

CHAPTER 8 THE PURPOSE OF PROSPERITY (e²)

"And let them say continually, 'Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant' " (Psalms 35:27b).

At the time I became a Christian, my wife Barbara and I attended a mainline denominational church that emphasized going to church on Sunday, giving money into the offering plate to support the minister and maintain the church building, and trying to live a good moral life. Like most American churches there was little or no emphasis placed on winning those outside the church to Christ.

But soon after becoming born again, I attended a meeting of the Greater Seattle Chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, a Christian businessmen's organization, whose stated mission was to call men back to God, introduce them to the power of the Holy Spirit, and train and equip them to fulfill the great commission. The president of the chapter which I attended had a global vision for the work of God; at every meeting he would enthusiastically ask "How many of you have a suitcase?" Nearly everyone would raise their hands to indicate that they had a suitcase. Then he would ask "How many of you have a passport?" Only a few in the meeting would respond in the affirmative. Next he would enthusiastically challenge the people to get a passport, and then he would have them stand as an act of faith while he prayed that God would provide the finances required to participate in one of the many mission trips that the Greater Seattle Chapter sponsored. These mission trips, which were called "airlifts," were designed to win the businessmen of the nations to Christ, introduce them to the power of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to also lead other men to Christ. I had been a Christian for a little over a year and had gone to the Fellowship meetings for only a few months when I decided to participate in an airlift to Europe. Since that time I have traveled to dozens of nations starting Fellowship chapters, speaking in churches, praying for the sick, casting out devils, and providing financial resources to help reach the lost in those nations. Because I was encouraged to go to the nations within months of my being born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit, it never occurred to me that I needed a formal bible school education or I had to be an ordained minister in order to do the works of Jesus (Matthew 9:35). ***Doing the works of Jesus*** has been as much a part of my life as that of operating my business.

Recently I attended a seminar taught by John Garfield entitled "Releasing Kings for Ministry in the Marketplace." I picked up a copy of a book co-authored by John and Harold Eberle by the same name (1). In their book they make the following observation:

Think about the great names that you know from the Bible. Perhaps Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, or David comes to mind. Now, list all the priests you can remember. Draw a blank? You may think of one or two prophets, but leaders identified strictly as priests do not stand out. Why is this? The reason is that God always has used kings as the movers and shakers in the kingdom.

Priests (pastors, teachers, and other church leaders) play an important role in the Temple (Church), but it's a role that has a maintenance implication. They keep families healthy by feeding them the Word. They counsel, encourage, heal, marry, and bury. They shepherd, feed, and equip God's people. Pastors naturally gravitate to a peaceful, healthy atmosphere and have a godly motivation to keep congregations happy and maturing.

In contrast, kings go to war. They establish their authority. They move people into new territories – stretching people out of their comfort zones to expand the Kingdom of God on this Earth.

Historically, kings have been leaders who worked closely with people and prophets. They were talented people with the resources to get things done. They also were well-

versed in God's word and occasionally could operate in prophetic ministries themselves.

In the Old Testament, we see that Daniel spent his life in a governmental (kingly) role but used a prophetic gift to interpret dreams. Abraham was a businessman who raised livestock and became the most powerful man in his day. Moses was a national leader. Joshua was a military leader. They all had a calling as kings to possess the inheritance God gave His people.

In the New Testament, we see the Lord pressing major initiatives with kings again. Neither Jesus nor any of his twelve disciples came from priestly lines. The major players were kings in the ministry sense. They had influence and power in the marketplace; some even had significant wealth.

Notice that the kings did more than provide for the Temple of God. This is important because some of the church leaders today want to release the kings, but they think the king is to use all his profit to provide for the Priest and the Temple. Of course, the kings will be blessed financially, and they will be generous in providing for God's house, but they are called to do more than that. Kings have a calling of God to extend the rulership of Jesus Christ into all of the world. They expand the Kingdom to fill the earth with His glory (1).

I agree with the authors of *Releasing Kings in the Marketplace*. God has called those of us to who work in the marketplace to expand the kingdom of God in the earth, both by going to the nations ourselves and by providing for his missionaries to go. Paul says that the Lord "Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12).

THE PURPOSE OF PROSPERITY

If we expect God to make us prosperous, then we should endeavor to use our prosperity to accomplish His will and do His work. The apostle Peter points out that it is not His will that any human being should perish (2 Peter 3:9), and Jesus Himself said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). It is God's primary purpose in the earth to save the lost and populate heaven, and therefore His primary purpose for prospering His people is to evangelize the world.

Before you read any further, perhaps you should examine your motives. Why do you want God to prosper you? Is it to help finance the work of God or is it to enjoy the luxuries of life—a big home in an upscale neighborhood, expensive foreign cars, a vacation home in Florida, personally tailored clothes, and entertaining in the cities most expensive restaurants? I am not suggesting that these things in themselves are wrong, God wants you to live an abundant life, but what I am asking you is this: is your primary motive to become wealthy so you can live a luxurious lifestyle or is it to help evangelize the world?

When God makes you wealthy, He would have you use your wealth wisely. Paul admonishes his young follower Timothy to "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1Timothy 6:17). The word command used in this verse is the Greek word *parangello* which means to "charge or to command" (2). Paul's admonition to the rich Christian is a requirement; it is not a negotiable option. The word rich used in this scripture is the Greek word *plousios*, and it describes someone who possesses incredible abundance, extreme wealth, and enormous influence (2). God wants His people to have abundance, enough to not only meet their own needs but to abundantly meet the needs of others as well.

If you are financially blessed, praise God for it, but be careful to separate who you are from what you own. If you are willing and obedient, the Holy Spirit will direct you as to how to best use the resources that He has provided to you. The eyes of the Lord go throughout the earth

to find an individual through whom He can funnel His financial resources to advance His kingdom.

And if you know others who are financially blessed, don't covet their wealth. Instead rejoice with them and pray that they will have the wisdom to use their wealth to advance the kingdom of God in the earth.

(1 *Releasing Kings for Ministry in the Marketplace*-. John Garfield and Harold Ebrele. Worldcast Publishing (June 2004) (Pg 16 & 17)

(2) *Sparkling Gems from the Greek*; ISBN 0-9-97254-2-5 Copyright © 2003 by Rick Renner P.O. Box 702040, Tulsa OK 75170-2040 (Pg 893)