EMPOWERED FOR SUCCESS

CREFLO DOLLAR

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

Prosperity Starts Within.....4

CHAPTER 2

Bear Fruit.....9

CHAPTER 3

Keep the Favor of God Activated.....13

CHAPTER 4

Tap into the Presence of God.....18

CHAPTER 1
Prosperity Starts Within

What do you think of when you hear the word, "prosperity"? For many people it brings to mind the idea of having a lot of money in the bank. While money is definitely a part of the prosperity package, it is not the only aspect of what it means to prosper. Relegating it to the financial realm alone actually gives an incomplete picture. The truth is that prosperity is much more than finances. A prosperous person flourishes in his or her spirit, soul, and body, which translates to every area of that individual's life—from finances to relationships. It is not enough to have a lot of money in your bank account, but have sickness and disease in your body. Likewise, a person who is physically healthy, but has poor relationships isn't really prospering in life, either. When we understand that God wants *every* area of our lives to prosper, we can begin to cultivate the inner "wealth" that will ultimately manifest on the outside.

Third John 1:2 is the foundational scripture for total-life prosperity. It says, *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* We see from this scripture that prosperity starts in the soul. But what exactly is it that our soul needs to prosper in, for this prosperity to show up in our lives? Our souls must prosper in the truth of God's grace. The will of God is that we trust in His unmerited favor and be thankful for what Jesus has already done. When we do, we release ourselves from trusting in others or self-effort to achieve what only God could do for us.

The more we study the grace of God, the more we will realize that God wants us to rely on Him, completely, for our prosperity. To do this, we must labor to enter into His rest. Hebrews 4:11 says, *"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."* Laboring to enter into the rest of God is not always easy, particularly when our circumstances are telling

us the opposite of what God has promised in His Word. Nevertheless we must press into the rest of God. It takes discipline and determination to refuse to be moved by what the physical senses perceive. Thanksgiving and praise are ways to practically display our trust in God and His Word, and transfer God's resources over into this natural realm while maintaining a position of rest. In addition, we can demonstrate our rest in God by continuing to declare the finished works of Christ in our lives and situations.

As Believers, we are supposed to receive precise results and know exactly how to respond to the situations and circumstances we face in life. The key is the grace of God. We serve God by trusting in the finished works of Jesus and thanking Him for what He's already done. The best thing a Christian can do is rest in the finished works of Christ. This is why our focus should be on resting, instead of self-effort.

If there is something going on in your life that

does not align with the truth of God's Word, don't try to rectify the problem from the outside in. Recognize that you can only transform the quality of your life by changing the way you think. Remember that prosperity begins in your soul. Therefore, you should meditate on the Word of God at every opportunity. Only speak what God has said about your situation and refuse any thoughts that are contrary to His Word. When worry attempts to rear its ugly head, cast it out of your mind with a faith confession. Praise and thank God that you already possess everything necessary for life and godliness.

The more your soul prospers, the more you will find things in your life flourishing and increasing. As beneficiaries of Jesus' redemptive work, we have the advantage over the enemy. Satan hates when Christians rest in what God has already done and begin to reap the benefits of a prosperous soul. Renew your mind to the truth that God's grace is operating in and through your life. When you do,

you will begin to experience total-life prosperity like never before. The work has been completed!

CHAPTER 2
Bear Fruit

While America measures success by what you have done, what you have accomplished, and what you have, the true measure of your success and prosperity is if the Lord is with you. Joseph was a prime example of how the presence of the Lord empowers you to prosper. *"And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man"* (Genesis 39:2). Christians have been given something so powerful and so supernatural to equip us to have success in every area of our lives—grace. When we understand the purpose of grace, our lives will take on new meaning. The finished works of Christ are available to us, now. All we have to do is rest in them.

Remember, grace is God's unmerited favor. Its purpose is to empower us to live godly lives and see tangible results that bear witness to the finished works of Christ (Titus 2:11, 12). First Corinthians 15:10 says,

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." From this passage of scripture, we see a couple of things. First, grace was "bestowed" on the apostle Paul. And second, grace was not given in vain, but for a purpose.

God's grace has been bestowed upon all who are in Christ. As an act of His love, we were gifted with it when we acknowledged that we needed a Savior. Total life prosperity is one of the intended purposes of God's grace. To be prosperous means to be successful in life's journeys and to have more than enough resources to accomplish what God has called *you* to do in life. Does this mean that everyone will be a millionaire? No. But, all Believers can tap into a level of supply and provision that is over and above what they could ask or think. All can access the resources necessary to carry out the will of God for their lives.

Third John 1:2 refers to prosperity as a natural outgrowth of a prosperous soul. It says, *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* Prospering in your spirit means being born again; prospering in your soul means having a renewed mind; and prospering in your body means being physically healthy. True prosperity should be evident *in every area* of your life, and it is the result of having a revelation of God's grace.

Don't let religion tell you that God doesn't want you to be successful, or that you have to qualify for success through your own good works. The first word in Third John 1:2 is "beloved." God addresses us this way through Paul's words to let us know that He loves us dearly. Until you believe you are absolutely loved by God, you are limited in what will be manifested in your life. How can you release your faith for something He has promised if you don't believe He loves you? Every day, take time to

meditate on God's unconditional love, and keep your soul marinated in the Word of God.

Successful thinking is thinking that is in line with the grace of God and the life of grace. The only things that can stop you from seeing the fruit of grace manifest in your life is an attachment to self-effort and an attempt to obtain the benefits of salvation through your good works. Your relationship with God is based on what Jesus did, not your own righteousness. When you understand this, you will see the fruit of grace show up in your life like never before.

CHAPTER 3
Keep the Favor of God Activated

The favor of God is one of the most valuable spiritual assets you can possess. It is made available by way of God's grace, and is what gives the Believer the advantage in life. Joseph was a man who was highly favored and successful because of his personal relationship with God. Because of this intimate relationship, Joseph prospered even in negative situations and circumstances. He had favor with those in authority over him and was promoted to a position of leadership and authority. Did you know that the same favor in which Joseph operated is available to you? When you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and have received His grace as a free gift, the favor of God is working on your behalf!

Too often, people pay more attention to their problems than God's promises. They look at a lack,

shortage, or deficiency, and try to figure out how to get *things* to work instead of relying on God's favor to work for them. You see, the favor of God will get more results for you than self-effort ever can. Through favor, you can achieve the same things that someone who has worked harder and longer than you achieved.

Joseph is a prime example of how favor can work in a person's life when he or she has a personal relationship with God. The favor on Joseph got his superior's attention and was responsible for his promotion. Genesis 39:2-6 says:

> And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over

> his house, and all that he had put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

How do you keep the favor of God activated in your life like it was in Joseph's life? The answer is to stay with the Lord. Matthew 6:33 says, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* You see, when you pursue the kingdom of God, you are really pursuing *Him*. He promises that everything else will be added to you when you seek Him. Is there something you are praying for God to "add" to your

life? Rather than focusing on the thing you need, focus on Him. He wants to have a real *relationship* with you. He wants to converse with you, not just listen to you talk to Him. The more time you spend getting to know God is the less time you will have to spend asking Him for things.

Joseph had a living relationship with God and walked in His ways. He had the character necessary to support the success God bestowed on him. Even when Potiphar's wife made sexual advances toward him and attempted to entice him to sleep with her, he refused her because of his desire to please God (Genesis 39:7-12). He knew not to commit adultery before the Law was even given because he didn't need a "law" to tell him not to do it; his personal relationship with God taught him the truth. Joseph would not compromise his character, which is why he was so well-favored. God was with him and enabled him to live a holy life.

For the Believer today, an intimate, heartfelt relationship with Jesus Christ is the difference-maker. An abundance of money and material possessions are not what make you successful. But when you behold the Word of God and behold Jesus, you will see success. And when God is with you, good things will happen to you, through you, and around you. Keep the favor of God activated by developing a personal relationship with the Lord and making the Word your final authority in life.

CHAPTER 4
Tap into the Presence of God

Have you ever been in the presence of someone who just exuded love and positivity? Most likely you didn't want to leave that person's presence. Isn't it wonderful to know that God is always waiting to commune with you? In fact, His presence is the key to success. Your daily goal should be to spend time with Him, talking to Him, and then listening to His response. You will be infused with strength and see increase in every area of your life as you spend time in His presence.

Psalm 16:11 says, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* The presence of God is the best place you could possibly be. His presence brings joy and pleasures that surpass time and understanding. When you marinate yourself with His presence, you will produce fruit that reflects the character of Christ.

So the question is, what are you exposing yourself to? What are you allowing to come before your eyes, go in your ears, and come out of your mouth? If you expose yourself to the world and the things of the world more than you do the presence of Jesus, you will produce worldly, ungodly results in your life. Christians must make a conscious decision to expose themselves to the things of God, so that they can remain in position to receive the benefits that come from His grace.

One of the many benefits of exposing yourself to the presence of Jesus is the elimination of fear. God is love and a consciousness of this love will have a tremendous impact on your faith. Meditating on God's love for you will also change the way you look at others when they miss the mark. You will be more likely to release grace instead of condemnation toward others. Keep in mind that the presence of the Lord is not there to convict you of everything that's wrong with you. The presence of the Lord is there to remind you of your righteousness in Christ!

There are several ways to tap into the presence of God. Praise and thanksgiving are two keys to access God's presence, immediately. When you praise and thank God, no matter the circumstance, Jesus will make what looks monumental look microscopic. Psalm 3:3 says, *"But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head."* Jesus is your Shield and nothing can penetrate Him. He protects you from whatever comes against you. Praise stops the enemy in his tracks and immediately brings the presence of God on the scene; while thanksgiving demonstrates faith and gratefulness for what God has done for you.

Meditating on the Word of God, declaring the Scriptures, and praying in the Spirit are also ways for you to expose yourself to God's presence. His love for you is personal, detailed, and in-depth. Seeing God in the midst of everything going on around you, and experiencing His presence, daily, keeps you connected to your power source. Nothing, and no one can stop people who know God is with them!

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