



I never imagined this could be an issue! But after reading the *Atlantic Magazine* article*, I understand why folks could ask this question.

There is no doubt prosperity proponents' unbiblical teachings promoted greed and selfishness that contributed to folks spending funds they didn't have to get more... bigger ... better... now! Many folks borrowed, extended themselves financially, claimed God wanted them to be rich, and then, *wham!*; the recession hit.

Another reason for North American *me-centered Christianity* is popular unbiblical teaching on tithing, often applying Malachi 3:10 out of context--give God 10%, keep 90% for *me*, and expect *financial blessings* from God. A contextual study of tithing will show without a doubt, God owns 100%, we own nothing and have nothing to give but surrendered hearts. Many sincere pastors teach tithing out of ignorance, habit, or other reason without coercive intent (See [TITHING: THE TRUTH ABOUT TITHING](#) for more).

Prosperity proponents have gotten financially wealthy by speaking to vulnerable, poor, captive audiences not grounded in God's word. Wealthy TV evangelists present Jesus as a Celestial slot machine--give Him a "seed" and claim significantly more--but they take the "seed" to buy planes, expensive homes, cars, and more ... and to perpetuate lavish lifestyles.

Messiah followers should rejoice because these events fulfill scripture. Judges 21:25 (NASB) is as true today as it was in antiquity: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Be on guard and heed Apostle Paul's warnings to his prodigy, Timothy, in 1 Timothy 6:20 (NASB): "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge.""

The caption is the essence of the *Atlantic magazine's* December 2009 article

["Did Christianity Cause the Crash"](#)

In 2008, Jonathan Walton, commenting on the prosperity gospel noted: "Narratives of how "God blessed me with my first house despite my credit" were common ... Sermons declaring "It's your season of overflow" supplanted messages of economic sobriety and disinterested sacrifice... little attention was paid to using one's home equity as an ATM."

Again, listen to Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 4:3 (NASB): "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires." Indeed, the time has come when folks refuse to accept God's truth.

Spiritual leaders need to lead folks to God's agenda, not ours. We need to speak truth, and we need to be accountable. Let's start by reminding folks who a is Christian: We become Christians when we are *born again*. Jesus said, "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The apostle Paul said that when you are "in Christ," the old things pass away.

Reject easy believe-ism the prosperity preacher teaches--say a simple prayer and *presto!* you are a Christian and can demand what you want from Jesus! Next time prosperity teachers start preying on you, recall Jesus' words in Luke 14:27: "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." As well, ponder Luke 14:28-33. Jesus' disciples, folks who surrender their lives to Him, must "count the cost" of following Him." We must be prepared to die for Him. Will He take care of our needs? Sure, He will, when we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

The doctrine wealthy prosperity teachers preach is poppycock ... garbage! They lift Bible verses out of context to sway folks who do not stay in the Word.

But don't despair, Scripture teaches that those who teach the Word, like me, will be held to a higher accountability standard: James 3:1 says. "Not many of you should become teachers ... because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

God will deal with prosperity gospel teachers in His time and His way. Meantime, even unbelievers will know teachings of many prosperity preachers are outrageous!

God wants you in a personal relationship with Him (John 3), where He is your perfect loving Father, not a Celestial slot machine doing your will. He wants you to be His disciple (Luke 14:27-33), and He wants you to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Christian walk is challenging but fulfilling. Christians; let's love Him, obey Him, and turn from the greedy, unbiblical prosperity gospel! Are you trapped in the prosperity doctrine? Repent; He will forgive you. That's His promise to you (1 John 1:9).