**VOLUME 70 AUGUST 2012**

**THE PROSPEROUS SOUL**

Greetings in the name of the One who was, who is, and who is to come- Jesus Christ, our Reward!

We pray every one of you are walking in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and are being led into God’s perfect plan for your lives!

Shannon and I are excited to announce to you this month that we believe God has given us another step that leads us into His perfect plan for our lives… Very soon, we will be starting a fellowship on Sunday afternoons!

Many have asked me over the past few years when I was planning on starting something where I am regularly ministering to God’s people. My general response would be that we were just waiting on God to release us. Well, we feel God has given us that green light! You see, while I could have certainly gone out and started some kind of ministry of my own accord, I was not willing to do that until I knew unequivocally that God was leading me to do it. Why? Because while God is not obligated to bless our plans, He will always bless His plan! And we believe this is His plan for this hour, so we believe this will be blessed! Therefore, we are excited about what the Lord has in store on Sunday afternoons in this Middle Georgia region.

Let me give you just a little background of how this came to pass… One evening, Shannon and I just had the Lord place on our hearts an excitement and a passion to start something that people can be a part of on the weekends that would feed them and where they could truly connect with their God. So we began taking a few steps towards making this happen and it has been amazing how God has prepared the way for us. We have received a couple of different prophecies as well as other confirmations that this is God’s plan and purpose for this season. So there is no doubt in our minds that God has something special in store.

What will this fellowship look like? This gathering will contain something similar to a Bible Study/teaching time, but also will involve a time of praise & worship and one on one ministry. While I am certain that the time we spend in the Word will be fruitful and will yield much fruit in those who attend to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying, I am also very excited about the time we will spend praising and worshipping the Lord!

You see, I have always believed that our times of praise & worship should be vertically based and not horizontally based. What I mean by that is that I feel like our praise & worship should be solely focused on God to where our songs are aimed at the Lord and we are not just singing to one another. So as I have always desired this, I am excited to have my first opportunity to incorporate it. And I *know* that as we gather together in one accord and worship Him in spirit and in truth that God’s presence will be manifested in a powerful way. Undoubtedly, this will produce many signs & wonders in our midst because God inhabits the praises of His people!

But we are extremely excited about these Sunday afternoon meetings because we believe that it is God-inspired and because we also know it will be a fruitful time in God’s presence. We will keep you updated on its progress and would ask that you keep us in prayer- that we would be filled with the knowledge of His will and would be strengthened to do His work. We appreciate your prayers, your love, and your support!

Now let’s get in to what I feel the Spirit of God desires to speak to us this month…

**3 JOHN 2**

If you have been receiving these newsletters for any period of time you might have noticed that I always write a particular verse above my signature, and that verse is 3 John 2. This verse, which has always been one of my favorites, says, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” The reason I have always liked to add this verse is because this is my prayer concerning all of you- that you would prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. But what I want us to focus on this month is that this verse does not just express my will for you, nor does it just refer to the Apostle John’s will for his original recipient of Third John; this passage expresses God’s will for all of our lives! Let me explain…

Some have commented on this verse, saying that the truth contained in it was simply the Apostle John’s desire for Gaius, to whom this short letter was written. Therefore, they say that this verse does not express the will of the Lord for all believers for all time, but this is simply incorrect. For who are we to determine what parts of the Bible are intended only for the original recipients of the letters and what parts are applicable to us? If this were so, how would we know if what was written to the Romans were just promises applicable to the believers in Rome? Or how would we know if what was written to the Ephesians was just meant for the select church in Ephesus? How then would we know what parts of the Holy Scriptures were written to us?

The truth is that *all* of the Bible was written for our admonition and instruction! All Scripture is given by inspiration of God- being God-breathed so that we can know and understand God’s will for all of our lives. He is no respecter of persons! Therefore, what He moved the Apostle John to say to Gaius is what God wills for all of His children along with Gaius to receive and embrace. So 3 John 2 is God’s will for all of His children for all time!

So let’s delve into this powerful verse, but let’s look at it from the perspective that God is speaking this directly to us…

**YOU BE LOVED!**

First of all, notice that God refers to you as His “Beloved”… This means that He is addressing those who (pardon the poor English) “be-loved!” In other words, since this verse is God speaking directly to us, by calling us His “beloved”, He is letting us know that we are greatly loved by Him.

You see, this simple truth, if understood correctly, should help us to embrace the truths contained in the rest of this verse that our Heavenly Father wants us to prosper in every area of our lives and live in perfect health. Why? Because how many of you parents out there who truly love your children want anything less than the best for them? No, you want them to prosper in every area of their life and you certainly don’t want them sick and suffering! Any parent that wills for their children to be sick and to suffer should be locked up with the key thrown away! Why? Because if any natural parent did the things to their children that God has been accused of doing to His, that parent would be incriminated in just about every culture or nation on the earth today.

So how can we believe God is any different- especially when His love for us far outweighs any love that we have for our children? No, you “be-loved” and because God loves you so much, He wants you to succeed and prosper on all levels! Thank you Father!

**PROSPERING IN ALL THINGS**

Now notice what the Lord starts off by saying to His beloved… He says, “I pray that you may prosper in all things.”

What an awesome truth! God’s will is that we prosper in all things! Not just in some things; God wants us to prosper in everything! This leaves nothing uncovered! The word “prosper” literally means to be successful, to thrive, and to flourish. So God wants us to be successful, to thrive, and to flourish in every area of our lives! Praise the Lord, our success, growth, and prosperity is God’s will, and He wants us to prosper in every aspect of our life.

Did you know God wants you to be successful in your career? He is not just concerned with what we consider to be the “spiritual things.” He wants you to be successful and to prosper in your business, and this happens as you seek first the kingdom of God in your secular job (i.e. as you practice godly principles and make your career’s aim to glorify God and be a blessing to others). He wants you to prosper in your vocation!

Did you know that God wants you to thrive in the arena of relationships? He wants you to have such a wonderful relationship with your spouse or significant other that you are in awe of the goodness and graciousness of God! He wants you to have such wonderful friends that add to you and that you can truly trust! He wants you to prosper in all of your relationships!

Did you know that God wants you to flourish in your finances? He does not want you struggling to make ends meet and living pay check to pay check! He wants you to have more than enough so that you can fulfill the blessing of Abraham that is on your life, which is being blessed, so that you can be a blessing! He wants you to prosper monetarily!

You see, being able to be a blessing to others is one of the main reasons God wants you to prosper in every area of your life. Sure, He wants you to be blessed simply because He loves you and wants the best for you, but He also wants you to thrive in every area so that you will not constantly be trying to fulfill yourself and can correctly put your focus on the needs of others. If you have needs that are unmet, that takes time and attention away from meeting the needs of others. God wants our cup to overflow so that we can share with others! Thanks be unto God!

**DIVINE HEALTH**

Then notice what else the Holy Spirit told us that God desires for us in this verse… Not only does God want us to prosper in every area of our lives, but He also wants us to “be in health.”

This verse alone should dispel the popular Christian doctrine that sometimes God sends sickness into our lives to teach us something. No, God’s will is that we are healthy, not sick. To live in sickness, disease, and infirmity is no more God’s will for our lives than for us to live in sin, transgression, and iniquity! And this is exactly what you see in Jesus’ ministry, which was a perfect reflection of God’s will (see John 14:7&9 and Hebrews 1:3)!

Acts 10:38 says that Jesus went about doing good and healing *all* who were oppressed by the devil! Why did He go about only doing good and healing everyone who responded to Him in faith? It was because this was (and always will be) God’s will!

But as great as healing is, I want you to notice that 3 John 2 does not say that God wants us to prosper in all things and be “healed”; it says that God wills that we be in “health”! In other words, this verse tells us that God not only wills that we experience healing, but that we experience divine health. For example, God’s perfect will is for our bodies to be so charged with His resurrection power that when germs or viruses touch our bodies, they die immediately. His perfect plan for our lives is that everything from our eyesight, hearing, and overall health is strong and living well above the norm.

And this not only includes wholeness in our physical bodies but also health in our mind and emotions. The prophet Isaiah said that the chastisement needful to obtain our peace was laid upon Him. The Apostle Paul said that the Holy Spirit has been given to us so that we can have a “sound mind.” This describes a soul that is whole and not weak and sick. Jesus purchased not only wholeness in our bodies, but also wholeness in our mind, will, and emotions! He wants us sharp and strong in our soul too. Thank you Jesus!

**JUST AS YOUR SOUL PROSPERS**

So God evidently has a greater vision for our lives than we do for ourselves… He wants us to be successful, to thrive, and to flourish in every area of life- which includes prospering financially, relationally, and vocationally! Not only that, but He also wants us to be whole and strong in every area of our bodies as well- which includes being healthy physically, healthy mentally, and healthy emotionally!

Someone then might say, “Trey, if this is truly God’s will for everyone’s life, then why do we see so little of it fulfilled in our lives?” That is a good question; I’m glad you asked☺…

The reason God’s will is not automatically experienced in a person’s life is because we have a part to play in God’s will coming to pass! It is true! Contrary to popular belief, just because something is God’s will doesn’t mean that it automatically will come to pass.

For instance, it is God’s will to save everyone, is it not? Sure, God wills that none perish but all be saved and come into the knowledge of His Beloved Son (see 2 Peter 3:9). But not everyone gets saved, do they? Why? It is because each and every person born on this earth must respond in faith to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sure, the grace needful to obtain God’s will has already been provided, but in order for us to obtain this grace, we must receive God’s will by faith! This is the only way to salvation! Likewise, the only way to receive every other part of God’s will- which is briefly listed here in 3 John 2- is also by faith.

And this is exactly what the Apostle John said at the very end of this powerful verse… 3 John 2 ends by saying that God wants you to prosper in all things and be in health “just as your soul prospers.”

Now the two words “just as” are extremely important because they show us how God’s will of prosperity and health is going to come to pass in our lives… These two words literally mean “according to”, or better yet “in proportion to.” So what the Holy Spirit was saying was that our prosperity and our health is “in proportion” to our soul prospering. In other words, **our prosperity outwardly is in proportion to our prosperity inwardly!**

So I suppose we better find out what it means for our soul to prosper if every other area of our prosperity is tied to that, don’t you? In other words, if our experiencing God’s will for prosperity in every area of our life and living in divine health is according to our soul thriving and flourishing, then I for one want to discover how my soul can prosper!

**THINKING BIGGER!**

Well, the first thing we need to understand is what our soul is comprised of… Many believe that our soul is comprised of what makes up our personality and includes, but is not limited to, our thinking faculties. So while a prosperous soul can be described in many different ways such as a will that has been shaped and molded by God’s Word, emotions that are excited and passionate for the things of God, or a heart that is desirous of and hungry for the things of God, there is one particular fruit of a prosperous soul that I want us to hone in on this month… And that is if our soul includes our thinking faculties, then this means that our thinking needs to change for the better!

What do I mean by this? I mean our thinking must grow! We must learn to think bigger- seeing God as greater than any situation and seeing ourselves the way that God sees us! We need our heart to become more sensitive to these truths than to the things we see, hear, taste, and feel. This is when our soul is prospering- when our beliefs take precedence over our feelings. When this happens our emotions are affected and the negative emotions like depression and discouragement are replaced with joy and peace. Therefore, a prosperous soul is an attitude and mentality that thinks greater, sees further, and believes bigger!

You see, I am convinced that one of the major pitfalls that keeps you and me from entering into God’s best for our life is our small thinking and believing. I believe that just as the children of Israel limited God through their unbelief (see Psalm 78:41), we can limit God from doing all that He wills to do in our life. The reason I believe this is because I once had the Lord tell me just this…

It was in the fall of 2006 when Shannon and I found out that she was pregnant with Levi… Now while we had definitely planned on having children one day, this was not that day☺. We had just gotten married in July and moved to Colorado Springs in August for me to attend Charis Bible College. Therefore, having our first child during those first two years of our marriage in Colorado was not part of *our* plan. But, thank God, He had a better plan!

What made this news even more alarming than the basic inconveniences of not being ready was the financial predicament we found ourselves in. You see, with me going to school full time, it was going to be extremely difficult to generate the income needed to sustain our budget. And, on top of that, we had always envisioned Shannon staying at home with our children. So the prospect of this seemed *impossible.* I mean, how were we to do what we believed God had put on our heart to do when we were struggling to make ends meet with both Shannon and myself working? In other words, how were we going to meet our budget after Levi arrived if we were struggling to meet our budget when both of us were working before he arrived? So the prospect of Shannon staying at home with Levi seemed like that was not even an option.

Well, there was an evening where I was spending some time in prayer- praying in other tongues- and the Lord spoke something to me that I will never forget…

He first asked me the questions- “Is there anything too difficult for Me? Is there anything I cannot do?” Then He told me- “You need to begin to believe bigger…You need to begin to see further…Stop limiting Me.” I’ll tell you, I came out of my prayer closet that evening full of faith in God’s ability! I told Shannon what He had spoken to me and, that evening, we joined hands on that couch in our little apartment on Illinois Avenue and asked the Lord to provide a way for Shannon to be able to stay at home with Levi. It seemed impossible. It seemed like a foolish request. But we chose to believe the word of the Lord!

Well, several months passed and we continued strong in faith, but as we were easing through the third trimester of her pregnancy, the thoughts of unbelief began to come. We remained persuaded that God was going to provide, but the question that began to trouble our hearts was *how* was He going to provide? Were we supposed to be doing something to help God out? These were the kind of thoughts that we felt ourselves having. So I had an idea… I told Shannon to just go to her employer and ask if she maybe could work for him from home. This seemed like a logical solution because she could stay at home with Levi and still generate the necessary income for our family. Other than this one option, we had no clue how God would provide. So Shannon went to talk to him and before she could get two sentences out of her mouth, he stopped her and said, “Shannon, stop. God has already told me that when Levi is born you are not coming back to work for me.” And you can imagine how far her heart sunk when he told her that. But he then started smiling and said, “And He also told me that from the time Levi is born to the time Trey graduates from Bible College (mind you, this ended up being exactly 12 months) to give y’all $1,000 a month!” Praise the Lord! God basically handed us $12,000 and we didn’t have to do one single thing to earn it! Praise the Lord for His abundant provision!

But how did this occur? It occurred as our souls prospered- as we began to think bigger! You see, we often limit what God wants to do in our life by our small thinking! We think- “Well, it has never happened that way” or “I can’t see God doing that for me.” And although some of us might not say those kinds of things; the truth is that we believe those kinds of things in our hearts! This is because we either have a poor self-image or we have a wrong concept of God. But God wants this to change! He wants our souls to grow and prosper to where we are more sensitive to the spiritual, unseen realities than we are of natural things. It is possible! All things are possible to him who believes! This is what a prosperous soul thinks like!

So begin today to focus on the truths we have talked about this month. First, embrace the truths that God’s will is that you prosper in all things and live in perfect health. And then, after you receive these truths as your own, begin to meditate on these spiritual realities so that you begin to think, talk, and act like they are so because they are! This is when you will begin to see the fruit of 3 John 2 begin to manifest in your life- when you have a prosperous soul. Amen!

 Victoriously,