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## **The Generosity Gospel - Asher Intrater**

Sometimes I am asked if I believe in the "Prosperity" gospel. What I believe in is the "Generosity" gospel. There is a divine revelation of God's desire to bless His people in every way, including financially. The issue of blessing can be seen at the first covenant of God with Abraham:

**Genesis 12:2 - I will bless you.**

**Genesis 12:3 - In you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**

We are blessed so that we can be a blessing to others. The issue here is the intention of the heart. We desire to be blessed IN ORDER TO bless others. Every blessing of God also contains its own temptation and the moral test to steward it properly. Solomon was blessed financially, but in the end, he was lured away from the Lord.

[Notice that in this passage the financial blessing of God is connected to the restoration of Israel (**Genesis 12:1 - "Go to a land which I will show you."**) and to world evangelism (**verse 3 - "All the families of the earth"**).]

There is a perfect balance to the word of God (a two edged sword). If we encourage people with the blessing of prosperity, we also have to warn them of the danger of greed. Greed is so dangerous that it can result in someone going to hell (**Luke 12:16-21, Luke 16:19-26**). The problem is not so much in what is preached by "prosperity" teachers, but in what they are not teaching. If you teach just half a message, even if it is true, then it becomes misleading.

This fault can be found on either side. If we teach only on God's will to prosper financially, without the character issues involved, people will ultimately become indulgent and greedy. Some preachers try to attract people to give to their ministry, or to come to their church, by giving a message that is basically an appeal to the lusts of this world.

However, if we do not teach God's will to prosper, the people will remain largely unfruitful and unbelieving. Many times people complain about those "prosperity" teachers, and then in the next breath they complain about their own lack of finances.

Yeshua's (Jesus') teaching is stunningly balanced and stunningly simple: **Luke 6:38 - Give and it will be given to you.**

This is an example of "measure opposite measure," the law of equal action and reaction. I would summarize the basic principles of finances in Scripture this way:

**INTEGRITY + GENEROSITY = PROSPERITY**

Integrity includes hard work and honesty. Integrity demands paying taxes. If we are to pay all our taxes, give decent wages to our employees, provide for our children's education, we will quickly find that we need a lot more money

than we ever imagined. Therefore, integrity demands prosperity.

If we want to help the poor, strengthen the body of Messiah, and spread the gospel, we will need even more provision. Thus generosity also demands prosperity.

Although Yeshua taught on the perfect balance of generosity and prosperity (Luke 6:38 above), He also taught that one is better than the other. **Acts 20:35 - It is more blessed to give than to receive.**

We will be judged, not by what we have, but by what we give (**Luke 12:15; 21:3, Acts 10:4**).

We are to give no thought to our own provision (**Matthew 6:25**) - that is worry; nor to our own prosperity (**Romans 13:14**) - that is greed. We are to be focused on bearing MUCH fruit for the kingdom of God (**John 15:8**) - that takes generosity; and His righteousness (**Matthew 6:33**) - that takes integrity.

Generosity is central to the plan of God. (**John 3:16 - God so loved the world that He gave...**) True faith in God will produce generosity of heart. Generosity may be seen both as character and as charisma.

Character means the personality qualities of God. We are to **"give to all who ask (Luke 6:30),"** so that we will become **"sons of the Most High (Luke 6:35)."** That is our reward - to be like Yeshua. God has great generosity of heart. I want to be like Him. Therefore I want to develop generosity in all things, including finances.

Giving is also a charisma, a supernatural gift of the Holy Spirit. In speaking of financial giving, Shaul (Paul) said, **"As you abound in faith, speech, knowledge, diligence and love, see that you abound in this grace (charisma) as well" - II Corinthians 8:7.** So we are to grow in generosity as both a fruit and a gift of the Spirit.

Just as we are passionate to worship and share the word, so should we be passionate in our giving. We want to be like the "first century church." In that community of faith, there was supernatural giving. Apostolic restoration will include apostolic generosity. (And the businessmen were as much a part of the kingdom ministry as the prophets and evangelists.)

**Acts 4:34-35 - All who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet.**

This money was used for the needs of the congregation and for the world mission. These saints understood their destiny together to change the entire world (remember **Genesis 12**). That vision was so exciting that people wanted to give everything to be part of it. The same fire of Pentecost (Shavuot) revival and world evangelism also made them "burn" with excitement to give. Their supernatural giving was "vision motivated."

The gospel is exploding all over the world today, particularly in the poorer nations of Asia. The potential of our giving to multiply results for the kingdom is exponential. Let's go for it.