



*Transforming society through the
power of the Gospel*

Establishing a Prosperous Soul

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

Introduction

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

In this series we will be looking at soul prosperity and how it has a “knock on” effect in our lives. Material and relational prosperity and physical health affect us; each is a fruit of a prosperous soul.

We spend a lot of energy and prayer on our health and wellbeing, but often neglect the condition of our souls. This is a case of putting the cart before the horse, because if we spent time on nourishing our souls, the fruits would take care of themselves.

To prosper is to succeed and have a good journey. This is difficult if we are sick or broke. If we are consistently having problems in our finances, relationships or health, we need to check out how our souls are doing.

We are three part beings: spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

- Our spirits are made perfect when we are born-again (receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour). Our born-again spirit is one with the Spirit of God and sealed against sin by the Holy Spirit. Our born-again spirit knows all things and is always in faith and communion with God because the Spirit of Jesus is there.
- Our bodies are never going to understand spiritual things and must be brought under subjection to our spirit man (1 Cor 9:27).
- This leaves our souls – our mind, will, emotions and conscience – as the area most under attack by the devil. We need to be wise in how we manage our souls. The Bible tells us we must be renew our minds with the Word of God.

(Get the teaching on Spirit, Soul and Body to understand this more).

3 John 1:2 says that we prosper in all things and are in health “just as” our soul prospers. This links everything to the condition of our souls. Keeping our souls well will help us avoid the pitfalls of life.

Proverbs 22:5

Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse; He who guards his soul will be far from them.

Many people’s souls are cluttered with unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, greed, pride, lust, idolatry, fear, cares and worries that crowd out Jesus and His life, healing and provision.

Below are nine principles that will help our souls to prosper.

I Rest

a) The prosperous soul comes to Jesus regularly for rest.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

The soul needs rest if it is to prosper, just like the body needs rest for health. When we allow our souls to get weighed down with pressures, stress, anxiety and troubles, they can't rest. We were never designed by God to carry these burdens, which is why they cause so much damage to our physical health. We need to be wise in giving Jesus our cares and worries, because an unrestful soul is an unprosperous soul. A soul in this condition leads to burnout, exhaustion, depression and nervous breakdowns!

Jesus is clear that we need to come to Him and let Him carry the burden. Let Him lead us into what we should be doing because following Jesus is where we find rest for our souls.

The reason many are running to entertainment to escape from reality is that their souls are not at rest in Jesus. They seek to find rest in escape, but they never truly find it.

b) Learn priorities from the story of Mary and Martha

Luke 10:38-42

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

Look at the two ladies in the story above: one whose soul was at rest, and one whose soul was full of anxiety and not prospering.

The moral of this story is not devotion verses duty; both ladies had sat at Jesus' feet and both had also served. The difference was that Mary's priorities and focus where correct. She knew when it was time to work and when it was time to sit at Jesus' feet to learn and get rest. Martha had allowed the anxiety of serving to cause her to become worried and troubled by many things; her soul was not at rest and so was not prospering. When we get caught up in everything that needs doing and neglect spending time with Jesus, the prosperity of our souls with suffer.

Mary chose to prioritise spending time with Jesus and she did well. When our focus and attention is away from Jesus, we become anxious and full of worry and we're then easy targets for the devil.

c) Let the good shepherd lead you into rest and restore your soul

Psalm 23:1-3

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Jesus is the great shepherd and as we follow His leading, you will not lack. The verse says "I shall not lack"; all our financial and physical needs will be met. We need to yield to Jesus, laying down all our self-effort, and let him lead us beside still waters. Too often we camp by raging waters (turmoil and worry) and we then can't find true rest.

When we speak of resting in Jesus, we don't talk of having a boring life or not doing exciting and challenging things; we talk of getting our strength and guidance from Him and trusting Him for our success. We can then do great things in Jesus, without the burden of worry and anxiety.

John 15:5

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

The foundation for eternal life and a prosperous soul is knowing Jesus, coming to Him regularly for His rest.

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

II Removing Judgement

a) Holding onto judgement restricts the flow of life from our spirits

Matthew 7:1-5

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Matthew 6:22

The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

While Matthew 7:1-5 speaks of not making hypocritical judgements, I believe that it also links with Matthew 6:22 to show us that having these "planks" of judgement in our eyes limits the light that can enter our bodies. We already know what the state of our bodies are directly linked to the state of our souls, so we can say that this light is not getting into our souls because of the judgments we are holding over others. The light and life in our spirit man must pass through our soul to reach our bodies.

b) Judgement hinders the flow of salvation's benefits

John 12:47

And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

Jesus is clear that his mission is not one of judgement, but of salvation. Judgement hinders the benefits of salvation from being released. Tolerating judgement in our souls can hinder the flow of salvation's benefits in our lives. We need to copy Jesus and exhibit His nature of forgiveness.

Hebrews 10:30

For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay"; says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

Whenever we tolerate judgment of others, or even of ourselves (self-condemnation), we are assuming the role and place of God. This will negatively interfere with the prosperity of our souls.

The reason we are told not to judge is that we are not objective enough and nor do we have every fact about a situation. We are unable to judge rightly or fairly, no matter how good at it we think we are. Leave it to God!

c) Examples of how we tolerate, excuse or justify judgement in our souls

- We hide our judgements under a cover of concern for the other person.
- We say we forgive but still punish the person with rejection and gossip.
- We hold back from full forgiveness in our hearts because we want an apology.
- Making little comments, passing judgement. "They are typical ..." "They are slow learners..."
- We judge people by events without understanding the motivation of their hearts.

We can be very good at justifying our wrong behaviour. The problem is that when we don't deal with these things, they release their poison into our lives and make us unfruitful.

d) Results of judging others

We get judgement from others instead of mercy (principle of sowing and reaping). Matthew 7:2 tells us that the standard of judgement we use on others is what will be applied to us.

Read Matthew 18:21-34: in this parable, not forgiving one another opens us up to torment.

Matthew 18:34

"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

When our eye is full of unforgiveness and judgement, we can't see clearly to help others. Our ability to minister effectively is restricted. Walking in judgement puts us firmly in the camp of the Pharisees and the Bible tells us that to be walking in judgement is to be a hypocrite.

Romans 2:1

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Judging produces condescension, looking down on others as though you were spiritually superior. Failure to remove judgment from our souls will hinder the life of Jesus there and make our souls unprosperous.

Speak success over people, declaring what the Word of God says about them, instead of speaking their sins and mistakes over them. You can look for the good and pray God's Word over them trusting that it will steer their lives in the right direction.

III Magnify the Lord

Luke 1:39-49

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.

a) Your soul is a magnifier

Your soul is a magnifier and whatever you focus it on will eventually totally consume your entire being. Look what happens when you are deep in worship of God, perhaps during your favourite song: you become oblivious to everything else and are only focused on God's presence.

Whatever you are magnifying with your soul will either cause the release of what God has placed in your spirit or cause it to be bound up. When we look to and focus on God, instead of our problems, God is magnified and we can say "what bills?", "what needs?", because our trust is in the God who provides. If you focus on and magnify the problem, God becomes small in our eyes and we operate in fear, not faith.

Look at the example of the twelve spies sent by Moses to check out the promised land (Numbers 13). When the spies came back ten gave a bad report, but two, Joshua and Caleb, had a different view.

Numbers 13:30-33

Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

The ten bad reporters were focused on the problem: there were giants in the land. The Bible says they saw themselves as grasshoppers in comparison to the inhabitants of the land. Joshua and Caleb were focused on the size of their God. They remembered how God had delivered them from Egypt, fed them and protected them from enemies on the way. They knew God would help them with the giants too. The difference between the spies was their focus and what they allowed their souls to magnify.

The key to all this is to consider whose perspective you are viewing your life and circumstances through. The prosperous soul is looking through God's perspective, using His Word and not present circumstances to determine its reaction.

When we magnify God and His Word over our circumstances, we allow the life and promises in our spirit to flow into our physical bodies to affect the natural realm.

b) Remain focused on God and remember all the times He has delivered you before

Numbers 21:1-9

The king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners. So Israel made a vow to the Lord, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." And the Lord listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called Hormah. Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

We can't allow the way things look to determine how we respond. If we do this, we will be up and down like a yoyo. How your soul responds to situations will determine its prosperity.

Remember how God has delivered you before; He won't abandon you now, so don't let the problems cause you to forget God's goodness and love for you.

In Numbers above, we see the people took their eyes off God. This led to discouragement which got worse as the journey progressed. They focused on their problems and went into rebellion and unbelief. Their souls were not prospering because their focus and what they were magnifying was wrong. The snakes that bit and killed the people show us the danger of taking our eyes off God and focusing on our problems; the problems will destroy us. However, when the people repented and looked to the symbol of their sins on the cross (bronze snake on a pole), they were saved.

The answer to discouragement, poor health and lack is a changing of the focus of our souls.

If we spend our spiritual energy on seeing that our soul prospers, then God will see to it that our situations prosper. Too much energy is wasted trying to change situations that could have been avoided with a prosperous soul.

Psalm 103:1-5

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

IV Subject to Authority

a) We must submit to God-ordained authority

Romans 13:1-7

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

God appointed the institution of civil government. This does not mean that every way that authority is carried out is from Him. Those that are in authority will give an account of how they have used it.

We are called to submit to those in authority over us. Before you tell me that I don't know how bad your government is, remember that the Apostle Paul was writing this while living under the rule of Rome. Rome had invaded and conquered the Jewish people and Emperor Gaius Caligula had even tried to put a statue of himself in the temple in Jerusalem. Roman taxes were heavy, unfair and collected at the point of a sword. Rome was against Christianity and persecution of Christians was common. Most of us are living under a better civil government than Paul. It's obvious to me that this instruction was given to Paul by the Holy Spirit, and we need to take it seriously.

Romans 13:2 tells us that to rebel against authority resists the divine order and brings judgement on us. Our souls can't prosper if we take ourselves out from the authorities God has placed over us. God's divine order for our souls is to be subject to authority, not usurp it.

Authority was given for our protection and wellbeing.

2 Corinthians 10:8

For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

There are various types of authority established by God:

- Absolute authority: God and His Word (Col 1:15-18, 2 Tim 3:16-17)
- Authority in the home (1 Pet 3:1, Eph 6:1-3)
- Spiritual authority in the church (Heb 13:17)
- Civil authority (Rom 13:1-4)
- Authority in the workplace, school, etc (Eph 6:5-8)

All authority is under the absolute authority of God. No other authority source can countermand the instructions of God. If the government tells us to stop reading our Bibles, the instruction is null and void; however, we do still continue to submit to the government in other matters over which they do have God ordained authority.

b) Our souls prosper when we have a right relationship with authority

In every situation we walk into we must determine who is in authority, and submit ourselves to them in the proper manner. When we do this, our souls will prosper. The scriptures promise good things when we submit to proper authority.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

When we are submitted to God, we can resist the devil and see him run from us.

1 Peter 3:7-9

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

Husbands who act correctly within the authority of the house get answered prayer. Believers who love as brothers inherit a blessing.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Children who obey and honour their parents get health, prosperity and long life.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

It is profitable to submit to those in authority in the church.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

Peace and a good life come from submitting to and praying for those in civil authority (see Romans 13).

Ephesians 6:5-8

Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Promotion, favour and reward come from submission in the workplace, school etc.

Blessings are guaranteed for those in proper relationship with authority. Look at the example of the centurion with the sick servant (Matthew 8:5-13).

Operating in right relationship with authority releases blessings, anointing, life and protection from the devil's attacks in our lives.

Our submission to God-ordained authority, even when we do not agree with the way the authority is used, is a sign of trust in God. When we submit to authority, we can be confident that God will reward us and protect us from and restore to us any loss because of that authority. Look at the example of David in the Bible. King Saul was the authority and David submitted to it. He never tried to overthrow Saul, and never spoke badly about Him, even after Saul wanted to kill him. David was trusting in God to reward and bless him.

David did have to remove himself from Saul's presence for a time and we may also need to do so in a bad situation, but David always respected Saul's position and authority as King of Israel.

V Walking in Truth

a) Hearing and doing the Word of God

3 John 1:3-4

For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

These verses come directly after our key verse for this teaching,

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

We need to walk in the truth of God's Word for our souls to prosper. 'Walking' means *doing it*, not just hearing it.

James 1:22-25

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

The grace of God is unmerited; we can't earn it, but we must respond to it in obedience through faith.

b) Understanding the Parable of the Sower

Read the parable of the sower in Mark 4:1-20.

Mark 4:13

And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

Jesus says that if you don't understand the parable of the sower, you won't understand the other ones. This parable is foundational to all that Jesus taught!

Jesus is clear that we must listen carefully and see what He is saying. Jesus tells us the Word of God is the seed in the story and the ground is our hearts. How we value the Word of God will determine what kind of ground our hearts are.

The four types of ground (state of men's hearts) in the story are:

- Wayside ground (hard)
- Stony ground (shallow)
- Thorny ground (crowded)
- Good ground (fertile – soft, deep & uncrowded)

The wayside ground is a hard, tramped down, well-worn path that has no capacity to receive seed. This is caused by valuing another belief system or the traditions of men above God. The devil will steal the truth before it even penetrates this type of heart.

The stony ground represents hearts that place a greater value on feelings, circumstances and people than on the Word of God. People hear the truth with excitement, but it is never deeply planted and when bad things happen, they forget the truth and the devil steals the promises from them.

The thorny ground represents hearts that place a greater value on riches, possessions and worldly status than on the truth. They allow the business of this world to choke and crowd out the truth of God from their lives.

The good ground represents the heart that values the truth of God above every other belief system, over their own feelings and what people think. They don't allow what happens to them in life, good or bad, distract them from the truth.

This parable explains why so many people do not see the promises of the Word of God manifest in their lives. They do not make sure their hearts are good ground and that their souls are therefore

prospering. Too many Christians operate in the wrong three ground types; we must make sure our hearts are good ground.

VI Hope in God, an anchor for our souls

Hebrews 6:17-19

Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,

a) What hope are you anchoring yourself in?

People anchor themselves in many different things; some in the promises of people, and others in favourable circumstances. We must lay hold of the promises of God's Word and our relationship with Jesus. When we anchor ourselves correctly we will never be disappointed. Jesus and the Word will never let us down; we must have faith and patience that God's Word will always come to pass.

When we speak of hope in God, we don't speak of a gambler's hope where they hope for the right cards or roll of the dice; we speak of a joyful expectation that God always delivers on His promises. Hope in God and His Word are the only sure anchors for our souls.

Your soul can't prosper without being anchored. An anchor stops a ship from being blown onto rocks and in the same way, hoping in God keeps us steady in the storms of life. We must be anchored in God our refuge and in no other. Our thoughts, will and emotions must be anchored in His Word which is sure and steadfast.

Unless our thoughts and emotions are tied to the Word, we will become double minded and unstable, which will make our souls unprosperous and hinder our receiving from God (James 1:5-8). All people instinctively seek to anchor their souls in something, make sure you anchor yours in the right place.

Psalms 112:5-8

A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he will never be shaken; The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established; He will not be afraid, Until he sees his desire upon his enemies.

b) Examples

Jesus

Jesus had to face many difficult things: the arrest and death of John the Baptist, His family's rejection of Him, the Pharisees constant condemnation of Him and His own crucifixion. He never allowed all these bad situations and the opinions of men to overwhelm Him. His soul was anchored in the hope that was born of His trust of the Father.

King David

David learned and understood the need to anchor his soul in God instead of people or circumstances.

Psalm 43:5

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Psalm 62:5-6

My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

David could say these things while running for his life from Saul!

As we anchor our souls in God and His Word, they will prosper.

VII Knowing your identity very well.

Psalm 139:13-15

For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

a) Knowing what God says about us

The prosperous soul knows and agrees with these facts ("and that my soul knows very well"):

- I am fearfully and wonderfully made
- I am a marvellous creation of God
- My Father created me with skilful hands and care

Many Christians do not know their identity or agree with what scripture says about them. As a result, their souls are not prospering.

Instead of being confident in who God says they are, they are insecure and go around trying to bolster their identity. They obsess on their appearance or chase things that they perceive to be status symbols. They use bragging and "name dropping" in an attempt to seem important and to get respect. They behave as orphans even though they are children of God!

b) We get our identity from God our Father

Proverbs 17:6

Children's children are the crown of old men, And the glory of children is their father.

We receive our identities from our natural fathers, our spiritual fathers and from our Heavenly Father.

Until I learn to value my identity from my spiritual father and Heavenly Father, I will live a performance driven life. I will constantly seek my identity from the natural, from men.

A good father helps their children find their identity in who they are in God's eyes and that He is their Father irrespective of what they do. This identity that is not based on how we perform, but based in our positions as sons and daughters of God who are loved and accepted by Him.

Jesus ministered from a place of security in His identity as a son.

Matthew 3:16-17

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

At this point Jesus had not yet done any miracles or performed any aspect of His ministry assignment. God's pleasure in Him was based on relationship, not on performance.

During Jesus' temptation by the devil, the devil attacked His identity first.

Matthew 4:3

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

Matthew 4:6

and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

Jesus refused to be drawn in because He was secure in His identity and His Father's love for Him.

Jesus had a confident relationship with the Father that was not based on performance or the approval of men. His soul was prosperous and He was able to overcome.

c) Understand the treasure in the field and the pearl of great price

Matthew 13:44-46

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

First a man finds a treasure hidden in a field, re-hides it and goes and sells all that he has and buys the field. Second a merchant finds a pearl of great price, sells all that he has and buys the pearl.

Both the man and the merchant do the maths and decide that the value of the treasure and the pearl is worth everything, no matter the cost. Both approach the exchange as trading up.

While these stories can be looked at as us giving up everything for what is even more valuable, the Kingdom of God, we should also look at Jesus as the man/merchant and us as the treasure/pearl. Jesus gave it all, His life, to purchase us from destruction. When Jesus looks at us He sees both value and beauty. He sees the value and beauty hidden in us that even we do not see.

Jesus paid the price with great joy. He was not reluctant to purchase us to Himself as His bride.

Most of us view ourselves through the glasses of success/failure, strength/weakness or some other natural attribute and we value ourselves accordingly. This is faulty, performance based identity.

Jesus defined us by the price He is willing to pay for us. The value of something is defined by the price someone is willing to pay for it. Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for us, we are worth the life of Jesus!

The merchant was looking for things of value, Jesus searched for us and purchased us because He values us.

God looks at each of us as a beautiful treasure. Our soul must know that well in order to prosper.

VIII Possessed with patience.

Luke 21:19

By your patience possess your souls.

a) Release patience and self control

The context of the above passage is one of intense persecution. We are to release patience and self-control, the fruit of the Spirit, in time of trouble. When things are coming against us, when we are in financial, physical or relational crises is when we discover how prosperous our souls are. Anyone can pretend to have a prosperous soul when times are good, but if you freak out in time of crisis, it is a big sign that you need to pay attention to the prosperity of your soul. Learning to exercise patience in difficult times will keep your soul in the correct alignment and keep it prospering.

Psalms 62:5

My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him.

When we have difficulty waiting on God, it is an indication that our expectation is in something or someone else.

Psalms 130:5

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope.

It takes real discipline and a prosperous soul to wait on the Lord when people or our natural mind provide us with other options that seem reasonable.

Learn to wait on the Lord and He will work things out for you. Don't be hasty and let pressure cause you to jump into things.

Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.

Don't just follow your head and natural wisdom; wait on the Spirit. Hear from God. The person who waits on the Lord and hears from Him no matter the pressure will prosper.

b) Be “weaned”

Psalm 131:2

Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Weaned from: impatience, carnal behaviour, whining, complaining, manipulation through temper tantrums and emotional fits.

A “weaned” soul is a patient and prosperous soul. Until you learn to calm and quiet your soul, it is not possible to mature and yield the full potential of fruit ordained in your life.

When we stop crying and screaming every time we get into a mess and start trusting and looking to God, we begin to mature and prosper.

People who live in a continual drama of emotional turmoil have some maturing/weaning of their souls to do.

A weaned soul is a quieted soul. A weaned soul does not offload on others, giving them a “piece of your mind”. A weaned soul filters what they say through the Word and Love before speaking. A weaned soul takes the time to wait on God and get His perspective.

People stunt their spiritual growth and kingdom potential by holding on to the right to say and do what they want, when they want, to whomever they want.

IX Generosity

Proverbs 11:25

The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself.

A primary character trait of men and woman of faith is their generosity, they are givers. We are made in the image of God and God is a generous giver. He gave His son to set us free.

The Bible is full of people who were generous givers. We can name many Christian leaders today who are givers and whom God is prospering.

Luke 6:37-38

“Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

The principle of sowing and reaping is not reaping and sowing. We must first plant something if we expect to reap something. God begins everything with a seed that is sown, whether money, kindness, love, encouragement, prayer, etc.

When we read vs38, we often forget about vs37. We can’t go about judging, condemning and not forgiving and think that it will not interfere with the prosperity of our souls and the effectiveness of the return on our giving.

To walk in generosity, we must first let go of things that you think people owe you and stop trying to balance the scales on perceived wrongs and unfairness. We must release and commit these things to God because He is good. We must trust that He will restore and make things right. This will release us to be generous in all things and cultivate a prosperous soul.