

Positioning Yourself for Prosperity

By: Mark Lowman

I am going to share with you my testimony. Some of it goes back more than just a few years to give you some background, primarily the last year or so with some teaching about God's goodness, about faith, seed, and wisdom. I promise it's a word in due season.

The economy right now is not doing very good. You can see it every night on TV. But we don't walk by sight. The righteous shall walk by faith. Jesus said that we are in this world but we are not of it. I tell you we are in this economy but we are not of it. You see, in the natural there is an economic crisis at the present time but in the spirit there is an economy that still flows with milk and honey. It is our Kingdom economy, the economy of Heaven. And faith will bring it from the spiritual to the natural. I will prove it tonight by His Word and for His glory.

Some months ago, Pastor Jerry's CD series "Positioning Yourself for Prosperity", in his four sermons teaching on hiding places where provision and prosperity are waiting the first hiding place got my attention. You see the job description where I work for a local high-end furniture company here in Hickory, for probably 21 years I worked as an upholsterer on production. Production work is not hourly pay. The more you produce the more you make. Most of you may be familiar with that.

Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do work at it with all you heart as working for the Lord and not for men."

Ever since I read this it is something that I have tried my best to live by and in a production based work place sometimes that might be hard to do. It is hard to work with the utmost in excellence when you get paid on a production scale.

Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another praise you, not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips."

If we live and apply Colossians 3:23 into everything that we put our hands to we will work with excellence in everything that we do. You will always, always

do your very best. Proverbs 27:2 will keep you humble; you won't be conceited about how good you are. Live by what you believe.

The first hiding place – INITIATIVE

1. See something that need doing and do it before you are asked.

In the workplace where I work on production there may be 10 to 20 pieces of furniture on the floor at any one time. Various pieces pay various amounts. Of course, with competition being what it is, everybody wants the best highest paying job. For whatever reason they may pull a job to the front, we used to call them "rush jobs". Not all the time, but most of the time, they were lesser paying jobs. people didn't want that when they could make two or three dollars more an hour on something else. But when the supervisor came around and said, "Hey, I'm looking for this piece." I like to be the one that speaks up and says, "Sir, we built that two hours ago. It is at the next stage of production."

2. Do it with excellence.

Because we work for the Lord and not for man. Now in this production environment not everyone sees, does, and acts as believers. I worked with a guy I'll call him "Joe" (not his real name). Quality was not one of his better points. Matter of fact I could relate to Paul's thorn, not that Joe was a bad guy, he just followed bad influences.

3. Do more than you get paid to do.

A new product line came through and because of past quality and productivity they selected me and a few other people to build this new product simply because they wanted to keep the business. This new line was also going to an hourly pay rate and not production. Now given hourly vs. production what they do is pay you your average. So what you made on an average they now pay you hourly. And typically what happens with some people is that instead of working at a 100 percent they drop to 50-60 percent. Management watches and they know who is productive. Always be honest, even if it hurts financially. You will be rewarded. At the time you may wonder "*what is happening*" because you are being honest and making less.

When the new product line comes into existence they don't know how long it will take you to build a piece. Therefore, they don't know how much to put on it. Management at that time would come out after you have built several sofas, chairs, whatever it may be and ask, "Mark, how long did it take you to build it?" "I built it in an hour". It took me an hour and they put a fair rate on it. They ask Joe the same question, different piece of furniture and he has built several. Joe builds the furniture in an hour but says it took him two and a half hours. They put that amount of pay on the piece of furniture. Joe is making more money, but Joe is dishonest. If you think it hurts you financially, Colossians 3:24, says "*Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.*" There is your motive. It is the Lord Jesus Christ that you are serving.

4. Always respect authority.

In the workplace, in the home, in the government and in the church. This keeps taking me back to Matthew 8 when Jesus had entered Capernaum a centurion came to him asking for help. "Lord, he said, my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering". Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord I do not deserve to have you come under my roof, but say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I myself am a man under authority with soldiers under me.

I will stop right there for just a moment. How do you suppose he got the authority, the position he was in? By being disrespectful to those who were over him? I don't think so. The centurion knew his authority and he knew the authority over him. Here is what he says. "I tell this one go and he goes, and that one come and he comes. I say to my servant do this and he does it." What he was saying I am in authority. I know when I speak things happen. When Jesus heard this he was amazed and said, "I tell you the truth, I've not found anyone in Israel with such great faith". If I may, what he said was "I have not found anyone in Israel with such great expectation." The centurion said, "Lord I do not deserve to have you come under my roof but speak the word and my servant will be healed". He understood authority. He understood to respect authority. He respected the spiritual authority of Jesus when he said, "Jesus, my Lord, just speak the word. That wowed Jesus. Church, you will never get promotion, higher position, or go to a higher level of authority with a disrespectful or rebellious attitude toward those in authority over you.

Then Jesus said in verse 13, “Go, it will be done just as you believed.” May I say it this way – “Go, it will be done just as you expected it would.” And his servant was healed at that very hour. So always respect authority. For what you respect you will attract.

5. Love one another (this fulfills 1 through 4)

Just as Jesus said, “A new commandment I write unto you, that if we love one another love will fulfill the works of the law.”

But understand something – you will be mocked, ridiculed and made fun of. Why? Because your strive for excellence will embarrass someone else who doesn't. When they put your work beside theirs at final inspection before it goes out the door it is an embarrassment to them and they won't like you for it. It has nothing to do with you, it has nothing to do with them. But the Bible tells us that darkness hates light. It despises it because it exposes deeds done in darkness.

REWARDS FOR INITIATIVE

People retired and production quality levels begin to drop. One day I was working and the supervisor at the time came up to me (I trust him completely – he is a friend of mine and I have known him for many years) and said, “I have to tell you what I just heard. I overheard the vice-president of the company speaking to the plant superintendent and he said, ‘Moral is low, production is down, quality is not what it used to be, what can we do about it?’ The superintendent's reply was, ‘I can't do anything.’ He raised his eyebrows, not something the VP wants to hear. He said, ‘What do you mean?’ He said, and I quote, ‘I don't have ten people like Mark Lowman on the floor.’” That makes you feel good inside. Sometimes God will let you know that you are doing right. So the wheels began to turn and they began talking about starting an upholstery training program for young people who had already proved themselves within the company. They needed a supervisor for this area. It is company policy that they post for new positions. I did not apply. After the interviews were over, I was called to the Human Resources department. They said, “Mark we would like for you to multiply yourself - we want you to do this.” I said okay. My first reward – I was promoted to Training Supervisor, teaching them Colossians 3:23.

A few months later the floor supervisor at that time retired and another guy takes his position. A few months after that he decides that position is not for him so he puts in for a transfer and gets his transfer. This happened within just a matter of days. Once again I was approached by management to consider this position. Well I don't make decisions like that lightly. You go from what you are comfortable with for the past 22-23 years and all of a sudden life changes overnight. So I prayed, didn't hear anything so I turned down the position. They wanted a quick reply and I had not heard so I had no choice.

From that moment on for the next five or six weeks (they gave the job to someone else) I felt inside like he was doing what I was supposed to be doing. I questioned had I missed hearing. But I had an inner drive to go and speak with my Superintendent, so I did. My discussion with him as, "Sir, first I have great respect for you and I don't know why I need to mention this to you but I just know that I do. The gentlemen that filled the position that you had asked me about is doing an excellent job but I know realize that I should have been more aggressive in filling that position. Perhaps you saw something in me that I didn't see. I don't know, I just know that I had to tell you this." His reply was, "I appreciate you coming to me and I will certainly pass it on to my superiors. But understand this, you will always be my first no before I go anywhere else." That does something to you.

Well after that discussion, it happened (Snap) almost like that. I was promoted to the Assistant Floor Supervisor's position. They told the guys on the floor, "You will answer to Mark just like you do me." And at that time at a higher income than my boss. God is so good.

Because I sowed incorruptible seed into my life and into the lives of others and live what I believe I reaped a harvest. I now have the authority to set and adjust the unfair pay rates. Because I respected authority I now have authority. Two positions that I did not apply for, after the interviews were over they sought me out because I sowed the word. That is the God that we serve in this economy. Sowing, do not be deceived, God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Referring back to Pastor Jerry's teaching on "*Positioning Yourself for Prosperity*", God will prosper you in two ways:

1. Someone gives into your bosom – Luke 6:38, “Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured to you.”

2. By gathering your harvest – Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

Gathering will be primary. Someone giving to you (money to you will be the exception). When you sow don't wait for the check in the mail – look for an opportunity to gather. If the check comes, we will receive it. We will take every one. But do not overlook looking for a harvest. But to receive either one you must do something. **SOW. In the desert of this economy people will say, "Hold on to your money, times are bad. You are going to need that to pay some bills."** But you cannot afford to not sow and believe for your harvest.

2 Corinthians 9:10, “*Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.*”

Seed to the sower – that is provision. *Bread for food* – that is provision, that is your cup. *Increase your store of seed* – that is prosperity, that is your overflow. *And will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness* – it will enlarge the people that you affect for the Kingdom of God because of your right standing with the government.

A cup running over is good and that will come first – look at the order, seed to the sower, bread for food, increase your store of seed. Don't stand in the door of the Kingdom for 40 years. Salvation through Jesus is the door. He is the way in but he has given the keys of the Kingdom. The keys to abundant life. So don't keep coming to God for a cup full when He wants to fill your wheel barrel and your truck and then your barns to overflowing.

This is not the barn of the fool in Luke 12. He was a hoarder and he wasn't rich toward God. Savings is wise so you are prepared for every good work financially. We store up incorruptible seed inside our hearts to sow into the lives of others. God also wants us financially blessed to be a blessing and prepared when opportunities are there to sow.

Seed must be released, not consumed. Seed must be sown before it can produce. Seed must be sown in good soil to produce its best yield. Seed must be sown in good soil in faith to produce its best yield for you.

“In faith” simply means with expectation of the harvest. For with expectation you will be looking for the harvest. If you are not looking you will just casually go through life once in a while bumping into a blessing that God has placed in your path and you will say, “I have favor with God – I have favor with man.” I think that it will be sad to a certain degree when we stand before God and He shows us what He had in store for us and what we missed.

I like what Mike Murdock said in “Wisdom Keys That Will Change Your Life”, he said, “Seed is what God multiplies, expectation is why God multiplies.” So how long to the harvest? Within one year. You plant, grow, harvest yearly. We sow, it grows into a season of harvest. We plant a garden, tomatoes, beans, whatever. Do you pick it one time when it ripens? Every few days, few weeks there is a season of harvest.

Now let’s go to the financial realm. I say this for anyone here tonight or anyone who hears this later that has ever wondered if this ministry is good soil. May of last year – “Dominate the Debt” – remember the red chart we filled in weekly until the goal was met. On May 18th of last year Lisa and I sowed into “Dominate the Debt”. Is the May 18, 2009 – is it May yet? In November of last year our home mortgage was paid off! Isn’t that good? God is good! Every time I thank Him for being good He does something better. Two months later our home equity line of credit was paid off. In February our credit card debt was paid off.

This month, we are completing it as we speak – Lisa has wanted to remodel our home for a few years. We remodeled our home debt free. In less than one year, in ten months, one cycle of sowing, growing and a season of harvest Lisa and I owe no man anything but to love him.

You sow in season to reap for a season. Galatians 6:9, “*Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season, at the proper time, we shall reap if we faint not.*” If we do not lose heart, if we do not give up, if we do not lose our expectation.

Live Responsibly. Allow God to bless you. Don’t bless yourself. By that I mean don’t indulge yourself via credit cards and going into debt and then wonder

what happened. Jesus said you can't serve two masters. The mammon's system or God's system. You know when Lisa and I went some years back to borrow the money to purchase our home we wanted to borrow a certain amount. The lender said, "Oh, but you qualify for three times that amount." Irresponsibility would see new cars, vacations, things that you couldn't afford.

Here are two words every believer should learn concerning finances – *Stewardship* and *Management*. Church this happened not by someone giving tens of thousands of dollars into our bosom. Could God do it that way? Yes He could and we would receive it. But He did it by stewardship, management and increase.

Well what can I do to be blessed you may ask. James 1:22-24 puts it clearly, *"Do not merely hear the Word and so deceive yourselves; do what it says. Anyone who hears the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror and after looking at himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like."* We have heard this scripture. We have heard it and heard it. Physically to forget what you look like as soon as you turn around. But Jesus said that My Word is spirit so let's look at that on a spiritual level.

In the spiritual realm you will forget what you look like. You will forget who you are in Christ. You will forget that you are an overcomer and more than a conqueror; that you are sealed, filled and empowered by Holy Spirit and a partaker of his divine nature. You will forget that you are seated with Christ in heavenly places and the angels of God are encamped around you. You will forget that you are a King and a Priest unto God and an ambassador of Christ and the apple of your Father's eye.

James 1:25 says, *"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does."*

Don't chase after the blessings. Just last week when we were so busy with the remodeling Lisa didn't have the time to do what she usually does which is working her job, calling people, making contacts and setting appointments. She received (three that I know of) phone calls from people that she did not know and had never met. Most of you know that she is in cosmetics, "We have never met

but my name is so and so and I understand that you do cosmetics, I need some and I have a friend that needs some too.”

Do not chase after the blessings. Seek ye first the Kingdom and His righteousness and let the blessings chase you. Jesus said that if anyone hears the message about the Kingdom and does not understand it; the evil one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. So we need to hear the Word. Jesus said understand it so Satan can't take it. And do what it says with expectation of the harvest. Live what you believe and reap the blessing.