Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Toxic Television: A Biblical Answer to the Prosperity Gospel, Part 2
Scripture: Selected Scriptures
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Now turning back to our discussion of the health and wealth gospel, we started last time to talk about the cargo cults in the South Pacific, and where there are still Aboriginal people who worship the cargo gods, they developed a religion, because during World War II so many big airplanes landed on their islands, they were the first exposure they ever had to modern technology and they thought they were gods who were flying in and delivering all of this cargo and they developed religions out of this, and today they have little temples made out of bamboo and other kinds of woven material. Temples that look like control towers, cargo planes and airplane hangars and they worship the cargo gods.

A materialistic kind of religion; they want the cargo gods to come back and deliver them some more Zippo lighters and radios and nuts and bolts and tools, and all the things that were landing there in Word War II. I suggested to you that the modern health wealth gospel is nothing but another kind of a cargo cult where people are looking for a god who delivers all the goodies that they want. That the essence of the cargo cult was that God is there to provide what we want, the essence of the health wealth gospel is the same, that God is there to provide what we want and frankly what we demand.

I suggested to you last time that all of the elements that are common to the cults exist within the prosperity movement or the health wealth movement, a distorted Christology, an exalted view of man, an erroneous view of God, a theology based on human works, a belief that new revelation is coming and unlocking secrets that have been hidden for years, extra biblical human writings that they deem inspired and authoritative, all of those are typically cultic features.

Now I said that we were going to look at some of the aspects of the health wealth gospel and look at some of the theological keys to understanding them. Last time we discussed the fact that they have the wrong god. They do not understand that God is sovereign, they do not understand that God is able to act independently, they believe man is sovereign, God has given over sovereignty to man, and now God is at the mercy of man and if He's going to do anything we have to release him to do it. Man is sovereign, God has been deposed and man has been put in his place. He is dependent on human faith. He is dependent, most of all, on human words. In fact they go so far as to say, we are little gods and since we are little gods, God has delegated Divine authority to us and just like God spoke and things were created, we now speak and they are created as well. So we have creative power with our words because we are in fact sovereign little gods and God has delegated sovereignty to us.

We talked about the fact that since they have this view of God there is really no need to pray to God. In fact, they say it would be better off to talk to your disease or talk to your wallet then to talk to God because you can speak into existence anything you want with the creative power that you have a reproduction of God Himself. Thus, they have pulled God down and they have elevated man, and we won't go over that in detail anymore then just to review that briefly.

Now secondly, not only doe these health wealth preachers and this movement have the wrong god, but they have wrong Jesus and I want you to listen very carefully to this because it is so important. The Jesus of the word faith, the positive confession, the health wealth movement is not the Jesus of the Bible, the New Testament. Word faith teachers say, "Jesus gave up His deity and took on Satan's nature in order to die for our sins." Let me say that again, they say that "Jesus gave up His deity and took on Satan's nature in order to die for our sins."

Kenneth Copeland, who is a worldwide proponent of this, defends his infamous prophecy that called doubt on the deity of Christ by saying, "Why didn't Jesus openly proclaim Himself as God during His 33 years on earth?" For one single reason, "He hadn't come to earth as God, He'd come as man."

He seems to be saying that Jesus came only as man and not as God. The word faith Jesus often sounds like nothing more then some kind of divinely empowered man. Further quoting from Kenneth Copeland, "Most Christians mistakenly believe that Jesus was able to work wonders, to perform miracles, and to live above sin because He had Divine power that we don't have. Thus, they've never really aspired to live like He lived. They don't realize that when Jesus came to earth He voluntarily gave up that advantage, living His life here, not as God but as a man. He had no innate supernatural powers, He had no ability to perform miracles until after He was anointed by the Holy Spirit as recorded in Luke 3:22," that would be at his baptism. "He ministered as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit."

These statements tell us that Jesus is divested of His deity. Evidently, it matters little to this system whether Jesus was God or man. Further Kenneth Copeland writes, "The spirit of God spoke to me and He said, 'He said a born again man defeated Satan, the first born of many brethren defeated Him, He said you are the very image and the very copy of that one.'" I said, goodness, gracious sakes alive.

I began to see what had gone on in there and I said, well now you don't mean, you couldn't dare mean that I could have done the same thing? God said, "Oh yeah, if you'd known that, had the knowledge of the Word of God that he did you could have done the same thing because you're a reborn man too." Then God said, "The same power that I used to raise Him from the dead I used to raise you from your death and trespasses and sins." I had to have that copy and that pattern to establish judgment on Satan so that I could recreate a child, and a family, and a whole new race of

mankind. Then God said, "You are in His likeness."

Now this is simply saying, to sum it up, Jesus came into the world not as God but as a man. As a man he died and than as a reborn man he lived, and in fact, he wasn't any different then Kenneth Copeland or a lot of other people. That utterance is obviously blasphemous. It is astonishing to me that anyone with the barest knowledge of Biblical truth could accept it as true revelation, but judging from the response to Copeland's ministry and many others who teach the same thing, hundreds of thousands of people believe this.

They are divesting Jesus of His identity. He is the God man and to say that He is anything less then the God man is heresy. Again, I mark for you, note carefully that in cults it is typical to have an aberrant view of Christ. The word faith movement also moves on to talk about His atonement in terms that are utterly unfamiliar to orthodoxy. His sacrificial death on the cross was the primary work our Lord came on earth to accomplish. The atonement is the major emphasis of the whole New Testament and is central to everything we believe and everything we teach as Christians, yet the word faith movement teaches things about the work of Christ that are absolutely aberrant to the point of blasphemy.

Copeland says, "Jesus was the first man to ever be born from sin to righteousness. He was the pattern of a new race of men to come, Glory to God." You know what he did? The very first thing that this reborn man did, see you have to realize that he died, you have to realize that he went into the pit of hell as a mortal man made sin, but he didn't stay there. Thank God he was reborn in the pit of hell.

Further he says, "The righteousness of God was made to be sin. He accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit and at the moment that He did so he cried, My God, My God why has thou forsaken me?" You don't know what happened at the cross, why do you think Moses, upon the instruction of God raised a serpent up on that pole instead of a lamb? That used to bug me.

I said, why in the world have you got to put that snake up there, the sign of Satan, why didn't you put a lamb on that pole? The Lord said, "Because it was the sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross." He said, "I accepted in My own spirit, spiritual death, and the light was turned off." Later in that same message Copeland adds, "The spirit of Jesus accepting that sin and making it to be sin, He separated from His God and in that moment He is a mortal man, capable of failure, capable of death. Not only that he's fixing to be ushered into the jaws of hell, and if Satan is capable of overpowering Him there he'll win the universe and mankind is doomed. Don't get the idea that Jesus was incapable of failure, because if He had been it would have been illegal."

What in the world kind of double talk is this? The idea that Jesus is man taking on the nature of Satan, going to hell because He's thrown into the pit of hell as a sinner, waiting to be reborn an entering into some kind of mortal combat with Satan and the winner gets the universe, all of that is

absolutely foreign to what the New Testament teaches about the atoning work of the God man. In fact, Copeland has embraced a heresy known as the ransom theory of the atonement also, that is an old heresy that basically said God has been held up by Satan and until somebody pays Satan a ransom he is not going to let Jesus go, so God was stuck and he had to pay the ransom price for salvation to Satan. Christ's death was that ransom paid to Satan to settle the legal claim the devil had on the human race because of Adam's sin.

That view, by the way, contradicts the clear teaching that Christ's death was a sacrifice offered to God not to Satan, read Ephesians 5:2. Furthermore, Copeland and the word faith teachers move outside of orthodoxy and teach that Christ died spiritually. Now we sometimes say that Christ was separated from the Father on the cross and sometimes we say that as a kind of spiritual death, but the reality of it is that Christ did not die spiritually in the sense that His Divine spirit went out of existence. It is error to teach that Christ's spirit ceased to exist, the light was turned off, He called it. Or that He was somehow separated from God and became in an instant a mortal man and worse took on the nature of Satan, was dragged into hell and tormented for three days and three nights.

Fred Price, who follows up the same kind teaching in a news letter, wrote this, "Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case the two thieves could have paid your price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God. Satan and all the demons of hell thought that they had Him bound and they threw a net over Jesus and they dragged Him down to the very pit of hell itself to serve our sentence".

Two thieves could have paid that price? Could a zillion thieves on a zillion crosses have paid the price of our sin? Obviously not; Jesus deity and His sinlessness, as the only qualified Lamb of God made Him the only person who could have suffered for our sins. To say it could have been anybody is absolutely ridiculous. You were redeemed with not perishable things, not like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with the precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and spot, the Lamb Christ, the blood His blood.

They're confused about who Christ is. They don't know whether He's God or whether He's man and they're confused about what happened on the cross, the meaning of the atonement. Copeland also preaches an aberrant view similar to that, I noted from Fred Price quoting Copeland, "Jesus had to go through that same spiritual death in order to pay the price. Now it wasn't the physical death on the cross that paid the price for sins because if it had been any Prophet of God that had died for the last couple of thousand years before that could have paid the price." It wasn't the physical death, anybody could do that. What they're teaching is that Jesus' death on the cross didn't save us, what happened was He went into hell and that's where He won our salvation but that is not what the Scripture says and that's not what Jesus meant when he said, "It is," what? "Finished."

Now behind these very popular teachings of these two men is the teaching of Kenneth Hagan. Kenneth Hagan says, "Jesus tasted death, spiritual death for every man. See, sin is more then a physical act it's a spiritual act and so he became what we were that we might become what He is, praise God, and so therefore His spirit was separated from God." Why did he need to begotten or born? Because He became like we were, separated from God, because he tasted spiritual death for every man and His spirit in every man went to hell in my place, can't you see that?

Physical death wouldn't remove your sins. He tasted death for every man; he's talking about tasting spiritual death. Jesus is the first person that was ever born again. Why did His spirit need to be born again? Because it was estranged from God; he has Jesus in a prolonged condition of ceasing to be God and being man alienated from God in hell, trying to get his act together in order that he can be reborn. The word faith movement has concocted this strange theology that makes sinners God's and makes the sinless Son of God into a sinner.

Such teaching is utterly unbiblical, it demeans our Lord, it demeans His work, as it is obvious to anyone. Furthermore, the atonement did not take place in hell; it was completed on the cross when Jesus said, "It is finished," recorded in John 19:30. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "That Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross," not in hell. Colossians 2:13-14 says, "He cancelled the debt of our sin and He has taken it out of the way having nailed it to the cross." Ephesians 1:7 says, "We have redemption through His blood." Blood here refers to His physical death, the actual shedding of His blood on the cross and there is our forgiveness.

Jesus promised the repentant thief, “Today you'll be with Me.” Where? “Paradise.” He wasn't in hell for three days. He served notice to hell that the powers of evil were defeated. The Bible knows nothing of the kind of atonement that exists in this word faith teaching. The Bible knows nothing about the kind of Jesus they're talking about either. They have the wrong god and the wrong Jesus. Thirdly, they have the wrong faith, they have the wrong faith.

This is a fascinating and very central part of their system. Let me help you to understand this. They teach that faith is some kind of law, some kind of inviolable, immutable, unchanging, impersonal law that it's like gravity. That anybody who gets involved with it gets the same results. I mean you could take ten people up to the top of a building and you could have three of them that understood the law of gravity, three of them that knew nothing of the law of gravity, and three of them that didn't believe the law of gravity exists, and one person who was deaf, dumb and blind, and didn't know anything. If they all jumped they'd all go down; why? Because the law of gravity works no matter what you believe. The law of gravity is fixed. It's not a question of faith; it's not a question of anything. You jump it you go down.

They take that same concept, like the law of gravity and move it into the spiritual dimension and say faith is like that. It doesn't matter who you are, if you just enact the law of faith it'll work. Pat

Robertson, for example, was asked if the laws of the kingdom work even for non-Christians. This is what he wrote in his book called, "Answers to 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions," he wrote, "Yes, these are not just Christian and Jewish principles any more then the law of gravity is Christian and Jewish."

The laws of God work for anybody who will follow them. The principles of the Kingdom apply to all of creation. What the law of faith is all about is if you believe you can have something, you'll get it. If you believe you're going to get well, you'll get well. If you believe you're going to get money, you'll get money. If you believe you're going to get married, you'll married because you're enacting a law and it's an immutable, inviolable law that works for anybody anytime, it's impersonal, it's fixed.

What the error of this is simply stated, is that this puts confidence in the nature of faith rather then in the object of faith. It assumes that there's something inherent in believing that enacts something when it isn't true at all. It is the not the nature of faith that is effective, it is the object of faith. It is my faith in God that gets results not my faith in faith.

There used to be a song when I was kid and it was as pretty popular one, I Believe, do you remember that song? I believe for every drop of rain that falls a flower grows, and it went on, I believe, I believe and that was the whole sentence, I believe and you kept wanting to say you believe what? You believe whom? You believe how? No, I believe; and sometimes you'll hear people, secular people interviewed, and they'd say well I'm a person with real faith.

I'm really a believing person. Oh good, well what do you believe? Oh I just believe in believing, good. You see, this is the same kind of secular concept taken over into this movement that says, if you apply the law of faith, if you just sort of screw up your faith and say, I believe you'll make it materialize. If you can just eliminate doubt and eliminate all negative thought and just thing super positive and really believe hard, I don't know how hard you have to believe, but harder then most people are able to believe obviously. There are some people who get rich in this movement and you know who they are. Most of the people stay right where they are just as poor and unhealthy as they were before they learned this stuff.

Faith, according to word faith doctrine is not submissive trust in God. It is not belief in revealed revelation in the Scripture, faith is a formula by which you manipulate the universe, by which you manipulate things. Capps, Charles Capps says, "Words governed by spiritual law becomes spiritual forces working for you." Idle words work against you, the spirit world is controlled by the Word of God. The natural world is to be controlled by man speaking God's words. So if you just believe and say it with your mouth you'll make it happen, that's your creative power again.

As the name word faith implies, this movement teaches that faith is a matter of what we say more then in whom we trust, or what truths we embrace and affirm in our hearts. A favorite expression in

the word faith movement is positive confession, have you heard that? Positive confession; it refers to the word faith teaching that your words will create, they have creative power. They say what you say you create, so if you believe it strongly enough to speak it you'll create it, you'll create your riches, you'll create your health, you'll get out of your wheelchair, it determines everything that happens to you they say.

Your confessions based upon your faith in faith will bring things to pass and God has to act because it's a law whether you're Christian, Jewish, or non-Christian it's going to work. Kenneth Hagan writes, "You can have what you say, you can write your own ticket with God, and the first step in writing your own ticket with God is say it, say it." What they're trying to do is get you to say it, and say it, and say it, and say it until you finally convince yourself you believe it and than supposedly once your saying it becomes believing it you will create it.

He later says, does Kenneth Hagan, if you talk about your trials, your difficulties, your lack of faith, your lack of money, your faith will shrivel and dry up. But bless God if you talk about the Word of God, your lovely Heavenly Father and what He can do your faith will grow by leaps and bounds, so you just have to talk about it, talk about it.

In his little booklet called, "How to Write Your Own Ticket with God," Hagan's supposedly inspired four point sermon is say it, do it, receive it, and tell it. Hagan claims Jesus told him if anybody anywhere will take these steps or put these four principles into operation he will always have whatever he wants from Me or the God the Father; write your own ticket.

The idea of course has bred superstition, terrible disappointment, tragic things. Magical incantations is all they are, it's a form of voodoo, it has no value beyond that. Charles Capps warns against the dangers of speaking negative confession. He says, we've programmed our vocabulary with the devil's language. We've brought sickness sand disease into our vocabulary and even death, the main words so many people use to express themselves is death. The word death; I'm just dying to do that. They'll say I'm going to die if I don't. That just tickled me to death. Now that my friend is perverse speech, that's contrary to God's word. Death is of the devil, we need not buddy up with death, all men are going to die soon enough, so don't start buddying up to it now. In other words, you don't want to say those words because it might happen, that's how powerful you are. You could kill yourselves.

Positive confession, listen would rule out the confession of sin wouldn't it? Word faith books on prayer, word faith books on spiritual growth are utterly lacking in any teaching about confessing sin. Of course they undermine the crucial teaching of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In fact, positive confession encourages people to absolutely ignore their sins and deny their reality, doesn't it? You don't want to mention anything negative. It has produced multitudes of people who perpetually wear these emotionless smiles out of fear. Fear that a negative confession might bring them bad fortune and so they may be

piling up sin which is never, ever dealt with.

This is like the Hindu view of karma or some pagan concept of bad luck. I don't want to say that because it might bring me back luck. Hagan admits he feels that way himself; I'm quoting him, "I wouldn't tell anybody if I had a doubt thought or a fear thought." He won't say a sin thought, or a sin, but he says, "I wouldn't accept it. I wouldn't tell somebody if the thought came to me and you know the devil can put all kinds of thoughts in your mind, we're a product of words." Did you ever stop to think the Bible teaches that there's a health and healing in your tongue? So he says, "You must never say things that are negative." I never talk of sickness, I don't believe in sickness, I talk health, I believe in healing, I believe in health, I never talk sickness, I never talk disease. He' just talking sickness and talking disease; I talk healing, I never talk failure, I don't believe in failure, I believe in success, I never talk defeat, I don't believe in defeat. I believe in winning, Halleluiah to Jesus!

Now they won't say the word sin, they won't say we never talk sin, but they never talk sin. That perspective is rife with obvious problems, Bruce Barron tells of one word faith church where the pastor wrote sheepishly to instruct his congregation on a ticklish concern, some of the church members he had were spreading contagious diseases among the churches little ones by bringing their sick babies to the nursery. Against the nursery's volunteers protests these parents were positively confessing that their children were well. This is true. Since the parents had claimed their healing there was nothing to worry about. They may have been dismissing those persistent whines and coughs as lying symptoms, but those lying symptoms proved to be contagious and only an announcement from the pulpit could succeed in putting an end to the problem; foolish.

Word faith, denial of diseases and problems as lying symptoms robs believers of an opportunity to minister with compassion and understanding to suffering people. Would you like to be in a word faith church and have the gift of showing mercy, and try to find somebody who would admit they needed it? You might look a long time because everybody would be running around saying, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm well, I'm whole, I'm healed, I'm rich.

How are going to help somebody when nobody's allowed to talk about anything? How can you help someone whose symptoms you believe are lies from Satan? Or worse, the result of sinful, unbelief, that anytime somebody's sick it's because they're a sinful unbeliever. Consequently, many word faith devotees tend to be unfeeling, callous, indifferent even to the point of being coarse and abrasive toward people they assume don't have enough faith to claim a healing.

Bruce Barron tells of a pastor and his wife unable to bear children who were told by a member of their church that they needed to confess a pregnancy and display their faith by purchasing a baby stroller and walking down the street with it. Now that is pretty callous, don't you think?

A few years ago I received a heart rending letter from a dear woman who was deceived by positive confession theology, believed God wanted her to write everyone she knew with a baby announcement for the child she was hoping to conceive. She was incapable of having children but she sent out all these baby announcements. Months later she had to write to everyone again to explain the expected faith baby didn't come. She was quick to add however that she was still claiming a pregnancy by faith. She was fearful that someone might take her second letter as a negative confession.

Just the normal hurts and heartaches of life you can't even deal with. Kenneth Hagan seems callous even about the death of his own sister from lingering cancer. He writes, "My sister got down to 79 pounds. The Lord kept telling me that she was going to die. I kept asking the Lord why I couldn't change the outcome. He told me she had had five years in which she could have studied the word and built up her faith, but she was saved but she hadn't done it. He told me she was going to die and she did. This is a sad example but it's true."

That's pretty callous isn't it? Word faith theology makes the healer a hero when miraculous cheers are claimed but always blames the seeker for lack of faith when the healing doesn't happen. Hagan describes an incident when he was attempting to heal an arthritic woman; her disease had crippled her so badly that she was unable to walk. He became frustrated at her unwillingness to let go of her wheelchair. I pointed my finger at her and said, "Sister you don't have an ounce of faith, do you?" Without thinking she blurted out, "No Brother Hagan I don't. I don't believe I'll ever be healed. I'll go to my grave from this chair. She said it, and she did it, and we weren't to blame."

Remember positive confession teaches people that their words are determinative. God is not the object of their faith and God is not the force in their life. Word faith devotees learn to put their faith in their own words. Hagan bluntly says, "Faith in their own faith." He has a book titled, "Having Faith In Your Faith." What this is is idolatry; this is having faith in you which makes you what? God.

Try to follow his logic as he attempts to substantiate this idea. Here's what he writes, "Did you ever stop to think about having faith in your own faith? Evidently God had faith in His faith because He spoke the words of faith and they came to pass. Evidently Jesus had faith in His faith because he spoke to the fig tree and what He said came to pass. In other words having faith in your words is having faith in your faith. That's what you've got to learn to do to get things from God, have faith in your faith. It would help you to get faith down in your spirit and say out loud, faith in my faith. Keep saying it until it registers in your heart. I know it sounds strange when you first say it, your mind almost rebels against it, but we're not talking about your head, we're talking about faith in your heart."

As Jesus said, I shall not doubt in His heart." What is that? Once again you'll notice that he manages to depreciate the Father and the Son by saying, "God has faith and Christ has faith." Can we accurately speak of the faith of an omnission sovereign God? He turns faith moreover into some kind

of magical formula and our words into an abracadabra by which we get things from God like rubbing a magic lamp.

There's no biblical basis for any of these ideas about faith. The only appropriate objects of our faith our God and His infallible Word, His Son, and His spirit. Nevertheless, these word faith believers view their positive confessions as an incantation by which they conjure up whatever they want. Kenneth Hagan says, "Believe it in your heart, say it with your mouth, that's the principal of faith and you can have what you say."

Such teachings have led many people into gross materialism. I'll be real honest with you; I personally believe that in many of the cases of these leaders this is simply a theology developed to support their materialism, that's all. John Avanzini, one of the lesser known word faith teachers, spent an evening on Trinity Broadcasting Network arguing that Jesus was actually rich. He pointed to Judas role as treasurer and said, "You got to handle lots of money to need a treasurer."

More recently as a guest on Kenneth Copeland's broadcast, Avanzini said he believes Scripture teaches that Jesus had a big house and wore designer clothes. All of that is touted as justification for the word faith teacher's lavish lifestyle and materialistic bent.

Robert Tilton goes a step further, he said this, "Being poor is a sin." I'd hate to take that message to the Soviet Union and give that to the church. He said, "My God's rich and He's trying to show you how to draw out of your heavenly account that Jesus bought and paid for and purchased for you at Calvary. Tilton says, new house, new car, that's chicken feed, that's nothing compared to what God wants to do for you.

How was this cargo to be obtained? Well Tilton suggested his followers make a vow of faith in the form of a gift to his ministry. This is what he says, "I like a $1,000 vow because I don't like halfhearted people lukewarm, just well I'll do a little, I like a $1,000 vow of faith. I'm not talking to you that's got it, you that's got it don't pay a bit of attention to me, I'm talking to you that don't have it and I'm showing you how you can get it. Yes the Lord's work gets a portion of it but you get the biggest portion, you get the biggest blessing, I'm trying to talk you out of that dump you're in. I'm trying to talk you into a decent car. I'm trying to help you. Quit cursing me, quit cursing me. God what will pull this blessing from you? I am a blessing. I have been blessed supernaturally by God. I bring a blessing to you this day and I know it and my responsibility is to take it to you."

Then Tilton encourages his listeners to pray the prayer of faith, not one of those Lord if it be thy will; I know what the will of God is when it concerns healing and prosperity and Divine direction. I don't have to pray a prayer of doubt and unbelief. In other words, Robert Tilton wants you to make a $1,000 dollar vow of faith to his ministry, especially if you can't afford it.

He doesn't want you to pray for God's will on the matter, after all, you can demand what you want and God must give it to you. What's the difference what God's will is? Set your vow at a $1,000, demand that God provide the money, send it to Him, and wait to get rich. As I said, some people are getting rich and a lot of people are a $1,000 poorer.

Richard Roberts echoing his father's seed faith concept urged viewers to sow a seed on your MasterCard, your Visa, or your American Express and than when you do expect God to open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing.

Oral Roberts once mailed out plastic bags full of holy water from the River of Life Fountain at ORU. To demonstrate how to use the stuff he poured a bag of it over his own wallet on his television program while standing knee deep in the fountain and that's supposed to be the key to getting your cargo delivered.

Why do so many believers, supposed believers, try this stuff and don't get rich? Fred Price explains, "If you've got one dollar of faith and you ask for a $10,000 item, it ain't going to work, it won't work." Jesus said, "According to your faith not according to God's will for you." In his own good time if it's according to His will, if He can work it into his busy schedule." See him mocking God and mocking the concept of God's will. He said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Now I may want a Rolls Royce and don't have but bicycle faith, guess what I'm going to get? A bicycle." But guess what he's got?

Thus, God's ability to bless us supposedly hangs on our faith. Now note that both Price and Tilton recoil from the idea of praying, "If it be they will," but that's exactly what the Bible teaches. This is the confidence, 1 John 5:14, "Which we have before Him that if we ask anything," what? "According to His will He hears us." Hagan goes so far as to claim that no such truth is taught in the New Testament, "Because we didn't understand what Jesus said and because we've been religiously brainwashed instead of New Testament taught, we water down the promises of God and tacked on something that Jesus didn't say and added on something else to it. Well He will all right if it's His will but it might not be His will," people have said and yet you don't find that kind of talk in the New Testament. It's in mine.

Hagan has also written, "It is unscriptural to pray if it is the will of God." When you put an “if” in your prayer you're praying in doubt. Romans 8:27 tells us "That even the Holy Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Far from stressing the love of the importance of wealth, the Bible warns against pursuing it, doesn't it? Believers, especially leaders in the church are to be free from the love of money. The love of money leads to all kinds of evil. “Beware,” Jesus warned, “and be on your guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has abundance does his life consist of his possessions," Luke 12:15.

In sharp contrast to the word faith gospel's emphasis on gaining money and possessions in this life Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves," what? "Treasures on earth." He also said in Matthew 6:24, "You can't serve God and money." This is really not Christianity; this is not New Testament theology. The concept that the universe, God, is governed by some impersonal spiritual law is not Biblical. It is a denial of God's sovereignty and God's providence. It is really a form of deism if a somewhat ignorant one. Furthermore, the notion that we can use words mystically and magically to control reality is far removed from the Biblical pattern of faith and believe me has more in common with Christian Science then Christianity.

Most word faith teachers vehemently deny that their teachings have anything to do with Christian Science or other metaphysical cults but they do. I don't know how you can distinguish between the two. Now I want to say something and I want you to listen to it. The word faith movement, Kenneth Hagan, Kenneth Copeland, Fred Price, Charles Capps, Robert Tilton, et al., and it goes on and on from there, can be traced all the way back. Every major figure in the movement was mentored by Kenneth Hagan or one of his close disciples. Every doctrinal distinctive of the movement is traceable to Kenneth Hagan who is in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

There's a book called, "The Different Gospel," by D.R. McConnell and one of the things that's very fascinating in that is that McConnell points out that Kenneth Hagan gleaned these teachings from the writings of a faith evangelist named E.W. Kenyon. In fact, I quoted earlier to you that Kenneth Hagan said he got all of this from the Lord; the truth is that he plagiarized much of it. In fact, McConnell states that Hagan plagiarized the writings of a Christian Missionary Alliance Minister named John A. MacMillan. A man named W.R. Scott gives solid evidence that these accusations are true as well. Specifically it is incontrovertible that Hagan lifted at least three-quarters of his book, "The Authority of the Believer," verbatim from MacMillan's magazine article of the same title.

Scott also documents Hagan's plagiarism of Finis Jennings Dake who wrote a very interesting study bible called, The Dake Study Bible. In other words, huge sections of the writings of Hagan had plagiarized from other sources. He not only borrowed ideas from Kenyon, but McConnell includes several pages of column by column text that proves beyond question that Hagan repeatedly plagiarized long sections of the writings of E.W. Kenyon word for word, for word, for word, for word.

So there's a track, there's a kind of historical track; Kenyon's roots were in the metaphysical cults. He was a faith healer, not in the Pentecostal tradition but in the sense of Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science. He attended a college that specialized in training lectures for the metaphysical science cults and he imported and adapted into his system most of the essential ideas these cults propagated and Hagan absorbed them from E.W. Kenyon, in many cases word for word.

Truth of it is, McConnell's book is a devastating expose, the book entitled, "A Different Gospel," published by Peabody in 1988. It is a devastating expose of the word faith movement. Demonstrates irrefutably that word faith teachers owe their ancestry to groups like Christian Science, Swedenborgianism, Theosophy, Science of Mind, and New Thought, not classical Pentecostalism. It isn't classical Pentecostalism, it really is not Christianity at its core, it is corrupt, it is cultish, not Christian. It is a mongrel system; it is a blend of mysticism, dualism, and neo-Gnosticism that borrows from the metaphysical cults. Its perverse teachings are causing untold harm to the Christian church as you obviously know.

It is, I believe, in the words of Peter a destructive, or damnable heresy. Despite what word faith teachers say, God is not just a source of cargo is He? We are His servants, not He ours. He has called us to live lives of loving service and worship, not God like supremacy. He blesses us but not always materially. In no way can we write our own ticket and expect Him to follow the script. The life of a Christian is a life spent in pursuit of God's will, not a life in which God is chasing around trying to fulfill our will.

No one who rejects that fundamental concept of the relationship to the believer, between the believer and the true God, the true Christ, and true faith can genuinely be called Christian. Well, you can see the seriousness of this, right? If you have the wrong God and the wrong Jesus, and the wrong faith, it's hard to have the right salvation, if not impossible.

In conclusion, there are a few things I need to say, lest I be misunderstood. We've covered a lot of things, and I want to wrap it up and I want you to listen very carefully because I do not want to be misunderstood. I know many charismatics who are committed, consistent, honorable believers devoted to the Word of God. Many Pentecostals are godly people; numerous charismatic churches and individual Pentecostal charismatic believers reject many of the errors which I have highlighted in this series.

We would find many Pentecostals, many Pentecostal charismatic churches and believers who would agree with our assessment of many of these movements and I am not attempting to color all these people the same color. Within the Pentecostal charismatic movement there is everything from Evangelical orthodoxy all the way over to rank heresy and I'm grateful that some in the Pentecostal tradition have the courage to confront error in their movement and call all charismatics to a Biblical perspective and I wish more of them would do that.

I'm grateful for those who will speak out against these evil things. One of the pamphlets that first alerted me to the terrible, terrible teaching in the health wealth movement was written by Chuck Smith, pastor of Calvary Chapel, a straight forward critique of charismatic extremism. There are many like him who have taken their stand and I thank God for their courage and their desire to be Biblical.

And I don't want for any moment for people to think that I don't believe there are such people in that Pentecostal tradition because in fact there are. But listen carefully; I also believe that the seeds of these errors that they wish to fight are sometimes inherent in the very doctrines that they believe. If you believe that the baptism of the spirit is subsequent to and separate from salvation, you have now created two classes of believers. If you believe in mystical experience, transcendent esoteric kinds of supernatural things, then what you will do is depreciate study, spiritual discipline, and the means of grace by which you grow.

If you exalt feeling you will denigrate reason and open the mind and the spirit, the powers that people cannot understand or deal with. And as long as these kinds of things lie at the core of Pentecostal tradition, the potential for disaster is there, and if you believe that God is still giving revelation of any kind, the lid is off. This message is not only a statement of truth to people who already believe it, but an appeal to my charismatic friends to examine what they believe, as well as an appeal that non-charismatics to see the difference and to see that the differences are not inconsequential.

Now the final thought; many people who listen to these tapes will be concerned about its effect on the unity of the body of Christ. I want you to know something; I have no desire to place a gulf between charismatic and non-charismatic believers. I have no desire to make a rift between those segments of the church. May I say to you that rift is already there and the only way that you can avoid its reality is just flatly deny it or refuse to recognize it.

My concern is to call the church to unity around the truth. Believe me; the most serious damage done to the church by the charismatic movement has been precisely in the matter of unity. Who knows how many thousands of churches have split over these issues. The number would stagger us all. Charismatic doctrine in itself is schismatic because it erects a fence between the common ordinary believer and those who have leaped up to the higher levels, thus the partition between charismatics and non-charismatics was actually put in place by the charismatic system itself.

And there's a second tendency that compounds the problem and that is the disposition of many charismatics, who in the name of unity are willing to embrace everyone and anyone, even it means overlooking doctrine. So on the one hand, if you say you don't believe what they believe they'll create a schism, but on the other hand, if you'll tolerate what they believe they'll accept you no matter what you believe. Do you understand that?

They have unwittingly succeeded in becoming the kind of worldwide ecumenical force that many liberals envision the world council churches would become. They have become the ecumenical movement of the world. The liberals couldn't pull it off, charismatics are doing it, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Christians, Protestants, and all kinds of sexisms, schisms, are uniting under the charismatic banner.

Far from being a positive corollary to the movement's growth, this ecumenical influence may well prove to be the most potentially disastrous, long term effect of the charismatic phenomenon. It is disastrous because as long as you'll tolerate what they do they'll take you in.

One writer pointed out the inconsistency of the charismatic movements marriage with ecumenism, listen to this, this is Thomas Edgar, "Is it not inconsistent that a movement which claims to be in direct contact with the Holy Spirit to have all the gifts such as prophecy, apostleship, and the word of knowledge, to communicate directly with God by tongue speaking and other means can at the same time include Roman Catholics, conservative and liberal Protestants, amillennialists, pre-millennialists, Calvinists, Armenians, those who deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible, and those who reject Christ's vicarious atonement on the cross.

It's a fair question. If they've got all this revelation, certainly they ought to be able to sort that group out. Further, Thomas Edgar writes, "Apparently the Holy Spirit is not concerned with communicating any information to correct all these differences, many of which are crucial and some of which are incorrect. All this direct communication with the spirit has apparently done nothing to correct even basic errors. It has not produced unity among charismatics regarding the nature and purpose of many of the gifts. This movement has solved no theological issue, produced no advance in Biblical knowledge, has not produced more spiritual Christians with such an effusion of the genuine spirit of God produced so little."

Wouldn't you assume that if this movement was really feeling the full power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit would be delivering them some sound doctrine? Gordon Clark has also written about the dangers of charismatic ecumenism, he quoted an article from a charismatic magazine celebrating the in roads Pentecostalism is making into Catholicism, and than he said this, this is Gordon Clark, "Several things immediately strike any reader who is not asleep, first the tongues experience is tremendously important. It is not true to say that nothing else matters, it nonetheless seems true to say that nothing else matters very much. Speaking in tongues is the chief mark of a dedicated Christian. The clear implication that the worship of the Virgin Mary is unobjectionable if one speaks in tongues. There is little point in justification by faith alone, one can accept merit from the treasury of the saints, transubstantiation can be acknowledged if only one speaks in tongues. Still more fundamental, one can place tradition on a level with Scripture, even assert new revelations from God, if only one speaks in tongues. The Pentecostal minister," mentioned in the article in question, "Note well said, there has been no attempt to proselyte Roman Catholics. In other words, Romanism is acceptable if only one speaks in tongues."

You see the point is charismatic ecumenism is steadily eroding the identity of Biblical Christianity. In Asia, shocking new charismatic cults are springing up, blending Buddhism, Powism, confusionism and other teachings with western charismaticism. The charismatic movement as a whole is entirely

unequipped to defend against such influences, how can they confront errant groups, even ones that are overtly heathen?

Listen to this, for in the charismatic movement, unity is a question of shared religious experience, not doctrine. If doctrine doesn’t matter then why not embrace Buddhist charismatics, and that is exactly what is happening. So while charismatic doctrine tends to be divisive among groups that are orthodox, it is not divisive among groups that are heterodox. They're building bridges to the false religions and cutting off the true.

Well, it's a serious issue and we need to know as we have been learning what the Word of God has to say. The only appropriate response to all of this, very simple, is a return to this book, right? Everything is tested by this. The sad truth is the legacy of the charismatic movement has been chaos and doctrinal confusion. Their approach to spirituality is unsound and fraught with potential disillusionment and some of the people in the movement are in despair, disappointed, defeated, and some of them are desperate. The spiritual good life they hear about all the time never seems to happen and they're looking for the key to real Christian life and I would encourage you in love to take on the responsibility graciously to evangelize these people, and if in fact they do know Christ, show them the true path to spiritual blessing.

Father, we thank You for this wonderful time we've shared and thank You for the clarity with which Your word speaks to matters such as this. For those who love Christ, who are our brothers and sisters in this movement we pray God show them the truth that they might find the path of true spirituality and gain victory over the flesh and true joy and blessing. For those in the movement who under the illusion that they're saved when in fact they're not, may they see the true God, the true Christ and exercise true faith, and God we pray somehow you would silence those who speak error and give voice to those who speak the truth. To this end we pray that You might be glorified, the Savior's name, Amen.

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