

# Manna

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*The following extract from chapter 2 of a new book that is still being written. After the Spiritual World experience, I saw things differently, especially how the poor and the rich fare in the Spiritual World. This book is written to guide Christians in the Laodicean age that we live in.*

*(Continued from previous Manna 3.6)*

## **The Gift of Prosperity**

Not all prosperity is produced by the gift of prosperity. Much of it is through the mere obedience to the law of God (Mark 10:17-22; Deuteronomy 28:1, 2). Although we have the benefits of the fulfilment of the law in Christ (Matthew 5:16-17), the New Testament has been categorically classified by the New Testament writers as the better covenant (Hebrews 11:40). It is better in two areas: through the new spirit and through the new heart (Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 5:17). With the laws of God written in our hearts and minds (Hebrews 8:17-13; 10:16-17), this newness of the New Covenant implies a new motivation of love (Romans 13:8, 10; Galatians 5:14; 1 John 3:16) and a new energising of love (Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 3:14-20; 1 John 4:15-21).

The difference between the works of the law and the works of grace are within and not without; although eventually it will become self evident through the failures of the works of the law versus the success of the works of grace. Outwardly, the works of the law and the works of grace may look similar but internally and eternally, within the spirit and within the soul, they are like the difference between light and darkness. The main difference in the New Covenant is the supply of the grace of God to energise us and motivate us from within (1 Corinthians 15:10; Galatians 2:20). This grace would produce the

works of grace which have been prepared beforehand (Ephesians 2:10). From the subjective experience of this objective truth, one would experience a great motivation of the love of God to do the works of God as well as a new spiritual energising that comes from within the new-born spirit through the power of the Holy Spirit that enables the ease of doing the works while experiencing the rest in Christ (Hebrews 4:10). In application to the laws of prosperity, this implies that the following would be the works of the law:

1. Tithing in order to receive prosperity (OT<sup>1</sup> motivation with elements of self)
2. Giving in order to receive (OT motivation with elements of self)
3. Sowing in order to reap (OT motivation with elements of self)
4. Planting 'seed faith' or firstfruits in order to gain (OT motivation with elements of self)

At best the above would produce some prosperity (based on OT principles which still operate in the NT) and at worst they would lead to frustration and failure. Many of those who seem to succeed in the above commonly taught financial principles succeed because they happen to have the correct motivation and have some dependence on the Lord's energising. The outward methodology and the laws themselves are still operating but the true fulfilment in the New Covenant is to allow the energising love of God to empower us to:

1. Tithe because of our great love for God and His kingdom
2. Give because we love God and love those we are giving to
3. Sow because we want to sow love in other lives.
4. Plant seeds of gifts and firstfruits because we love God and love those we give to.

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<sup>1</sup> OT – Old Testament

When the apostle Paul was teaching the above principles, he was not teaching them the above laws in order to motivate the Christians to gain by these works, rather he was teaching them to use them as expressions of love:

1. In Corinthians, he made mentioned of the law of sowing and reaping to teach them to do so as an expression and proof of their love and the grace of God within them (2 Corinthians 8:24; 9:14).
2. In Galatians, he made mention of the law of sowing and reaping not because of wanting them to have the motivation of worldly gain but rather that they fulfil the law of Christ (the law of love) by not being weary in sowing because they would reap everlasting life and have the opportunity (privilege of love) of doing good to the household of faith (Galatians 6:8-10). In the New Testament, natural gain is always only secondary (a bonus and not a motivation) to the greater gain of spirituality and love (Matthew 6:20, 33).
3. In Philippians, Paul expressed how much he appreciated the care (and love) he had received from them and speak of their need being met as a consequence of what they are doing (Philippians 4:10-19). He was not motivating them to become carnally motivated each time they sent help to him but rather he kept emphasizing that it was a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice (of their love to God).
4. In 3 John 2, the prosperity of Gaius was a consequence to his walking in love (the reason why his soul prospers). He loved the brethren and strangers and the church bore witness to his love to everyone (3 John 6).

The development of our Christian character (and who and what we really become as a person) is the progressive result of all our thoughts, motivation and acts through the years. Imagine if we continually think and act

selfishly and carnally, wouldn't that result in a more and more selfish and carnal person as we grow older? Instead, if we are careful to always be motivated and empowered by the love of God, through the years our love for God and for people would grow and love would become the key character in our lives. If we continually tithe, sow and give out of selfish desire to gain material prosperity (no matter how minute the desire), then we will become more and more selfish and carnal with time. On the other hand, if we continually tithe, sow and give out of great love for God and a great love for those we give to, our character would become love through the constant acts of love.

The next time you tithe, sow and give, forget about what you are trying to get out of it. Just focus on your act as an expression of pure love for God and for those you are giving to. The material world is only temporary and passing away, only the transformation of love remains when the physical becomes dust in the light of eternity (Matthew 6:19; James 4:14; 1 John 2:15). Take no thought for this earthly life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink (Matthew 6:25). Seek to grow in love with each act of tithing and giving rather than to grow in wealth. Forget all natural motivations for your tithing and giving and seek to experience the love of God in the heart each time you tithe and give (Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 9:7). Each experience of the release of money from our lives should be an experience of God's love in you towards God and towards others.

The greatest fear that people have is that if they do not have in mind a specific return (as a misconstrued form of faith exercise) that God will not bless them. Yet by doing so, they are holding themselves back from the New Testament gift of prosperity and only living in the OT laws of reception. Jesus assures us that the Father knows that we need all these things and that all these things shall be added to us (Matthew 6:32, 33). The question is whether you want to be like the rest of the Gentiles or be living the truly New Testament realm of the gift of prosperity (Matthew 6:32). The statement that we have

to be blessed in order to bless is also not true in the New Testament (Genesis 12:1-3). In the New Testament you ARE ALREADY BLESSED IN CHRIST (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:13-14).

The key understanding in the difference between the New Testament gift of prosperity and the Old Testament works for prosperity are the following:

1. Jesus has sown the greatest seed faith for all our lives that will take us this life and the rest of eternity to keep enjoying the harvest of what He sowed. Jesus became poor that we through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). We don't have to sow in order to receive, Jesus did it for us. We reap what Jesus sowed! The New Testament grace of prosperity (gift of prosperity) is purely the reception and the action of this grace that Jesus has given to our lives.
  - a) When the Macedonian churches tap on the grace of prosperity, they were able to give richly and abundantly beyond the natural limits of their poverty (2 Corinthians 8:1, 2).
  - b) This abundance in grace has the power to create abundance in all things for every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8).
  - c) It increases the fruit of righteousness and causes one to be enriched in everything (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).
  - d) The supply for all our need is according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). These riches in glory are the riches of His grace through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3, 6, 7: 2:7).
  - e) One may ask, why then should tithing and giving be practiced any longer in the New Testament? It is done not for material gain but as a way to release love and grace

(Matthew 23:23; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, 6-8, 24; 9:8; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10; 1 John 3:16-19).

2. Before the fall of mankind in Genesis 3, mankind was blessed and enjoyed the abundant provisions of God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:28-31). The curse of having to work and toil for provisions came *only after* the fall (Genesis 3:17-19). Jesus Christ came to remove all the source, cause and results of the fall of man and to inaugurate the dispensation of grace (Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 3:2-5). The gift by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ now abounds to many (Romans 5:15). Like mankind in the Garden of Eden before the fall, we now work from a position of blessedness and not for a position of blessedness. We are already blessed in Christ and have received the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:3; 2:7). Our living and our giving are the good works of grace prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10). This implies that:
  - a) The works of the law work *to receive* prosperity while the works of grace work *to distribute* prosperity from a faith (grace) position of prosperity. For this reason the Macedonians were enabled, despite their deep poverty, to freely, willingly and urgently give to the ministering of the saints (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
  - b) All the teaching to sow, plant seed-faith, give and tithe *in order to receive* or *to be blessed* or *to be prosperous* are based on the works of the law. True New Testament giving is from a position of blessedness. We are already blessed in Christ therefore being empowered by this grace we walk in the works of grace. The Macedonians received this

grace first and then only were they moved to give liberally (2 Corinthians 8:1-2). The grace must abound before the good works abound (2 Corinthians 9:8).

- c) Although Christ has given the grace of prosperity to everyone of us (2 Corinthians 8:9), the gifts of God, differing according to the grace given, would cause some people to operate more in other areas of ministry while some would operate powerfully in the grace of prosperity (Romans 12:6-8). All the gifts of God (gifts of Holy Spirit, ministry gifts and fivefold gifts) are purely the result of His grace and the performance of every gift should purely be an act of love and charity to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:7, 16). Through the finished work of Christ, who has taken all our infirmities and sicknesses on the cross, all of us can exercise the authority to lay hands and pray for the sick but some would have the grace to do miracles and perform gifts of healings more than others (Matthew 8:17; Mark 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Similarly, through the finished work of Christ, who has taken all the curse the law and

poverty on the cross, all of us can receive His abundant provision for us but some would operate more powerfully in the grace of prosperity than others (2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 3:13-14; Romans 12:3, 8; 2 Corinthians 8:14; 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Timothy 6:17-19).

- d) One does not have to give beyond the measure of grace given and received. Paul advises each person to have a willing mind but to give according to what one has and not what one does not have (2 Corinthians 8:12). Since the proportion of prosperity is directly proportional to the abundance of grace (2 Corinthians 9:8), one needs to give in proportion to the grace (Romans 12:3, 8).

Just as there would be special training and preparation for those who are called to the ministry of the fivefold (Ephesians 4:11, 12), God would put one called to the gift of prosperity through special training and preparations.

*(To be continued in next issue: The Gift of Prosperity part 2)*

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