

CHRISTIAN FINANCE SERIES

LOVE BRINGS PROSPERITY

We are going to touch on a different aspect of the law of finances. Deut. 28: 1, *Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I commanded you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.*

Now Deut.28 covers prosperity. Look at verses 3-4, *Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.*

In verse 8, *The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.*

So promises of Deut. 28 cover financial prosperity. They cover healing, being blessed and being redeemed by God too. We are going to see that God does promise prosperity in Deut. 28: 2 –14 but it is dependent on verse 1 which says, *“If you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God and observe carefully all His commandments.”* So, it is based upon our obedience to God’s commandments. Prosperity is not something that will come to us without obedience. Prosperity is a conditional promise. It is conditional upon our obedience to Him.

What are the commandments that God is referring to? God is talking about all the

commandments listed in Exodus, in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy. All these commandments God said you must observe them. You must carefully observe that you keep those commandments and then all these blessings will come upon you. Now that is in the Old Testament. We know that some commandments have been done away in Christ like for example the animal sacrifices. However, the moral laws still stand today.

Rom.13:8 onwards, *Owe no one anything except to love one another for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder." "You shall not steal." "You shall not bear false witness." "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* In other words, all the commandments of the Old Testament that God has told them. In Deut.28: 1 God says, "If you obey my voice diligently and obey all my commandments, I will bless you." Now in Rom.13 God is telling here that in the new covenant all the commandments of God and he quoted a few. And Paul went on to say if there are any other commandments, commandments are summed up in one simple sentence, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. Love is the fulfillment of all the commandments of God. Love fulfills Deut.28. Thank God, we don't have to keep all the animals sacrifices to receive Deut.28 blessings. But there is one way today by which we can fulfill the commandments of God – by loving others.

Your attitude towards others produces prosperity. If it is a loving attitude, it will reap prosperity. Love fulfills the commandments. If God says obedience to His commandments produces prosperity and if God says love is the summation of the commandments, then love equals prosperity. So, prosperity is produced by love. If keeping the commandments of God produces prosperity and if love keeps the commandments of God totally, then love will produce prosperity. What we do onto others, how we love others will produce prosperity in our lives. That is why some people don't realize it that their rotten selfish thinking attitude is causing poverty to themselves. But when our attitude is loving and kind towards others, we reap the side benefit, which is prosperity.

Let us define love. What does it mean to love? We are not talking about the measure of love according to man. God's measure of *agape* love produces prosperity. If we were to keep on loving and keep on being kind onto others, God is going to bless you and prosper you. Love brings prosperity.

1 Cor.13: 3-4 *And though I bestow my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.* You can give without loving but you can't love without giving. Sometimes people have many different motives for giving. So, you can give without love. But if you really love you will give. God so loved the world that He gave. Jesus so loved us that He gave Himself for us. You cannot love without giving your whole being onto others.

Verses 4-8 *Love suffers long and it is kind, love does not envy, love does parade itself, it is not proud, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.*

That is the bible love that we talk about. Love suffers long. In other words, love is patient with others. It is not impatient. The opposite of long-suffering is short suffering. You cannot bear long with others. You just have no patience with other people. You are not loving. You are short sufferers. The word longsuffering here talks about putting up with the false hearted, bearing the imperfection, bearing all that is not likeable about other people. Yet, love just keeps loving. If you think that you can't do that to your neighbor, just think how much God has been putting up with you. God is so kind. He is so loving. He is so patient with us. You failed Him a million times. But when you say God forgive me, He forgives. He is so long suffering, so patient, that is the love of God. And love is kind, love does not envy, love is not covetous, does not parade itself, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own.

I like to simplify the definition of love. Look at the dictionary and try to find the opposite of love. They would say that hate is the opposite of love. In the bible, the opposite of love is self. Love does not seek its own. All these characteristics of love listed here point to one fact. That love is selfless. Love is being unselfish. Love is the giving of yourself, your time and your talent. Love is the concentration of all our life's effort to bring joy, happiness onto another and not to ourselves. Love is completely unselfish. Being selfish is unloving. Love demands that we die to self. God so loved the world that He unselfishly gave His Son. He bore the pain to see His only begotten Son, the second person of the Godhead, go through all those salvation processes for us. Jesus' love suffered all kinds of humiliation for our salvation.

Every example of love in the bible brings self-sacrifice. Paul said that he was constrained by love to preach the gospel. He went through a lot of sufferings for the sake of the gospel and that means a denial of self. Love will produce a denial of yourself. So in all of your life, if you want to prosper, we have to think of others first before ourselves. We have to be concerned to bring joy, happiness, love and comfort to others above ourselves. We have to think in terms of how we can bless them. How we can lift them up onto the throne of God. How we can help them? Our thoughts are constantly concerned for others and not onto ourselves. When you have this attitude, prosperity comes forth naturally for you. It just seems to be attracted to you like a magnet attracts iron. So, love attracts prosperity to your life.

In fact, the world of business is run upon service. You will notice that you will go back to the shop or office that will give you good service. Why? Because they are putting the needs of the customer above their management. For them the customer is the king. After all everything runs on the customers. If there are no customers, the whole business will collapse. If there are no sales coming in there is no work to do and no business to run. If there are no sales coming in, there is nothing to service. So, in the world they have the practice of putting others first. It may not be of the same quality as God and the bible. But yet, just a small little fragment of that principle of putting the customer first brings prosperity to the business. Yet, here in the Word of God it is required of us at a higher standard of being concerned with the needs of others above our own needs. It will reap many benefits.

Prov. 11:25 The word love is not mentioned. But it is talking about an attitude that is unselfish, an attitude that puts others first. If you are that kind of person who always put your own needs first and your own self first, I doubt that you are going to get prosperous at all. But the day you die to self and you began to seek ye first the kingdom of God and bring blessings onto others and not think of our own self, the side effect is you yourself will get blessings too. In seeking to bless others you yourself get blessed. So in Prov.11: 25 *The generous soul will be made rich*. If I take the Word of God for what it means, it also means that the selfish soul shall be made poor. So generosity, benevolence, that is, the care and concern for others produces prosperity in our life.

I am not talking about neglecting your own self. I am talking about putting the needs of others above your own. It's no glory to God if you reach a point where you completely neglect yourself. You wouldn't even be an example to others. We

are talking about being unselfish. We are not talking about being silly where you completely neglect yourself. And every Tom, Dick or Harry that come along you just give everything to him or her. Then you yourself don't have any food. I am not talking about going to the extreme. Some people just love to go to the extreme. They take one principle and always go off tangent. These people must be linked to another who is more balance so that they could grow into balance. There is a tendency for some people to go to that extreme. Every truth they have they pull it right to the extreme.

We are talking about an attitude of benevolence, an attitude of generosity, an attitude of concern for others and an attitude that is unselfish and loving. That is an important attitude in your life. If you want to prosper, you have to be loving in your words and in your actions. If I become loving and kind to others, I don't know how it's going to produce it but somehow prosperity flows into my life. If you are someone who speaks kind words to others, somehow, that simple action of yours is going to cause you to be magnetized to receive prosperity. It's a wonder how my attitude to another person can produce prosperity. But it does.

The second part of the verse in Provb.11: 25 *and he who waters others will also be watered himself*. That is talking about unselfishness. You are watering others and you shall be watered yourself. What you do onto others, others shall do onto you. Jesus' Golden Rule states, Do onto others what you would like others do onto you. If you would have men to do onto you, you should do onto others. If you want others to be generous to you, you must be generous to others. Love brings prosperity.

Prov. 13:7 *There is one who makes himself rich yet has nothing; And one who makes himself poor yet has great riches*. I have always wondered about this verse. There is one who makes himself rich. That is a person who is selfish and wants to make himself rich and prosperous. He is self-centered, self-loving and selfish and yet he will end up with nothing. Then there is another that makes himself poor. It means that you begin to be generous and you begin to sort of not accumulate wealth for yourself but you begin to share what you have with others.

God gave me a verse in 2 Cor. 8: 13-14, *For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack – that there may be equality. As it is written, "He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little has*

no lack."

It says that those who have abundance, they supply the needs of others. That is one who makes himself poor that others' needs will be met. And the blessing involved says he will have much. The more you give the more will be given onto you.

Lets look at 2 Cor.8: 2. The Macedonian churches were in a great trial of affliction. The abundance of their joy in their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. This is a prime classic example of one who makes themselves poor that others may be made blessed. They could have kept what was theirs. Yet they continued to be liberal, generous and unselfish to others. And God blessed them back. The Macedonian churches are the same Philippians where Paul says my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

That's what it means in Prov.13: 7 that says, *There is one who makes himself rich yet has nothing and one who makes himself poor yet has great riches.* They are generous and unselfish. In other words, they are loving. You can give without loving. You are a good giver. You are a good person who helps others.

Prov.18: 16 *A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men.* Some says that the author was referring to bribery. The bible will never condone nor command us to bribe. It is a sin and is wrong. It is not a bribe here. It is a gift. When the bible tells us that God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, His Son was a gift. God is not bribing us. He was giving a gift. A gift is unconditional. A bribe is conditioned upon favor to be shown. A gift is just given due to the goodness of the giver. The love and generosity of the giver cause the giver to give. A bribe is given upon condition. There must be a reciprocal reaction back. So here the word is give. Some people use this verse, you can do that, to refer to the ministry gifts and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life that will give you favor and open doors for you. It will make room for you. If you have a gift of God, it will make room for you. That is good teaching. Strictly speaking, this verse is talking about gifts - actual gifts, blessings and presents that you give onto others.

When you give it onto other, you become a generous person. You are a giver of gifts. You become like God. God loves to give gifts. It says that this kind of

attitude will make room for you in the area of prosperity. It will make room for you and bring you before great men. God will prosper a giver of gifts. That is, it must come from a heart of love. Some people when they give something, they put conditions on it. But when it's an unconditional gift that makes it a bona-fide classic example and definition of what a gift is. God loved us unconditionally. When you give gifts, you will find that it will be reciprocated to you; room is made for you. Blessings come your way. It will bring you before great men; it will bring about your promotion. Now you don't do it for motives of self-gain. You do it because it is a part of your heart of love. A gift is given based on the giver. A bribe is given based on the receiver. It's because of the love in your heart that flows forth from your life. You can never love without giving. You just want to give your life, your talents, and all your blessings onto others. You become loving.

Prov. 19:17 *He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord and He will pay back what he has given.* See love has compassion, love cares. Here he talks about those who are caring towards others, those who are needy, those who are poor. Remember be balanced. We are not saying give to all that come to you and ask. Some are swindlers, conmen and lazy bums. Usually a bona-fide poor person who is looking to the Lord does not come to you. The Lord will speak to you about them. But those who keep asking from you are not poor. They have made a profession out of asking. Some people use the scripture, "Give to all that ask from you." See they are taking one principle and pressing it to their advantage. Just like some people take Mk.11: 22-24 Like a robber they go to the bank and say lets pray and believe according to Mk.11: 22-24 that when we go into the bank and rob the bank that there would be no policeman around. That is using God's Word against God's Word. Mk.11: 22-24 is based upon all the other scriptures. And the scripture says thou shall not steal. So when we are talking about giving to the poor as lending to the Lord, it says when you genuinely help the poor, the Lord repays you back.

There have been countless times when the Lord brings a blessing onto me. I asked the Lord, "How is this coming?" The Lord told me, "Remember the day you lent your car to this person?" See when you care and you love genuinely, blessings flow to you. That comes from love. Love brings prosperity.

The same area in Prov. 28 refers to generosity to those in genuine need. Verse 8 *One who increases his possession by usury and extortion gathers it for him who will pity the poor.* All those crooks in the world that are gathering wealth by selfish means and extortion by charging exorbitant interest rates will have their prosperity

channeled the person who has compassion for the poor. Do you know that when God bless you, it is so that you could be a blessing to others? You cannot take anything out of this world except by the way you use it. How you give your money will determine your blessings up there in heaven. We are stewards of all we have on this earth. You are a good steward if you bring blessing to others. God wants you be like Him. It is in His nature to give freely. He sends down rain on the just and the unjust. God keeps pouring His gifts to men. Some of those men don't even know God. God just keeps pouring His blessings on people. They are the general blessings of God. When we catch hold of the nature of God that God is love, God lives in us. We become love personified. Love flows from our heart. We love because God's love is in our heart. And when we love, we keep the commandments of God. When you are someone who takes care of several people and God sees that you did it out of genuine love, He will know how to reward you in His time.

Then there is another guy who is just a crook. He piles up money. His bank account is always fat. The bible says in Prov.28: 8 all that he has is going to come to the one who has compassion for the poor so that he or she could use it to bless the poor. The rich crook is having the wealth but is not using it faithfully. It shall be taken from that person and given to another person who is a good steward and faithful. So, when God prosper you watch out. You are not made rich in order to be self-indulgent. Every time God promotes you, you are in a higher position to be a help to others. It is not so that you will just get the glory. Every time God brings a blessing your way, every time you are prosperous to a higher level, it is so that you could be more effective in bringing blessing to others. Earlier, when you could only bless 3, 4, or 5 people, now God promotes you with more riches and prosperity so that you could bring blessings to 10, 20, or 30 people. And if you are faithful there, God will promote you to a place to bless 100 or even 1,000 people.

So remember everything you have on this earth comes from the Lord. If God promotes you and blesses you and you are crooked, everything you have, no matter how much, in the end is going to somebody else who will use it properly. If someone who is faithful in that, they are going to get all those blessings. And they are going to use it the way God intended. Because God gave it to you and you didn't use it properly, another person is going to get it who will use it the way God wants it.

It's just like the case of Mordecai telling Queen Esther, "Don't think you can escape

the persecution of the Jews while you are there as a queen. If you don't use your position that God has brought you to help to bring salvation to the Jews, God would raise up deliverance from another place." So there is a purpose for God putting Esther in the king's court. In her position, she could use it to bring deliverance to the Jews. If Esther was not faithful, she could have perished and God might raise up another one.

None of us are indispensable. Where we are today and where we are still going to remain depends on our faithfulness right where we are. If you are unfaithful, you are going to lose everything. If you are faithful, you are going to gain more. We are all stewards onto God.

All the riches are going to come to the one who is faithful. Whatever level of prosperity you are in, don't be proud. Don't think that you did it by yourself. Pontius Pilate wanted to act big and said, "Don't you know I have the power to crucify You or to set You free?" Jesus turned to him and said, "You have no power except what has been given to you from heaven." In other words, Jesus was saying, "You are where you are, even though you don't know God."

God has blessed you. Use your power properly. All of us came into this life with nothing. And every thing you have, every thing you have earned, came, whether you know it or not, because God has blessed you. God has been your source. And there is a reason and a purpose why God has put you where you are and blessed you where you are so that you could be a blessing to others. If you are not going to use it properly, God is going to take that same position and give it to another. So be faithful, walk in the fear of God and in reverence of God.

Prov. 21:17 *He who loves pleasures will be a poor man. He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.* What are pleasure, selfishness, and self-indulgence? Those who are selfish will lose everything. Love is unselfish. The next part says, *He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.* Wine and oil are the symbols of indulgence. You can use it but you must not love it. You can use money but you must not love money. He who loves money will not be rich. You can use silver and gold but don't love silver and gold. You can use diamonds but don't love diamonds. You must not be self-indulgent. Praise God for the blessings He has given you. Enjoy it but when you enjoy it don't go to the extreme and feel guilty. Some people have such a guilty conscience that every time they eat a steak, they look at that steak and they remember all the poor

and starving in some Third World countries. What the devil is trying to do is to rob you of your enjoyment of God's blessing on your life. If you want to enjoy some blessings of God, enjoy it properly and don't enjoy it with guilt and condemnation in your life. What does this verse in Prov. 21: 17 say? If you are selfishly pleasuring yourself, you will end in poverty.

We are talking about balance here. You must know our Father places the things of this world here for you to enjoy. But don't be off-balanced. Do you know that there is a certain balanced way of doing all things is a Christian manner? I am sure if every day you spend about \$100 on food, there is something wrong. At the same time if you try to super spiritual where everyday you budget 50 cents on food for a family of 3, I think your super spirituality is a sense of pride. I think it is more a super stupidity. God and His angels are looking down and saying, "I am constantly trying to meet the needs of this person and he is constantly backing off from Me." So there is an extreme on both ends. You yourself must decide and know by the Holy Spirit the balance that you need in your own life. You must know at which point is over the limit that God sets for you. And at which point is under the limit. You must have a limit in our own life. Don't copy the world. Some of you may learn this truth and become a millionaire in the future. Don't live like a worldly multimillionaire who wastes a lot on extravagances. Don't copy the world. Set your own standard on what is average.

A loving attitude is important. If you get into strife with another, indirectly it is going to cause poverty. If you have the attitude of being angry with another person, you are going to reap poverty. All these attitudes that you have towards others will produce prosperity or poverty in your life. They indirectly go back to keeping the commandments of God. So, from this day forward, realize that prosperity includes laws of tithing and laws of faithfulness to handling finances. It includes your attitude to your fellow men. Your attitude to your fellow men must be one of loving. You must be one who forgives easily. You must be the one who loves easily. Don't bear grudges. Your bearing grudges and bitterness will cause your own downfall and poverty plus sicknesses too.

