

Module : Soul Prosperity
Session 7 : Obedience Purifies The Soul for Prosperity
Focus : Renewed Mentality for the New Land



The focus of this session is a reminder to live obediently to God's Word and to maintain your personal purity. This is vital for a prosperous soul and thus total life prosperity.

ALL PROSPERITY FLOWS FROM HEARING, MEDITATING AND OBEYING THE WORD OF GOD

Rest for the soul, which includes peace and peaceful relations, is vital for the prosperity of the soul. Only the Word of God saves and restores the soul. Refer to previous sessions in this series. Obedience to the Word purifies the soul.

1 Peter 1:22 Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

A pure soul is free from all expressions of carnality, or thoughts, emotions and decisions that are not aligned with God's will. Every **opportunity to obey** is an occasion for alignment of spirit and soul. This brings wholeness and completeness to our human-ness. Each entrenched inward mentality of obedience and every successive outward act of obedience is a step closer to or another opportunity for the ongoing purification of the soul. Purity of soul is a perpetual, personal process fuelled by obedient attitudes and acts.

When the Word of God comes to us, it brings correction, adjustment and fine-tunement to our minds, emotions and will.

Prov.29:17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

Jer. 6:16 Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and WALK IN IT And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' "

'Ancient paths' here refer to timeless and eternal truths or principles in God. This is the platform from which God functions. We must ASK for these and obediently WALK in them. In this way REST will come to us – so then will prosperity and success. In His lament over Jerusalem, Jesus said in Luke 19:42 **"If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes."** When principles, attitudes and behaviours that will ensure your peace are made known to you and you reject them, then destruction (as in did to Jerusalem in A.D. 70) can only result. Walking disobediently away from clearly articulated solutions for your peace and prosperity only reaps a negative harvest of breakdown and no positive breakthrough. Note in Jer. 6:16 quoted above – the people say "We will not walk in it", thus their souls have no rest and peace – and therefore no prosperity. Spiritual rest and prosperity is not possible when uncleanness and corruption abounds (Mic. 2:10).

Micah 2:10 “Arise and go, For this is no place of rest because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction, A painful destruction.”

OBEDIENCE STRENGTHENS YOU MENTALLY AND SPIRITUALLY TO POSSESS THE LAND

Deuteronomy chapter 11 emphasises the necessity of obedience especially in reference to entering a new sphere or phase of God’s will for one’s life. As you read it you will discover that obedience is the pathway for God to adjust and tweak our mentality to foster a new mindset (thinking in the soul) that is completely compatible with the new environment or phase in God’s unfolding purposes, and thus essential to successfully function in it. Slowly and meditatively read the entire chapter of Deut.11. We shall examine a few verses and note some comments, which I believe are prophetic for us in the present season.

Deut. 11:1-9

- 1 “You shall therefore **love the Lord your God**, and **always keep His charge**, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.
- 2 Know this day that **I am not speaking with your sons who have not known and who have not seen** the discipline of the Lord your God—His greatness, His mighty hand and His outstretched arm,
- 3 and His signs and His works, which He did in the midst of Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land;
- 4 and what He did to Egypt’s army, to its horses and its chariots, when He made the water of the Red Sea to engulf them while they were pursuing you, and the Lord completely destroyed them;
- 5 and **what He did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place**;
- 6 and what He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, among all Israel—
- 7 but **your own eyes have seen all the great work** of the Lord which He did.
- 8 “You shall therefore **KEEP EVERY commandment which I am commanding you today, so that** you may **be strong** and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it;
- 9 so that you may **prolong your days** on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their descendants, **a land flowing with milk and honey**.

VERSE 2 highlights the fact that Israel had been privy to experiencing **two sides of God**, viz., His deliverance and His discipline. We too have know these two dimensions of God’s engagement with us.

Verse 8 stresses the obedience of **EVERY COMMAND**, not some commands. This calls on us to bring completeness to our obedience. Our obedience is to be neither sporadic nor partial. It is to be consistent and total. Obedience must not be seasonal, but must be a perpetual state of being. God is expecting heightened obedience in the present season, especially in the area of our unseen thoughts – our thoughts must be pure and holy.

2 Cor. 10:5,6

- 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God,
and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,
6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete

Note Verse 8 again:

Deut. 11:8 “You shall therefore KEEP EVERY commandment which I am commanding you today, so that you may be strong and go in and possess the land into which you are about to cross to possess it;

Note the words “so that”. Your obedience is necessary preparation to receive STRENGTH to possess the land. Keeping every commandment of God makes you strong to go in and possess the land. Obedience empowers you with strength to robustly pursue and attain your destiny in God. Disobedience has the opposite effect. It is erosive to one’s spiritual stamina and resolve. It renders you powerless, for you have no confidence to forge ahead without hesitance in doing God’s will. Daily personal obedience is preparatory to steward and foster the right mentality required for effective and successful operation in the new land or season that God is leading us into. Every act of private obedience completes a phase of preparation for increased strength to be able to secure what God is leading us into.

OBEDIENCE IS THE PLATFORM UPON WHICH A NEW MINDSET CAN BE RECEIVED

After this instruction to be obedient so that strength would result to possess the land, **God immediately highlights the fact that a new mindset is necessary to function in the new land. Obedience is the platform upon which a new way of thinking is entrenched in order to fully appropriate new territories or spheres of responsibility that God is leading us into.**

Deut. 11:10-12

- 10 For the land, into which you are entering to possess it, is not like the land of Egypt from which you came, where you used to sow your seed and water it with your foot like a vegetable garden.
11 But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, **a land of hills and valleys, drinks water from the rain of heaven,**
12 **a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year.**

• **MENTALITIES OF LIMITATION ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH BORDERLESS SEASONS OF INCREASE:**

One of the first things God says to them is that the new land they are eventually to conquer is **NOT AS THE LAND OF EGYPT**. What they were going into bears no resemblance to where they had come from. Israel had been in Egyptian slavery for approximately 400 years and had adopted a particular mentality toward life and their function within the conditions of slavery. Now, free from that environment, before they enter into a new environment, they are made aware of the differences between the two. A new level of freedom and increase demanded a new and elevated mental operating system by which they would

conduct and regulate their lives. New requirements and codes of behaviour and function were necessary. Obedience also was to be heightened.

God was about to break a 430 year enslaved state of existence. Historical patterns and expressions of limitations are about to be broken. But the imperative is to deliberately adjust one's mindset out from small thinking to big thinking. God requires a certain character and mental disposition before increase and enlargement comes.

A Brief ASIDE: Jabez dared to ask God, **"Enlarge my territory"**. This prayer of Jabez is well known and an oft prayed prayer by many. But many do not focus on Jabez' character, viz. he was 'more honourable than his brothers'.

1 Chron 4:9-10 Jabez was **more honorable than his brothers**,... Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me indeed and **enlarge my border**, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from harm that it may not pain me!" **And God granted him what he requested.**

The power and accuracy of Jabez's character and representation of God's glory (honour) is noted first before his request for enlargement of his border is answered.

- The honour principle determines the extremity of your borders. Your borders can only expand contingent upon your honourability.
- Your territory will never expand beyond the power of the principle of honour in your life.
- Heightened honour precedes territorial expanse.
- Erect the principle of 'greater' or 'more' honour internally within your life first before seeking outward growth of your sphere of impact.
- Focus upon developing the principle of honour as a priority - not so much on seeking to enlarge your borders. Enlarged borders comes to honourable sons.
- Increased internal self-government is a non-negotiable prerequisite to the external enlargement and activation of one's territorial governing potential in both the realms of the Spirit and the natural.

May I encourage us all to be honourable men and women in all areas of life. Honour implies living a life of the highest integrity, honesty, transparency purity and obedience in all things. It also includes giving honour to those to whom it is due. I am convinced that we are poised for enlargement and expansion of our borders in all respects. But we must remain focused upon our character disposition of being 'MORE HONOURABLE'. This is the basis upon which growth in all respects occurs.

- **EMBRACE AN ENLARGED SPHERE OF ACTIVITY WITH A DIFFERENT OCCUPATION EMPHASIS:**

Whilst still in Egypt, the Israelites tended gardens of herbs. In contrast to this, God says that He is leading them into a land, which has valleys and hills – a vast land. **Imagine the drastic shift in comprehension required to adjust from a limited and confined ‘garden’ to a ‘LAND OF HILLS AND VALLEYS’.**

The word ‘garden’ = gan = a garden (as fenced). This Hebrew word ‘gan’ implies an **enclosure, an enclosed area**. By contrast, the word ‘LAND’ implies an area far larger than the ‘garden’. The word ‘land’ = erets = firm; it has the implication of a large area.

A ‘garden’ mentality’ is highly insufficient to possess THE LAND. God is challenging us about breaking out of smallness and moving into largeness. Move out of confinement, and function within a borderless environment. Before you enter into enlargement externally, you must be enlarged internally. Territory that is to be taken outwardly must first be appropriated inwardly. In Egypt, the agricultural activity of the Israelites was prescribed to a garden. In the new land to which they were proceeding, the boundary of their activity would be determined by their thinking. Years before in Genesis 13, God said to Abraham, “All the land you SEE, I will GIVE to you”, viz. “if you can see or envision it in your mind, I will give it to you.” The receipt of the full promise is contingent upon expansive sight.

An enlarged land requires an enlarged heart and mind. You cannot operate with a limited mentality within an unlimited environment.

Ps. 119:32

I shall run the **way of** Your commandments, **for** You will enlarge my heart. (NASB)

I will run the **course** of Your commandments, **for** You shall enlarge my heart. (NKJV)

I will run the **way of** thy commandments, **when** thou shalt enlarge my heart. (KJV)

Running in the course of God’s commandments is the result of an enlarged heart dues to obedience. Exploring the fullness of God’s plan for your life is only possible once your heart has been enlarged. Running implies a faster speed than walking. ‘Run’ indicates not just movement or progression, but an accelerated progression. Hence, one is able to fulfill the full ambit or scope of God’s commandments more rapidly than before with an enlarged heart. Not only will our sphere or area of activity and influence be enlarged, but our occupation and specific expressions of labour will change in this season.

- **YOUR PREVIOUS HISTORIC LEVELS OF INCREASE AND HARVEST IS NOT THE STANDARD OF YIELD THAT GOD HAS FOR YOU :**

See Deut 11:10 again: Note : ‘Not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out’. The land of Egypt was fruitful, particularly Rameses, in which Israel dwelt, yet Canaan exceeded that level of fruitfulness. Genesis 13:10 indicates the portion of the land which Lot chose in Canaan was as fruitful as the land of Egypt.

As productive as Egypt might have been, its productivity was to be insignificant when compared to the level of harvest that God determined for His people. Do not become comfortable with your present level of success and increase and assimilate that degree of inheritance into your thinking system. God has

much more for you. The greatest threat to future success is previous successes. Egypt was never intended to be the ultimate settlement for Israel. It did serve as a place of sustenance and provision in one era, but the place of provision became a place of enslavement when they overstayed their stay there and were subjected to slavery by a Pharaoh who did not know the fathering grace of Joseph.

Previous historic levels of provision are now obsolete as God is about to shower His people with levels of abundance to which the previous levels do not compare. All this is contingent upon total obedience. (Cf. how God made Joseph forget his hardship through the level of fruitfulness and influence God gave to him – and this is embodied in the names of his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim)

DEPENDANCE ON HUMAN TOIL AND INGENUITY IS NOT REQUIRED:

In Egypt, the Nile overflowed once a year. Water was carried off to other parts of the land via canals. This required much human skill, labour and effort. Egypt enjoyed no rain worth speaking of, but drew its water supply from the annual overflowing of the Nile. This only lasts about a hundred days; but the water was rendered available for agricultural purposes throughout the year by an elaborate and costly system of tanks, canals, pumping machines, etc. To these mechanical appliances, allusion is made in Deut.11:10. The inhabitants of Egypt probably watered “with the foot” in two ways, namely, by means of tread-wheels working sets of pumps, and by means of artificial channels connected with reservoirs; these were opened, turned, or closed by the feet. Both methods are still in use in Egypt.

In contrast to the land of promise, Canaan, by its very physical features, rendered the Egyptian method of water supply redundant and ineffective. Canaan as a mountainous country (compare Deut.3:25) was well watered, but by the rains of heaven, on which it absolutely depended for its crops. Artificial irrigation could do nothing to remedy this dependance. Hence, it was a land on which, so long as God’s people were faithful and consequently prosperous, “the eyes of God” would always be: i.e., He would supply at each successive season the useful conditions for productivity.

Hence, as we enter into a new land and season of unparalleled increase, growth and productivity, we must not depend on human ingenuity and toil to attain to the new level of harvest that God has ear-marked for us. We need the rain and the dew of the heavens to water and nurture the increased fruitful harvest we are about to experience. Conscious and deliberate throwing away of any human or naturally constructed talents, thought patterns, mentalities, structures, plans, programmes, schemes, etc. be dismantled because they will not be effective in their use in the new land.

We cannot depend on a river of blessings and empowerment once a year that we need to work hard at to distribute its effect through the rest of the year – we need the rain of the heavens – former and latter rains in one season. Not man-made and humanly initiated irrigated systems of channeling divine resource is required, but a system of watering and distribution divinely given by God. Canaan abounded in natural rivers, springs, brooks, fountains, etc., all resourced by the rains of heaven.

Deut. 11:13-15

- 13 “It shall come about, **if you listen obediently to my commandments** which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and **all your soul**,
- 14 that He will give the **rain for your land in its season**, the early and late rain, that you may **gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil**.

15 He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

Again obedience is stressed as the key to activate the rain – the new source of watering the hills and valleys.

Deut. 11:16-18

- 16 **Beware that your hearts are not deceived**, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them.
- 17 Or the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.
- 18 “ **You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul**; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

God’s principles must be IMPRESSED upon the soul, bound on the hand (denoting they determine our actions) and on the frontals of the forehead (must dominate our thinking, mindset and mentality).

Deut. 11:19-21

- 19 You shall **teach them to your sons**, talking of them **when you sit** in your house and **when you walk** along the road and **when you lie down** and **when you rise up**.
- 20 You **shall write them** on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,
- 21 so that your days and the days **of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the Lord** swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth.

God’s principles are to be imparted to the next generation in a deliberate manner – and it is to be all-pervasive, touching every expression of life.

Deut. 11:22-25

- 22 For if **you are careful to keep all this commandment** which I am commanding you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him,
- 23 then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will **dispossess nations greater and mightier than you**.
- 24 **Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be** from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea.
- 25 **No man will be able to stand before you**; the Lord your God will **lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot**, as He has spoken to you.

Obedience to God’s principles ensures the displacement of every potential obstacle or threat to God’s will being performed in your life. (cf. Rahab’s report to the two spies that the men of Jericho dread the Israelites)

Deut. 11:26-28

- 26 “ **See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:**
- 27 **the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today;**

28 and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known.

Obedience and The Attendant Blessing is Your Personal Choice.

Obedience and the attendant blessing is a personal choice. Disobedience and the resultant curse is also a personal choice.

Job 36: 11 **If they obey** and serve him, they shall **spend their days in prosperity**, and their years in pleasures.

Deut. 29:9 So keep the **words of this covenant** to **do them**, that you **may prosper in all that you do**.

Isaiah 1:19,20 If you are **willing and obedient**, you shall **eat the good of the land**; but if you refuse and rebel you shall be eaten by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken

Josh 1:8 This **book of the law shall not depart from your mouth**, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may **be careful to do** according to all that is written in it; for then you will **make your way prosperous**, and then **you will have success**.

Proverbs 4:20-23

20 My son, **give attention to my words**; **Incline your ear** to my sayings.
 21 Do not let them depart **from your sight**; Keep them in the **midst of your heart**.
 22 For they are **life to those who find them** and **health to all their body**.
 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life

Psalms 1:2,3 But his **delight is in the law of the Lord**, and in His law he **meditates** day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in **whatever he does, he prospers**.

Isaiah 55:10,11

10 as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
 11 So will **My word be which goes forth from My mouth**; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, and **without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it**.

[KJV: ... it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it]

When the Word of God prospers in you, prosperity will result in every dimension within you and externally in your life. The Word prospers in you when you love it, hear it, meditate on it daily, speak and confess it, and obey it. The PERSON of Christ will bring you peace; the PRINCIPLES of Christ bring you prosperity.

Your soul will abide in prosperity when it heeds the instruction of the Lord. Read the whole of Ps. 25.

Psalm 25:1 To You, O Lord, **I lift up my soul**. O my God, in You I trust,
Do not let me be ashamed; Do not let my enemies exult over me

Psalm 25:20a **Guard my soul** and deliver me ...

Psalm 25:12-13 Who is the man who fears the Lord? He **will instruct him** in the way he
should choose. **His soul will abide in prosperity**, And his descendants will inherit the
land

DISOBEDIENCE ABORTS PROSPERITY:

Num. 14:41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do **ye transgress the commandment** of the
Lord? but it shall **not prosper** (KJV)

1 Chron. 24:20 Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood
above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, '**Why do you break the
commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper?**' Because you have forsaken
the Lord, he has forsaken you (ESV)

Jer. 6:16-19

- 16 Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where
the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find **rest for your souls**. But they said, 'We will **not
walk in it**. '
- 17 "And I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the **trumpet!** ' But they said, '**We
will not listen**. '
- 18 "Therefore hear, O nations, And know, O congregation, what is among them.
- 19 "Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, The **fruit of their plans**, Because
they have **not listened to My words**, And as for My law, they have rejected it also.

Isaiah 48:18 "If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well- being would have
been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea

OBEY DILIGENTLY

Deut. 28:1-14

- 1 "Now it shall be, **if you diligently obey** the Lord your God, **being careful to do all** His
commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all
the nations of the earth.
- 2 All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the Lord your God:
- 3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.
- 4 "Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the
offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.
- 5 "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl
- 6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

- 7 “The Lord shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.
- 8 The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.
- 9 The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.
- 10 So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will be afraid of you.
- 11 **The Lord will make you ABOUND in prosperity**, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.
- 12 The Lord will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.
- 13 The Lord will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully,
- 14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Psalm 143:8,10

- 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! Answer me in Your faithfulness, in Your righteousness!
- 2 And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous.
- 3 For **the enemy has persecuted my soul**; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have long been dead.
- 4 Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; My heart is appalled within me.
- 5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to You; **My soul longs for You**, as a parched land. Selah.
- 7 Answer me quickly, O Lord, my spirit fails
- 8 Let me hear Your lovingkindness in the morning; For I trust in You; **Teach me the way in which I should walk; For to You I lift up my soul.**
- 9 Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies; I take refuge in You.
- 10 **Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.**

SECRET SIN IS A SERIOUS HINDRANCE TO BIBLICAL PROSPERITY:

Obadiah 1:17 “But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy.
And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions.

Carnality negativity affects the state of the soul, making it accommodative of various expressions of works of the flesh. Overt indulgence with willful and secretive sinful behaviour with no desire/inclination

to repent, disqualifies one from receiving the quality of total multi-faceted prosperity as determined and tailored by God Himself.

Prov. 28:13,14 He who **conceals his transgressions will not prosper**, but he who **confesses and forsakes** them will find compassion. How blessed is the man who fears always, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

The more we secure victory over the flesh and carnal nature, the more we empower our souls to obey the leading of our spirits, which is led by the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the Word of God. As the soul obeys, it is purified. AS the soul obeys, it prospers. As the soul prospers, so too will we also prosper in every dimension of prosperity.

Sowing financial seeds, inclusive of first fruits, tithes and various kinds of offerings are also biblical ways to position oneself for a prosperous life, but secret sin neutralises the spiritual benefit associated with financial sowing. Here is a reminder of a case we dealt with in a previous session – secretive marital unfaithfulness hinders prosperity – it renders the innate potential within your ‘seed’ impotent.

Malachi 2:13-14

- 13 This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.
- 14 Yet you say, For what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant

HIDDEN FINANCIAL SIN PREVENTS PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PROSPERITY:

Lets explore two cases of how financial disobedience led to an inability to prosper financially.

In both instances, the people involved thought that their own human attempt to enrich themselves in a manner that was in violation of God’s Word or command could succeed.

Achan sought to prosper himself by hiding items of Babylonian wealth - an act that was clearly forbidden - through disobedience to Joshua’s voice. This brought tragic judgment upon himself, his household and the nation of Israel.

We either honour or dishonour God with our money, specifically how we handle our first fruit. Jericho was to be a kind of first fruit offered to God. Israel could not enjoy the spoil from the conquest of Jericho. They could enjoy the spoil of other cities as they would be directed. The spoil of Jericho was to be devoted to the Lord. Specifically, Israel was not to touch any of the gold, silver, bronze or iron – this was to be preserved for the Temple. Achan took a Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels. In essence, that which was reserved to be a first fruit offering to the Lord, he took for himself and hid it in his tent. For this he suffered a judgement of death. When we touch the Lord’s portion, we incur death on ourselves. In what way? This sin of Achan affected the potential success of subsequent spiritual battles and the reward of wealth attendant with them. If after the revelation of first fruit has dawned on you, and you do not practice it, it will affect your potential future harvest in God.

By eating our tithe or first fruit, we are essentially attempting to hide, cloak or camouflage our sin. Proverbs 3:9,10 indicates that we are to honour God with our wealth and the first fruits of all our increase. Those who 'HONOUR' God, He will also HONOUR (1 Samuel 2:30b).

JERICOH, the **first city** to be taken when the conquest of Canaan began, was a type of first fruit. Jericho was a fortified city that marked the '**entrance**' into the land of Canaan, a land of God's promise of abundance. One of the meanings of 'Jericho' is '**sent**' – which highlights the apostolic principle (apostle means 'sent one'). Another meaning of Jericho is 'let him smell it' or a 'fragrant place'. Herein is implied that first fruits rise up to God as a sweet and pleasant worshipful fragrance (cf. Acts 10:4 and Phil. 4:18) or that the huge degree of success attendant at Jericho is but only a 'smell' – a hint or an indication of the greater more abundant harvest or levels of conquest to follow. When we consume our first fruit, we are essentially removing the very indication of the subsequent blessing to follow. Signs point to the greater reality. So when you remove the sign, you forgo the attainment of the reality.

Again, the principle to be stressed is this – financial disobedience equates to an attempt to conceal a sin – and "he who hides his sin will not prosper" (Prov. 28:13).

The other example is Gehazi: He attempted to fraudulently extract funds from Naaman, after Elisha explicitly indicated this action was not appropriate. He misrepresented his spiritual father's will. He also did this without Elisha's knowledge – or so he thought – for Elisha said to him that his spirit went with him when he pursued Naaman. For this he was judged – he became leprous, losing his potential for all forms of prosperity, including spiritual prosperity, physical prosperity, social/relational prosperity, material prosperity and mental prosperity (wisdom).

FOR YOUR PERSONAL STUDY:

Explore **other negative examples** that exist in the persons of Cain, King Saul, Tobiah, the nation of Israel in times of spiritual slump, Judas, the rich young ruler, Annanias and Saphira, etc. On the other hand, **positive examples of financial obedience include** Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Abel, Joseph, the widow of Zarephath, the Shunammite woman, David, Israel as a nation in times of spiritual reformation, Ruth, Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehosaphat, Nehemiah, Ezra, Shebna, Jesus Christ, the wise men from the east who came see Jesus, the woman who anointed Jesus with spikenard perfume, Joseph of Arimathea, Barnabas, Lydia, Onesiphorous and Epaphraditus, the Phillipian church, the Macedonian church, etc.

THE MEDITATION ON THE WORD OF GOD – is an important process to bring us to a place of complete obedience. The only way the soul will 'LIVE' is by its compliance in obedience to God's Word. The soul will then prosper, and so will you in every domain of life.

Our soul, i.e. our thinking, emotions and decisions must be brought into alignment with God's thoughts and expectations. The spiritual discipline of 'meditating' on GOD'S Word is a necessary precursor or prerequisite to obeying it. We shall explore this subject soon.

Psalm 1:1-3:

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; **And in whatever he does, he prospers**

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