



Seeking the Giver

If God were to appear before you and say, “Ask Me for whatever you want,” what would you request?

Upon receiving such an offer, a young king asks earnestly for wisdom—and later gets much more.

The Lord appears to Solomon in a dream saying, “*Ask for whatever you want me to give you*” (1 Kings 3:5). Humbly, Solomon makes a request that will benefit God’s people, not himself. “*Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?*” (1 Kings 3:9).

Solomon’s request pleases God and moves Him to bestow abundance and honor on Solomon, in addition to the wisdom he sought. Ultimately, no man proved to be wiser than Solomon, who manifested “*a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore*” (1 Kings 4:29).

The physical prosperity Solomon experienced was clearly not the result of his seeking it; *he never asked God for it*. It did not come because he sought *gifts* from God. Nor did it come because he gave gifts to God’s work, expecting more in return. It came after he sought the *Giver* of the gifts and *His* wisdom so that he might fulfill the tasks God had for him. It came only because of the gracious One who gives good gifts to *His* children. He asked for what he truly *needed* in order to do God’s will, not what he *wanted* in order to do his own will. His priorities were right. And God blessed him abundantly . . . without his ever requesting a reward at all. This is a picture of what Jesus gave as a principle. . . .

“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.”
(Matthew 6:33 NLT)

Key Verse to Memorize

*“Give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.”*
(Proverbs 30:8)

6 Primary Positions of Prosperity Theology

1. PROSPERITY POSITION: “Sickness is always the result of sin.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* when the disciples asked Jesus about a man blind from birth. (John 9:2–3)
2. PROSPERITY POSITION: “Poverty is *always* the result of sin.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* by Jesus when He said about Himself, “*Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head*” (Matthew 8:20).
3. PROSPERITY POSITION: “Sickness is a curse.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* by the illness of Job, who was not cursed but was allowed by God to be physically afflicted by Satan. (Job 2:3)
4. PROSPERITY POSITION: “Poverty is *always* a curse.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* by the fact that Jesus honored a poor widow for her meager offering to God. (Luke 21:2–3)
5. PROSPERITY POSITION: “Sickness is of the devil.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* by Jesus when He responded to the illness of his good friend Lazarus. (John 11:4)
6. PROSPERITY POSITION: “If you have enough faith, you will be healed.”
BIBLICAL POSITION: This false belief was *directly refuted* by the experience and testimony of the apostle Paul. (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)

Key Passage to Read

1 Timothy 6:3–19

What Are the Causes of Sickness and Suffering?

- **Sin can cause sickness.** Sometimes illness is the normal consequence of sin. God does not cause sickness as a punishment, but He may allow it as a natural consequence. (1 Corinthians 11:27–30)
- **Satan can cause sickness.** God can allow Satan limited power to cause affliction. (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- **Spiritual growth can be God's plan for sickness.** God's purpose for suffering is the strengthening of faith. (Psalm 119:71, 92)
- **Spiritual glory can be God's plan for sickness.** The result of suffering can bring great glory to God. (Luke 18:38–43)

What Is the Root Cause of Confusion about Prosperity?

- **Wrong Belief:** "As a child of God, I have the right to ask God for whatever I want and, in faith, expect to receive whatever I request. Since God intends for His children to be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous, I will exercise my faith in what I want, and I know that I will receive it."

Right Belief: "As a child of God, I know I can trust Him to meet my deepest inner needs and fulfill His plan for my life. Since I am no longer 'my own,' but I belong to Christ, my deepest desire is to be conformed to the character of Christ . . . to love with His love and to care with His care."

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."
(1 Corinthians 6:19–20)

How to View Afflictions: A Blessing or a Curse?

- **Afflictions** soften your heart toward obeying God's Word. (Psalm 119:67)
- **Afflictions** open your heart to make you more teachable. (Psalm 119:75)
- **Afflictions** humble your heart to keep you from being conceited. (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- **Afflictions** uncover your heart's weakness so that you may appropriate Christ as your strength. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

- **Affliction** gives your heart a desire for eternal values. (Romans 8:18)

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him."
(James 1:12)

Trust Him

Thank God for what He has given to you. (Ephesians 5:19–20)

Rest in God as your Provider. (1 Timothy 6:17)

Uphold God's perspective on possessions. (Luke 12:15)

Seek God's provision in each and every circumstance. (Isaiah 43:20)

Trust in God, not in what you possess. (Psalm 20:7)

Honor God with what He gives to you. (Acts 4:32; 2:45)

Invest in heavenly treasures, not in earthly things. (Hebrews 10:34)

Manage well what God entrusts to your care. (Luke 16:10)

Is Divine Healing Guaranteed for Everyone Who Has Faith?

- **The apostle Paul** was not miraculously healed. (2 Corinthians 12:7–9)
- **Timothy** was not miraculously healed. (1 Timothy 5:23)
- **Epaphroditus** was not miraculously healed. (Philippians 2:25–30)
- **Trophimus** was not miraculously healed. (2 Timothy 4:20)

Questions and Answers

“If I truly follow Christ and pray with total faith, doesn’t the Bible say that I will be blessed with health, wealth, and problem-free living?”

No. The Bible clearly reveals that Jesus, along with the Apostles (who truly gave their lives to Christ), did not experience health, wealth, and problem-free living. But Scripture does state that when you “share in the sufferings of Christ,” you are blessed by God. . . .

“Rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”
(1 Peter 4:13–14)

“Is it okay to pray for miraculous healing?”

Yes, absolutely. It is biblical to present your request to God for full restoration. It is also biblical to pray as Jesus prayed, “Father . . . not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42). If it is God’s will, you will receive what you asked. . . .

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.”
(1 John 5:14–15)

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