

**WORD OF CHRIST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH**  
**POSITION PAPER**

**Topic: Prosperity**

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**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

We must agree that Scripture is our final authority in settling questions of faith and practice. But when born-again, Spirit-filled Christians, following proper biblical principles, come to reasonable but differing interpretations; we do well not to become dogmatic in support of one position. We affirm the inerrancy and authority of Scripture and we desire to know for certain what God expects of us. When we come to a sure understanding of His divine Word, we are committed to declaring and obeying those clear instructions.

In the following position paper we address one of many topics that have raised a fair degree of discussion, and, at times, arguments among the brethren. It is not our intention to fuel these arguments but rather to state our position based on our earnest understanding of the Scriptures. With this said, we also exercise caution in not stirring unnecessary strife or division among the brethren, and have made every reasonable effort to base our positions on Scripture, not personal opinion or conjecture. We respect and love our brothers and sisters who hold alternative interpretations on issues that are not critical to our salvation or standing before God.

**PROSPERITY**

There is an abundance of teaching today on the topic of 'prosperity'; some of which is revelatory and accurate, and some of which is unbiblical and misleading. It is important, therefore, that we discuss this issue and express our understanding based on biblical precedent.

Most of the erroneous teaching lies in the fact that many believers view God's prosperity simply in worldly terms, and therefore measure God's provision using worldly scales. The key to understanding biblical prosperity is first to define what prosperity is. According to Webster's Dictionary, 'prosperity' is '*the condition of being successful or thriving.*' It is interesting that the emphasis of this definition is on the 'condition' or 'state of being' rather than on the nominal value of success. Carrying this understanding over to the life of a believer, we see 'prosperity' as '*the affirmation in one's heart that all resources and means required to fulfill the specific will of God in one's life have sufficiently been provided.*'

**BIBLICAL PRECEDENCE**

Early in the book of Genesis, we encounter God's desire to be man's provider. In Genesis 17:1-2, it says "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD (Jehovah) appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (El-Shaddai); walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

El-Shaddai is translated "God (El) Almighty (Shaddai)". The name Elohim is also translated into "God Almighty". How then do these two names differ? Elohim (meaning "All Powerful One") is evident throughout the story of creation. It is derived from the root "El" which means "Power, Might, Exceeding Greatness" and is translated into Almighty God as well many times in the Bible.

Many scholars believe the difference lies in the fact that in God's dealings with Abram, special circumstances (the age of Abram and the deadness of Sarai's womb) required special powers to bring about the fulfillment of His promise. Powers which cause nature to perform contrary to natural law. We know from God's Word that, in spite of natural law, Sarai (Sarah) bore Isaac. However, many believe that the meaning of Shaddai is much deeper than this

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In the Septuagint version of the Bible, the scholars translated the Hebrew Shaddai into the Greek word *ikanos* which means "all-sufficient". The word Shaddai occurs some 48 times in the Old Testament and is always translated "almighty" in the King James Version. Also, the Hebrew word "shad" is used 24 times and is always translated as "breast". In the same way that a mother's breast is "all-sufficient" for her newborn's nourishment, God is "all-sufficient" for His people. Hence, when we combine El (Almighty God) with Shaddai (All-sufficiency) we have "The Almighty God who pours out sustenance and blessing".

Gen 49:24-25 bears this out ... "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God (El) of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God (El) of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty (Shaddai), who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb."

The usage of the names here is obvious. It is God as 'El' (Omnipotent, Almighty, All-Powerful) who helps in time of need, but God as 'Shaddai' (All-Sufficient) who satisfies with abundant blessings "of the breasts and of the womb". This clearly indicates that our righteous and loving God cares for us as a mother cares for a newborn child. God is everything we could possibly need, exactly when we need it. Simply said, God is our 'all sufficient provider.'

**THE KEY: KNOW YOUR DIVINE PURPOSE**

One of the deterrents to receiving God's blessings in life is holding onto a 'poverty mentality'. A 'poverty mentality' is a mindset that limits our ability from seeing beyond past experiences. A person who thinks along these lines will frame the borders of God's will for their lives no further than what they have already seen in the past. God is always stretching us and calling us to view life from His perspective. We must break out of this limiting mindset in order to know our divine purpose in life, and in doing so, lay down our vision by embracing God's vision. For most of us, thinking along these lines requires a significant renewal of our minds.

This is evident in God's selection of Abraham as the father of a new nation. God knew Abraham would walk by faith and see beyond his past experiences. When Abraham was ready, God called him to set the boundaries of the land for this new nation. Genesis 13:14-15 says 'And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are — northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.'

Abraham was given the responsibility to determine the extent of the borders by 'lifting up his eyes.' If he lifted his eyes just a little, allowing past experiences to influence him, he would have missed out of the fullness of God's blessing. But he didn't; he lifted his head and focused his eyes on the distant horizon and believed God for the improbable, and in turn, received what many would have considered impossible!

You see, prosperity has little to do with the nominal value of money, or the possession of cars, houses, boats, etc., but rather is the means by which God supplies us with the necessary resources, favor and tools to fulfill our purpose in expanding the Kingdom of God on the Earth. For some, that purpose will require large supplies of resources (as was the case for Solomon who

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was called to build the temple), and for others, smaller supplies of resources. Regardless of the call, God is still the supernatural supplier!

Let it also be noted that there is nothing wrong with possessing material wealth; the Bible is clear on this too. Those who walk in these blessings are commanded to use them to help others. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 says *"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*

**BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING**

On a final note, it is as erroneous to limit our view of God's provision just for our personal needs as it is to measure God's prosperity simply in terms of material value. Many believers hold onto the belief that they are to seek God to provide for their simple needs and no more. What appears to be a humble and modest position is, in fact, selfish, irresponsible and restrictive.

It is clear in scriptures that God desires all His children to reflect His character in the Earth ... which, by the way, is our greatest witness. We also know that God is a giver, even to the point of giving His only begotten Son! We, therefore, should be givers, and believe God for ample provision not only for our own needs but for the needs of others! This is why Paul writes to the Corinthians (chp 9, verse 11) and tells them *"now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality (that is, "giving to others"), which causes thanksgiving through us to God."*

Yes, God wants you to have so you can give, and be a source of blessing not cursing.

**CONCLUSION**

It is clear in scriptures that God desires to be our 'all sufficient provider' in this life. We must trust God and His faithfulness that He will never wane from His self-imposed obligation to provide for us as we walk in His perfect will. In turn, we must pursue His divine purpose in our lives and cease to look to His blessings as a source from which to horde material wealth for our own pleasure. God is a good God, and desires to bless us so that we, in turn, can be a blessing to others.

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