

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN



ALL
PREACHERS
WANT IS
YOUR MONEY

John Avanzini

**... believe his [God's] prophets, so shall ye prosper.
2 Chronicles 20:20**

"All preachers want is your money!" I am sure you have heard these faith-destroying words before. You may have even said them.

Think about it. Have you ever heard anyone say, "All the breakfast cereal companies want is your money"? You probably haven't. Yet, if you perform the following test, you will soon find out what cereal manufacturers really want. Pick up a box of your favorite cereal at the grocery store, and tell the clerk at the checkout counter you are not going to pay for it, because all the cereal makers really want is for you to have a wholesome breakfast.

If you try this test, you will find out that all they really want is your money!

With that thought in mind, let me pose a few interesting questions. Why don't we ever hear people say, "All grocers want is your money"? "All automobile dealers want is your money"? "All insurance agents, theater owners, gas station attendants, and fast-food clerks want is your money"?

All of these organizations have one primary purpose. They want to get your money! Everyone knows this is true, so why do we continue to hear that it's the preachers who want our money?

If you think about it, you will have to conclude there is a sinister plot at work against preachers. It is a devilish plan to break your confidence in godly ministers.

Christians must wake up to the fact that the devil is interfering with the way they think about preachers and their reason for being in the ministry. Satan knows if he can trick you into believing that all preachers really want is your money, it will block you from receiving God's best. The Bible tells us there is a vital link between your ability to believe God's ministers and your ongoing prosperity.

... Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; *believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

2 Chronicles 20:20

When the devil tries to hinder the plan of God for our lives, he has limited ability. He has only three primary weapons—the ability to *tempt, accuse, and deceive*. The power to deceive often proves to be his weapon of choice.

... the Devil... deceiveth the whole world....

Revelation 12:9

You might say that "deception is the oldest trick in the Book," because the first mention of Satan in the Bible tells how he deceived Adam and Eve. He tricked them into believing that God was keeping something good from them.

By deception, Satan has convinced millions of Christians not to trust their

spiritual leaders. He has done this with a masterstroke of advertising genius—a crisp, clear one-liner that simply says *all preachers really want is your money*. There is a reason he attacks our covenant right to a prosperous life. The devil knows the longer it takes for believers to come into the prosperity of God, the longer it will take to evangelize the world.

... how shall they preach, except they be sent?...

Romans 10:15

When the Apostle Paul uses the word *sent* in the above verse, he is speaking of the finances it takes to send workers to the fields of ministry. Money to send laborers into the harvest is an essential part of evangelizing the world. That is the reason the Bible talks so much about finances.

It is impossible to study the Word of God without realizing that it has a tremendous amount to say about money.

Approximately one out of every six verses in the Bible relates to money or something that can be turned into money.

Since so much Scripture relates to financial wealth, you would expect most Christians to insist that their pastors teach them about money on a regular basis. However, because Satan constantly sows a lie into the minds of God's children, most preachers seldom mention finances. This lie —all preachers really want is your money— is a demonic slogan that creates a negative attitude toward anything pastors say about it.

Pastors Are Valuable Assets

Do you really think your pastor is only after your money? Do you really believe he is making more money at your church than he could make in the secular field? Because of my extensive travel, I know hundreds of pastors, evangelists, and Bible teachers. I can honestly say most of them could easily find employment in the secular realm. The majority would make excellent salespeople, as well as good managers. Many could begin in upper management positions, receiving top pay and benefits. If all your pastor really wanted was money, he would go where the really big money is. He would head for Wall Street or the boardroom of a Fortune 500 company.

Anyone who stops to think about it will immediately realize that the reason most preachers choose to serve God is much greater than money. They serve God because He has graciously called them into His ministry.

Unfortunately, the damage Satan is causing goes far beyond merely casting suspicion on the reputation of ministers. Those seven words, "All preachers really want is your money," have all but stopped the abundant financial flow that God wants His children to experience. Because most Christians are unable to fully trust their ministers, they have disqualified the greater part of the Church

from the prosperity of God. The Bible confirms this fact by telling us that believing the men and women of God is essential to achieving financial success.

... believe his [God's] prophets, so shall ye prosper.

Since the Bible establishes clearly that we must believe the prophets to prosper, the opposite must also be true. *If we do not believe the prophets, we will not prosper.*

It is important for you to understand that Satan is the father of all lies, and everything he speaks is a lie.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:44

I hope you can see that Satan is the one who wants you to believe you can't trust the ministers of God. *He promotes this lie to stop you from prospering.*

Government statistics prove the statement, "all preachers want is your money," is not true. They show over 700,000 non-profit religious organizations in the USA. In the last few years, there has been only one nationwide scandal involving a preacher illegally taking people's money.

With this statistic in mind, let's consider the scandals involving the secular lending industry. In comparison to preachers of the gospel, these money handlers look like a reincarnation of Al Capon and his gang of thugs. In spite of this fact, even as you are reading, people are entrusting more money than ever before to the secular lending institutions of our nation.

It is obvious that we cannot attribute the universal mistrust of God's ministers to the few rogue preachers who are out to get people's money. There is something much bigger behind this hellish attack on Christian ministers.

Let me give you an example to show you how ridiculous it really is to make a blanket statement that all preachers want is your money. Suppose you came to me and said, "Brother John, I want you to meet a friend of mine." What would you think if I quickly responded, "I don't want to meet any of your friends"? No doubt, you would want to know why I would make such a rude statement.

What would you think if I told you I make it a strict rule never to meet anyone's friends, because a fellow once introduced me to a friend? Then his friend asked me for some money. So now I never meet anyone's friend because *all friends really want is your money.*

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know this kind of reasoning is flawed. After hearing my answer, you would probably have serious doubts about my ability to make proper decisions. If I were ignorant enough to believe that all

friends really want is your money, I probably wouldn't be able to make good judgments about the more important issues of life.

Yet, that's the same kind of lie some Christians believe about gospel ministers. Just because a few preachers have focused on getting money from God's people instead of ministering the Word, the devil has duped many Christians into believing that every preacher is after their money.

Please do not let the devil trick you into being as ignorant as my illustration would have shown me to be. You must evaluate gospel ministers on the basis of their own personal integrity and the anointing God has given them. This is the proper way to decide whether or not you can trust a preacher with money matters.

Ignorance Leads to Mistrust

Many Christians are reluctant to give when the man of God receives an offering, because they do not know what the Bible actually says about giving and receiving.

Let me illustrate. Suppose you are in the last stages of bankruptcy, and you hear I am conducting a debt-free rally in your area. You ask your pastor to bring me over so I can give you some *scriptural advice* concerning your financial problems.

When I come into your house, you begin to explain your financial problem to me, but

I seem to ignore what you are saying. I simply walk into the living room and ask if your beautiful television set is included in the bankruptcy.

"Yes, Brother John. Everything I own is involved in the bankruptcy."

With your answer, I immediately go into the next room, and ask, "How about this couch? Is it in the bankruptcy?"

You might become a bit irritated and begin to think that inviting me over wasn't such a good idea after all. However, to be courteous, you answer anyway, "Yes, Brother John. Everything in this home is involved in the bankruptcy. Why are you asking me about all the things that I am going to lose to the bankruptcy court? Are you trying to embarrass me? Please, Pastor, would you and Brother John just leave? This visit isn't working out as I thought it would."

Instead of leaving, I shout a quick promise. "Give me another minute! I'm sure God is going to be able to help you!" Then I go into the family room and see a magnificent grand piano. I ask, "Is this beautiful piano in the bankruptcy?"

Then I finally hear the answer I want. "As a matter of fact, Brother John, it isn't. It was given to us after the bankruptcy official took an inventory of all the belongings we would lose in the bankruptcy. It's the only thing we have that isn't mortgaged. We own it free and clear."

Immediately I reply, "Great! I now have *the biblical solution* to your financial problem. You must sell the piano and give the money to the ministry!"

Now I know exactly what you would be thinking. "Why, that slimy, good-for-nothing, preacher! His only interest in me is getting my money. This proves beyond any shadow of a doubt the thing I have always heard about preachers. *All they really want is your money!*"

If this would be your reaction, you would have totally missed the point. Before going any further, think back to the reason that you invited me to come to your house.

You wanted to know if I could give you any *advice from God's Word* that would get you out of your financial dilemma. Don't you see that giving God the money from the sale of the piano would be the only scriptural solution for overcoming the financial crisis you are facing? This is not because God needs your money. God's Word actually tells us if He ever needed anything, He wouldn't ask any of His children for it.

If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof.

Psalm 50:12

The reason I would encourage you to find some money you could give to God is that giving money *to* God is essential to receiving money *from* God. Your Bible teaches this truth from cover to cover.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for

whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:7

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into

Luke 6:38

Notice the word *it* in the above verse. Jesus says, "Give, and *it* [that which you are giving] shall be given unto you." Biblical economics teaches that if you want to receive the thing you need, you must release some of the thing you need *as a seed*. Don't let this kind of thinking throw you, because God doesn't do things the way we would do them.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:8

Everyone knows that when a person is facing bankruptcy, he needs money. Nothing else will do. According to God's Word, if you need money *from* God, you must release money *to* God.

If you are ever going to receive finances from God, you must let the

following verse become a part of you.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6:7

Please note that giving the sales price of the piano to God would not be an act of charity. *It would be an act of faith.* You would be placing your faith in God's promise to multiply back to you the money you had given Him.

Give, and it shall be given unto you....

Luke 6:38

It's sad that church members often trust the world's system more than they trust their own pastors. For example, when a person borrows money from the bank, even the most trusted customer must give the loan officer a complete financial statement. He must list his total income and assets, as well as any debts. The bank will not loan him a cent without this total disclosure. Notice the borrower will have to trust the banker enough to tell him everything about his financial condition!

Now ask yourself the following question.

Would you be willing to show a complete financial statement of your income, assets, and liabilities to your pastor? Or would something deep inside of you gently whisper, "If the pastor knows too much about my finances, he will find a way to get my money." There is something very wrong when millions of believers freely trust *the man of the world* and cannot trust their *man of the Word*.

All believers know the benefits they receive from the local church are far more valuable than any benefit they might receive from a lender. Nevertheless, they continue to hide their financial matters from their pastors, although they share them freely with the men of the world.

I have further evidence from personal experience that proves this point. Several years ago, when I pastored a local church in southern California, one of the little girls in our church came to me and asked, "Brother John, can you keep a secret?"

I said, "Yes, I can keep a secret."

With this promise, she began to tell me that her mother had just inherited a very large amount of money. However, her mother had also told her not to tell me about the money, or she would get a spanking.

Now this woman, who had painstakingly avoided telling me (her pastor) about her good fortune, went directly to her unsaved banker and said, "Look what I've got!"

She confidently shared the news about her newly obtained wealth with him.

So the lender said, "This is too good for a low interest certificate of deposit. Your money won't grow fast enough in that kind of investment. I will put your money in a very special business venture that is coming to our city. Trust me, and you will make lots of money."

Isn't it interesting that everyone thinks all the investment counselors really want is to increase your money?

A number of months later, this same lady was in my office weeping and brokenhearted. "Oh, Brother John, my inheritance is gone. I've lost every cent of it. The man of the world took it from me, and I feel that I will never see it again. *All he really wanted was to get my money!*"

Now, it is true this dear woman's mistrust of her man of God initially saved her the 10 percent tithe that was due on the inheritance. After all, she was smart enough to know that "all preachers really want is your money." With this satanic thought fixed firmly in her mind, she went to the friendly lender and lost everything.

Had this woman only come to me (her man of God), I would have encouraged her to obey God's Word and pay her tithe.

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:30

The Bible says that by tithing on the inheritance, she would have opened the windows of heaven over it. This act would have gone far in protecting her money from those who wanted to devour it.

Let's see God's promise to the tither!

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:10-11

How dangerous it is to fall for Satan's one-liner that all preachers really want is your money. The Bible states clearly that those who trust their man of God will experience God's prosperity in their lives.

... believe his [God's] prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2 Chronicles 20:20

A precious widow from the ancient city of Zarephath gives us a good example of the benefits of believing the man of God. This widow and her child

were saved from starvation because she was able to trust the prophet. In 1 Kings 17, the prophet Elijah asked the widow to give him something to eat. At first she refused, because he had asked at the worst possible time. A famine was raging, and she was down to her very last bit of food!

... Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

1 Kings 17:11-12

She was gathering the very firewood she would use to cook her family's last meal. The famine had brought her to the bottom of the barrel. All hope was gone. The death angel was at the door, and there was no natural way for them to survive.

If anyone had the right to say, "All preachers want is your money," it would have to be this widow. However, she knew in her heart that her preacher wanted far more *for her* than he wanted *from her*. What the prophet really wanted was to help her *release a miracle of abundant supply that would save her family*. All that stood between starvation and her miracle was her ability to *believe her man of God*. Thank God that Satan's one-liner did not destroy her confidence in Elijah. Instead, she listened to her man of God with a heart full of hope as he ministered *death to her fear*, and *life to her faith*. With a clear, bold voice, the prophet said:

... Fear not ... make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel,

The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail....

1 Kings 17:13-14

The Bible tells us her reward was a barrel of multiplying meal and a cruse of continuously flowing oil. However, I would like to show you an infinitely greater miracle that took place that day. The greater miracle was the widow's ability to trust her man of

God with *her most precious possession!*

Think about the confidence this dear woman had in her prophet! At his word, she took *the food from her starving son's mouth* and gave it to the preacher. Oh, thank God that the devil had not poisoned her mind against the integrity of her prophet!

Let's review the astounding truth of this woman's testimony. She knew the man of God was coming. God Himself had told her to sustain him. However, just

hearing these instructions from God was not enough to bring her to obedience.

It took *a man of God that she fully trusted* to help her overcome her fear. With the comforting words "fear not," the prophet of God inspired her to obey God.

Please note that the widow's ability to trust Elijah brought her to the place where she could obey the command of God. *Without total trust in her man of God*, she would have been overcome by the fear of insufficiency, and death would have come to her and her household.

... believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2 Chronicles 20:20

You must not overlook this scriptural truth. Consider the most important decisions you have made for God. You probably made them *after* you received the help of a trusted minister of the gospel.

This happened to me in two of the most important decisions of my life. For two weeks before I accepted Christ as my Savior, God spoke to me night and day about getting saved. However, I stubbornly refused to submit to His passionate appeal. I argued, resisted, and just said no!

Then one Sunday night, a visiting minister preached a powerful hellfire-and-brimstone message. When he finished, the congregation sang the invitation hymn with great conviction. They sang it over and over again while the young preacher waited for sinners to come to the altar.

Finally, he looked straight at me and said, "Are you going to come up here and get saved, or am I going to have to come out there and get you?"

With those powerful words from the man of God, I finally did the thing God had been asking me to do for two weeks. I got saved! Today, I am a living witness to the fact that *all the preacher really wanted was for me to get saved*.

The same thing happened when God called me into full-time ministry. He had been calling me out of the business world for at least two and a half years. However, I sternly refused to surrender.

I remember clearly the night all of this changed. An old-time revival preacher, Oliver B. Green, was preaching. In the middle of his sermon he suddenly stopped and said, "There's a man in this room that God has been calling into full-time service, and he won't surrender. I will give that person exactly fifteen seconds to get down here and surrender his life to God, or I'm coming out there to get him!"

Well, that was it. John Avanzini obeyed the man of God and started on the road to becoming a preacher of the gospel.

There you have another preacher, and *all he really wanted was for me to say yes to God's perfect will for my life*.

Remember, the key that unlocked God's miracle increase for the widow at Zarephath was the confidence she had in her man of God.

... she went and did according to the saying of Elijah....

1 Kings 17:15

Thank God that Satan's workers had not convinced her that all Elijah wanted was the last bit of food in her cupboard.

I hope it is becoming clear to you that the prosperity of God will not break forth in your life if you believe that all preachers really want is your money. We must trust our ministers. As long as we allow our minds to be dominated with doubt about their integrity, we will not be able to receive the prosperity that comes from God. Remember, the Bible says:

... believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2 Chronicles 20:20

Your minister wants you to prosper in every area of your life. Plant this thought firmly into your thinking process, and I promise you that *your Christian walk will dramatically improve*. Do not allow carnal Christians or the children of the devil to rob you of a trusting relationship with your preacher. Remember, the primary purpose in the heart of every true minister of the gospel *is to help you experience all that God has promised*.

Here is a saying that is truly worth remembering, believing, and repeating. *"All preachers really want is what God wants for you!"*