

The path to Prosperity – Step one HONOUR

The term “prosperity teaching” or “the prosperity gospel” is one of the most misunderstood and misused terms in today’s language. I believe biblical prosperity is scriptural, and it is taught throughout the Bible. God’s Word declares: **“Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers”** (3 John 2). Prosperity is not an accident but the result of God’s Word being applied in your life. Poverty comes when we ignore the Word of God. Proverbs 13:18 declares, **“Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honoured.”**

When we obey the Lord’s Word, prosperity will immediately become ours for the rest of our lives: **“If they obey and serve Him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment.”** (Job 36:11). The Word of God clearly states in Proverbs 15:6 that in the house of the righteous is great treasure and not much poverty. Poverty doesn’t belong to the righteous; it belongs to those who rebel against God. Abundance and blessings are meant for us!

Being in debt is not God’s will for you. In fact, it’s bondage: **“The rich rule over the poor and the borrower is a slave to the lender”** (Proverbs 22:7). The Lord wants to deliver His people from all bondage and all debt. However, it will only come your way as you seek God and obey His Word. You can experience the liberty that comes from being debt free. Why? Because it is God’s will for you! **“I love those who love Me, and those who seek Me find Me. For with Me are riches and honour, enduring wealth and prosperity... bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love Me and making their treasuries full”** (Proverbs 8:17-18, 21).

God’s Word is clear about the fact that He takes pleasure in our prosperity! He rejoices when we prosper: **Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favour My righteous cause; and let them say continually, “Let the Lord be magnified, who takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant”** (Psalm 35:27). If God Himself takes pleasure in our prosperity, then how come other believers can’t do the same? Why has the prosperity message been so contentious to so many?

According to ancient philosophers, **“Prosperity is created by the behaviour of the human being”**. Outside factors are secondary factors to this, and “honour” is fundamental to such behaviour. Honour can cause you to prosper, but it will also prolong your life: **“Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you”** (Deuteronomy 5:16)

Romans 13:7 tells us to **“Render honour to whom honour is due.”** Jesus said, **“If I honour myself, My honour is nothing. It is My Father who honours Me...”** (John 8:54) However, in verse 49 He says, **“I honour My Father.”** Notice how the Godhead renders honour where honour’s due. This tells me that “giving honour” is a vital component of our Christian walk. Honour an essential part of living life as godly men, women and children. And here is something we can all rejoice in, Jesus said, **“If anyone serves Me, him my Father will honour”** (John 12:26). The Father bestows honour upon any person who chooses to serve Christ.

In connection with true **honour**, God alone is worthy to receive adoration, adulation and praise. To honour Him is to worship Him! To honour God is to give Him reverence and homage, for God alone is worthy of our highest honour – **1 Corinthians 16:27**. But what exactly is honour? Honour may be defined as the humble recognition by word or sign of another’s worth or station. Therefore, you may show honour to another person by giving him his title, yielding to him, or giving him his rightful place. Yet honouring God is very different. To **honour** God is;

- [1] To show respect or great esteem for Him
- [2] To lift Him up or elevate Him
- [3] To bestow absolute dignity upon Him
- [4] To fix supreme value upon Him
- [5] To glorify His holy Name
- [6] To adore Him
- [7] To love Him with all your heart

Honouring God as an act of genuine worship is probably much easier to comprehend (and apply) than **“rendering honour where honour is due”** to everyone around you. Romans 12: 10 tells us that in order to behave like genuine believers **honour** must be given **“one to another”** – instead of claiming it for ourselves. Therefore, once honour is given to God, it can’t be kept; it must be distributed to others.

In this regard, let's look at what's expected of us (in line with God's word), in order for us to see whether honour is 'actually' being given *where honour is due*. For if it isn't, unnecessary debt is probably being accumulated.

(1) **Honour always recognises value.** What you place value on you will regard, respect and hold in great esteem. The question is.... *"What value have you placed upon your husband, your wife, your children or your loved ones?"* Do you really regard them as being valuable and precious, or do other things in your life take preference? Consider this, *"what you neglect you dishonour!"* Someone once said, *"Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words, but gratitude is shown in acts."*

(2) **Honour is always preceded by humility.** Proverbs 15:33, *"And before honour is humility."* Giving honour requires you to overcome your pride because it is preceded by humility. You can never give honour to anyone if you are seeking honour for yourself. Benjamin Franklin said, *"To be humble to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness."*

(3) **Honour always involves generosity.** The degree to which you 'give' expresses the degree to which you 'value'. It is an indication of the sincere worth you hold in your heart. Liberality toward one another is an act of love. Honour is about being a blessing to those around you, and it is never self-indulgent. The Bible places honour beside wealth and riches! Winston Churchill said, *"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."*

(4) **Honour is always active.** Honour will not just verbalise or vocalise, it will express itself in deed and behaviour – it will do! Respect is passive – honour is active. Respect is based on how you feel but honour is based on how others feel. Respect attaches itself to the norm (it does and says what is expected), but honour goes beyond the norm - it does and says the unexpected. Respect can be begrudging, yet honour is transparent and always truthful. There is a Proverb that says, *"A hundred years cannot repair a moment's loss of honour."*

(5) **Honour is always heartfelt.** Honour is a true reflection of what is held in the heart. Like adoration honour is an expression of your appreciation. Do you appreciate someone enough to honour and respect them? I heard someone once say, *"Feeling appreciated is one of the most important needs that people have. When you share with someone your appreciation and gratitude, they will never forget you. Appreciation will return to you many times."*

(6) **Honour is always founded and grounded in love.** Honour, as with love, is without hypocrisy. Honour seeks what is right, trustworthy and praise-worthy. It shuns evil and clings to what is good. Honour does not find faults, it does not criticise or bad-mouth. It does not slander or bring false accusation. Honour sees value and worth in every person. It seeks to encourage and edify. Honour always lifts up or elevates it never tears down. If love never fails, then honour never ceases to encourage. Shakespeare said, *"Love sought is good, but given unsought, is better."*

(7) **Honour always operates in integrity.** Integrity is regarded as the quality of having an intuitive sense of honesty and truthfulness in regard to the motivations for one's actions. Integrity is the opposite of hypocrisy in that it regards personal consistency and transparency as a virtue. Integrity is doing the right thing even if no one is watching. Someone once said, *"It's not what we eat but what we digest that makes us strong; not what we gain but what we save that makes us rich; not what we read but what we remember that makes us learned; and not what we profess but what we practice that gives us integrity."*

Having looked at this list, can you truly say that you have given honour where honour is due? Or, are you actually indebted to those around you – to those in authority over you? 1 Timothy 5:17 says, ***"Let those who rule well over you be counted worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."***

Don't give honour when honour is overdue! Start rectifying matters right now, purpose to change your attitude and get your priorities right. There are many benefits to those who give honour "where honour is due." And since the family is the key component to church and society, appropriate relationships must be maintained. Honouring each other within the family circle is a testimony to the world and it will cause prosperity to flourish. This is a vital key to living the abundant life Jesus secured for you. Remember, giving "honour where honour is due" is a trustworthy mechanism for **true prosperity** – in all matters of life! So take a step down the path of prosperity by giving honour to someone every day.