

HOW TO HAVE PROSPERITY AND GOOD SUCCESS

(An Action Plan for Purposeful Living)

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” (III John 2)

Notice that John prayed that the Lord’s followers would prosper outwardly as their souls prospered. How many of us truly want to prosper to the degree that our souls are prospering? Frankly, most people I encounter hope that the Lord will prosper them in their finances and material lives far more than their souls are prospering. If they were to prosper financially only to the degree they are prospering spiritually, they’d be living in poverty.

The Lord links outer and inner prosperity, and the clear implication is that the Lord is going to prosper us financially, in our work, in our relationships, and in our material lives only to the degree that we are prospering spiritually or in proportion to our spiritual prosperity.

1. CHOOSE YOUR SOURCE

You must decide where you obtain your values. This is very important because the source of your values will determine the quality of your values. For instance, would you consider the *National Enquirer* a good source for values? How about TV talk shows? The source determines the value of your priorities.

Will you obtain your values from the world (your environment) or the word (the Bible), The Christ or the culture?

1 John 2:15-16 *“Don’t love the world’s ways – the lust for physical pleasure, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you and the pride that comes from wealth and importance – these are not from God but from the world.”* It’s amazing that scripture written approximately 2000 years ago is still relevant today. Why? The

world's values have not changed. The world has always had three basic values in life. Let's become aware of what the world deems important.

1. **Pleasure.** The physical sensual enjoyment of life.
2. **Possessions.** The Bible says "*The ambition to buy everything that appeals to you.*"
3. **Prestige.** Power, position or popularity.

So the first step in building a purposeful and successful life is to choose your choice. Where will I acquire my values?

2. CLARIFY WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Job 34:3-4 "*We should choose to follow what is right but first we must define what is good.*" Make a list of your values. Make a list of what you consider to be the most important things in life.

Values must be written because we rarely think about our values until we have a crisis. Stop and ask the tough questions when life is great. "What's my purpose in life? What are my values and where are they leading me? What is the end result of these values?" Do not wait until bankruptcy, marital unfaithfulness, divorce, promotion denial, job loss, major illness or death of a love one before you begin asking the tough questions.

3. CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE

If you want to focus on changing your life, you must focus on three key areas: your schedule, budget and relationships. To build a value based life; apply your values to your schedule, budget and relationships.

Your schedule. Your schedule should reflect what is important. If God is important in your life, you should have daily quiet time with Him. The first day of each week, Sunday, should be spent in worship.

Your budget. Your budget should reflect that God is first in your finances. Therefore, you give back to God **first**, before anyone is paid.

Your relationships. Schedule time for the important relationships in your life? Your husband, wife or children should not get the short end of the stick?

Psalm 119:37 "*Turn my eyes away from worthless things.*" The Psalmist is simply saying that you need to eliminate the things that don't matter. Once you know what

does matter and you have a list of those values, the starting point is to stop doing what isn't important in your life, what you don't value. Now you have time, money and energy for the things that count. The purpose driven life begins with a shift in your values.

4. CHECK YOUR VALUES DAILY

The Wise man Solomon encourages us Proverbs 4:23 *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”* The Living Bible translates that verse as, *“Guard your affections. They influence everything else in your life”* (Living Bible). Watch what you hide in your heart, they are the things you love, desire and value. What you worship becomes the center of your life and it will shape the purpose of your life.

5. HAVE A CLEAR INTENTION

Know what you want to accomplish, start a new business, lose ten pounds, run for a political office, more productive or a better person. Be honest about what you want in your life. Be honest about what you value. You cannot begin to have what you want until you understand why you want it. A value is anything we try to either obtain or hold on to. What have you been holding on to? Why do you value it? Have a clear understanding about what you want. Be clear about what steps you will have to take to get there. (Matthew 6:33, James 1:27, Col. 3:1-2, Galatians 3:3-5, Philippians 3:14, Proverbs 3: 13-18, Luke 14:28)

6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LIFE

You must take responsibility for all of your life experiences. You may not be able to control everything that happens in your life, but you do have power over how you choose to interpret the events of your life. Learn to be responsible for each experience. (Romans 14:12, Matthew 12:33, James 2:15-17, Acts 16:31, I Timothy 4:16) You may not have had **much** control over where you have been, but you have all the control over where you are going.

7. TAKE OWNERSHIP FOR WHAT YOU THINK AND DO

It is easy to be a victim in our society. Tune the television to any talk show and you will see many examples. You, alone, can create the life you want, no one else. You are giving yourself the power to be you and advance to the next level when you take responsibility for your thoughts and actions. (Romans 8, Isaiah 55:7, I Corinthians 13, Ephesians 4:1-2, Matthew 12:35, I Corinthians 2:12, I Thessalonians 5: 17, Proverbs 6: 1-5, Deuteronomy 4:9, Matthew 5:1-5).

8. START WHERE YOU ARE AND TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME

Begin with your present perceptions, understandings, and strengths and advance forward, one step at a time. In this world of objectives, goals and big plans, we often focus too much on the future with the result that our ability to concentrate fully on the present is severely compromised. Yet, it is only in the present that we can make a difference. Examine your resistance points; the things that irritate, limit or cause you to react. We often resist what we need to learn. The next time you find yourself resisting new information, a particular situation, or something someone else is saying, ask yourself: “What is really bothering me about this situation? What can I learn from this experience?” (Nehemiah 1:4-11, Acts 8:26-39, Lamentations 3:40, Proverbs 19:20, Ecclesiastes 12:13)

9. FOCUS ON MAINTENANCE, RATHER THAN ACQUISITION

Life’s maintenance is not as much fun as acquiring new and different things. However, knowing the condition of your life and environment is the key to having control. Control empowers. (II Timothy 3:16-17, I Corinthians 9:21)

10. SEEK GOD'S KINGDOM FIRST

This step is last because it will ultimately become the first. God’s value system involves *the Kingdom of God*. By definition kingdom is “The rule and reign of God in the hearts of men”. The kingdom of God simply means the values that God sets for the world. You seek God's will for your life by placing Him and His Kingdom first, when you do so, He promises to empower you and give you the desires of your heart. The first nine (9) steps are designed to help you discover your purpose and establish your goals. ***When you do what you can, God will do what you can't.*** (Matthew 6:33, Deuteronomy 4:29, Proverbs 8:17, I Kings 22:5, I Chronicles 28:9, Psalms 34:10, Ephesians 6:15, John 16: 15, 23-24, Colossians 3:1-2)