

Manna

A publication of Peter Tan Evangelism
© 2008 by Peter Tan Volume 4.3

How to prosper in times of famine

In times of financial crisis that is sweeping throughout the world, the body of Christ needs encouragement that God will continue to provide for them, not just for survival but also abundantly.

Firstly, we need to note that it is part of the normal cycle pattern of growth to have periods of rapid growth and then periods of slower growth. Since economy today is measured by currencies of nations which are no longer peg to a real commodity value like gold but now peg to the slightly less tangible commodity of the value of a country (its GNP, etc.), any deficits of a country's trading with another will filter downwards to the country which then affects outwards every other country in economic relationship with that self-same country. The surplus or deficits will in the end (no matter how much each country tries to preserve the value of its currency by exchange controls) affect the intrinsic value of each currency in real terms. The attempt by governments to control their currency exchange rate, especially if it is too far off from its real intrinsic value, based on GNP surplus or losses and other economic factors of the respective country, will only delay the fall or rise eventually but never prevent it from finding its real intrinsic value. Indeed, such attempts by governments have almost bankrupt some countries of their foreign exchange and brought about national financial crisis.

Normally, good governance by the various central banks of governments have seen them trying to control rapid growth (which can produce inflation because of money supply surplus) by raising interest rates and trying to release more cash flow into the system by

lowering interest rates in a slow or negative growth cycle (which can produce deflation). With the internationalising of world economies and the abundance of external investment cash flow from outside a country, it is getting harder and harder to control the economy of a country by a close system ignoring international factors. As such we have new things like stagflation where the interest rate is lowering and yet inflation continues to climb.

At the moment, with the USA deficits, there will be downward pressure on the intrinsic value of the US dollar and with the China trade surplus, there will be upward pressure on the intrinsic value of the yuan. The Euro's intrinsic value will depend on the overall trading bloc of the European economy but it has Bible prophecy on its side (future Revised Roman Empire) which would see a return of economic power towards Europe.

If economies of the world were managed well, we would just have periods of slow growth and periods of fast growth. However, greed and impatience resulting in over extension with human emotions playing a factor, most of the time human economic history shows forth periods of boom and bust. The word that Christians need to know is that such periods of boom and bust are just cycles and one just need to know how to ride out the cycles; especially that of economic recession.

Wisdom the key to prosperity

The first key is to realise that prosperity is not just in physical and material wealth but it is rather in the wealth of wisdom. It is wisdom that produces physical and material wealth (Proverbs 3:13-18). Wisdom is a spiritual force and can be increased in one's life. Joseph had wisdom first before he had promotion from Pharaoh (Genesis 41:38). Solomon had wisdom bestowed on him before he had great wealth (2 Chronicles 1:10). Daniel had wisdom given to him by God that made him and his brethren ten times smarter than all the wise men in the land (1:17-20). He became rich and was made the ruler of all the province of Babylon (Daniel

2:48). When one seeks after physical wealth, it is like chasing after emptiness; many who desire to be rich fall into temptations and a snare, and fall into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Timothy 6:9).

Seek after wisdom, not the wisdom of this world but the wisdom which comes from God (James 1:5; 3:17-18). It is the wisdom which seeks to be a blessing to others (1 Timothy 6:17-19). This fulfils the blessing of Abraham which is to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:13-14). The purpose of wealth is that we may establish the covenant of God and not build monuments to ourselves (Deuteronomy 8:18). The covenant that He refers to here is the covenant to Abraham (Deuteronomy 7:8). As long as there are the poor in our midst, we must help them and share with them the blessings of wealth. Until poverty is eliminated, the rich stands condemned in their waste. By this we do not mean that the rich made themselves poor to help others who are poor rather it means that every person who has become wealthy needs to do something (at least a percentage of their income) to help others who are poorer than them. Those with great wealth should do more and those with some surplus can do the little that they have ability to do so.

Generosity shall open many doors

The Bible says that a man's gift shall make room for them (Proverbs 18:16). To many, this verse speaks of one's talents or gifting which opens the door of opportunity. In can include this but the actual verse speaks of the giving of gifts (Hebrew *mattan*). It has been used in the direct sense of an actual gift (Genesis 34:12; Numbers 18:11; Proverbs 21:14). It speaks more of generosity in the manner of one who cast the bread upon the waters and finding it after many days (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

The essence of business is that one is able to supply or service another person or company need and earn an income from that. The essence of generosity is that one is willing to

do the same at no cost but just for the sense and joy of doing another service (a gift). The gift can be through an actual physical gift or through using one's talents and gifting to be a blessing to others. Many people are so calculative and profit oriented that they have lost sight of the joy and love of doing good to another human being for free. The second key to prosperity is that one keeps on giving even without stopping when one has nothing left. At the least, one can give one's time or service to another. There is always something good and loving we can do to another person.

When money has run out, time is still there, talents or skills still remain available to give to another. We should see God as our true paymaster and He rewards us for all that we have sown to help another. If you lose your job because of the recession, and have yet to find another job, don't just sit around and get depressed. Of course, spend time with God and in prayer and worship. But also find ways to use your talents and gifts to help another person or company for free if they can't afford it. As you keep on using your talents, skills and gifting to help other people, God will open doors of opportunities for you. Be generous to help others and others will be generous to help you, too.

The best jobs, the best businesses, the best opportunities to make money does not always come to the most talented, the most skilful, the smartest person, etc. It comes because of an opportunity which angels have created for you to be blessed. Promotion comes forth not from the east nor from the west, it comes from God who is the source of all blessings (Psalms 75:6). There is a spiritual law that causes the best opportunities and open doors to come to those who are most generous with their time and with their money. Those who are helpful to others are themselves greatly helped.

God is the source of all blessings

There are many ways in which people receive their income; through their own trade skills, organisations they work for, businesses, investments, etc. but one must train

themselves to see that whatever the channel by which the pay or blessing comes that it is God and His angels who are at work bringing it in (Matthew 5:45; James 1:17). Although the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 applies contextually to ministry work, in principle it applies to every kind of work – that one can plant another can harvest but it is God who gives the increase and rewards each accordingly. Our eyes must always look to God as our source and not men.

The blessing of seeing God as our ultimate source is that one can change jobs, change careers, change geographical locations, etc. but still continue to receive from God for God is not limited in any of these areas. His angels continue to bring provision through us although the instrument and methodology may change. God is our ultimate paymaster and He pays well! Whatever we do in word or deed, we should do all unto God with thanksgiving (Colossians 3:17). Believing that God is the Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

There is also the principle of thanksgiving that one must be in to tap on this principle. Negative attitudes and complaining will hinder the work of God's Spirit and His angels. The atmosphere of thanksgiving will release the grace of God upon our lives for the root word of thanksgiving (*eucharisteo*) is the same as grace (*charis*). In a sense it is the ability to find good in everything (no matter how bad the circumstances) and still choosing to love God with all our hearts, minds and souls. It is the will of God that we give thanks every day (1 Thessalonians 5:18). When we tap on this principle with the principle of loving God, all things work powerfully for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28).

The grace of God is always more than sufficient for every circumstance that we face (2 Corinthians 12:9). God has provided more than enough grace and strength to find our way out of every difficult situation (1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:10). His angels are always ministering to us and we must not be discouraged whenever there is a delay (Hebrews 1:14; Daniel 9:22-23). Like

Abraham, one must continue giving glory to God having faith in God (Romans 4:20-21). Ultimately, one must understand that God is our Father and our Provider, to Him alone do we look for our daily bread (Matthew 6:11).

Righteousness brings abundance

The law by which one can walk in God's abundant provision is to seek the kingdom of God first and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). One must do what is right in all circumstances and not deprive another of what is rightfully theirs (James 5:4). The Spirit of Wisdom brings forth both enduring riches and righteousness (Proverbs 8:18). True prosperity is prosperity by the right principles, right motivation, right methodology establishing righteousness. It starts within the heart of one desiring to do what is right no matter what the cost or sacrifice entails. God is always pleased when one desires and seek after righteousness.

Even more powerfully, this righteousness is not our own righteousness but the gift of righteousness in Christ Jesus (Romans 4:3). This gift of righteousness enables one to reign in life in Christ Jesus (Romans 5:17). It is expressed in the fruits of righteousness in one's life (Philippians 1:11). The test of whether one is ready for true prosperity or not is in being given the choice to do what is right versus what is wrong. When one keeps on choosing the paths of righteousness, it will lead one towards green pastures and still peaceful waters (Psalm 23:1-3).

The purpose of prosperity is that righteousness and peace be established rather than evil. Thus God gives to the righteous the power of wealth that they may be God's instrument to establish good in a world which tends towards evil. For the kingdom of God is not just eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

In conclusion, we must take note that this cycle of recession is not permanent but only part of regular cycles of boom and bust. While people will react emotionally in all

situations (boom or bust) it is important to keep making wise decision based on principles and facts. The continual practice of seeking an increase in the Spirit of Wisdom, walking in generosity, seeing God as the source and walking in righteousness will keep

us steady in a time of financial turmoil. God is still our Father who takes care of us, His children. If He takes care of the sparrows and of the field, how much more will He take care of us who are His redeemed?

Those who would like to be partners with the ministry of Pastor Peter Tan through regular intercessions, prayers or contributions to the ministry may email to us to be part of the weekly Fatherly Talk emails, which Ps Peter sends to his Bible students, close friends and partners of the ministry every Sunday.

Those who would like to contribute to the ministry of Pastor Peter Tan may send their contributions crossed to:

Peter Tan Evangelism, PO Box 3177, Canberra, ACT 2601, Australia.

Donations by Bank Telegraphic Transfer please send to:

Account name: El Shaddai Ministries

Bank Branch Number: 032730

Account number: 123594

Bank: Westpac Bank, Dickson Branch

Bank address: Corner Badham and Woolley Street, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia

SWIFT code: WPACAU2S

Donations by credit card, please use Paymate link:



Donations by Paypal to elshaddai1@bigpond.com

All those interested in enrolling in Online Logos Bible School or who desire to be a partner in the ministry (Philippians 4:15) to receive the weekly Fatherly Talks, please write to elshaddai1@bigpond.com