

The Prosperity Message of Kenneth Copeland: Examined.

By: Ted Clore

I. Creating Faith.

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17 KJV)

The Word-Faith religion has at its heart certain uniquely defined doctrines. These doctrines are usually based upon an eclectic style of theology, piecing together a mosaic in which the doctrines exist. Sometimes this style of theology is driven by the principle of searching through materials hunting for what confirms it. This often leads to finding a verse, paragraph, sentence or historical document or author into which the theology is read. The presuppositions and presumption of the theology emerge as the defining process and instead of seeing the contextual or historical data in the proper light and setting, the theology is read into the data in a manner that the adherent thinks he has found affirmation and confirmation for his belief. I call this treatment of theology, *Eclectic Theology*, because of the hunting and searching process it so often demonstrates as its driving force.

This method was adopted in the beginning stages of when this theology began to emerge and its founder, E. W. Kenyon, demonstrated this often. He began with certain presuppositions and presumptions and then searched for, hunted and invented means and ways to find those in the biblical record and materials he encountered over many years of effort. That method has been the standard fair since, as the Word-Faith apologists, teachers and leaders demonstrate it over and over in their methods of apologetics and teaching¹.

For example, Kenyon taught the heretical view that Christ took a satanic nature while atoning for the sin of man². This he deemed as a “spiritual death”, which is a redefining of the orthodox and historical view of *spiritual death*. His claim was that Jesus died two deaths, one a physical death and the other a spiritual death. He stated at one time that he wasn’t sure about this doctrine, but was searching for a way to confirm it, as it was something that he believed in his heart. He says, “For years I knew this but I had no scriptural proof”.³ He continues to explain that he found his answer when he learned of the *Intensive Plural* used in Isaiah 53:9:

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death (*deaths*); because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (Isa 53:9 KJV)

The Hebrew used in this verse employs a grammatical method common among Hebrew writers. It is the use of a plural noun to signify the intensity or magnitude of an event. It has nothing to do with the number of deaths Christ died, but is signifying the type of violent and intense death of Christ. His death, was one of that it is viewed as a death of such magnitude that it was a severe and intense death. The Hebrew would say, “He died the deaths”.

¹ See my articles *Eclectic Theology and its Natural Errors*, and *The Failure of Charismatic Theology* for further examples and explanations of the theology.

² For more on this see: *A Different Gospel*, by D. R. McConnell, and *What Happened from the Cross to the Throne*, by E. W. Kenyon.

³ *Identification*, p. 18, Kenyon.

My point being this, Kenyon believed prior to his finding a source that Christ's died two deaths, one spiritual and one physical. When he found something that he could use to support his belief, he misapplied a word to show his belief, he read his belief into scripture and was satisfied with the outcome, although it is a misapplication and ignorant use of a word. The method used in the theology is to find things that can be used to confirm the theology, rather than adopting the theology to what is meant by the source. It causes the adherent to seek for things it finds useful for its purpose. This is what I mean by *Eclectic Theology*, it is a means to use various unrelated and often misused sources to construct a belief and confirm it with outside sources, even though it would mean that those sources would be redefined and misused in the application.

Kenneth Copeland has emerged as one of the leaders and definers of this *Eclectic Theology*. He is probably the foremost and most celebrated minister of the religion and is often looked to for his views from the Word-Faith adherents. He has written many books, articles, spoken worldwide, and been found in all types of media to promote his message of "*faith and prosperity*". This is a foundational doctrine of the movement, and is what is said to be the defining doctrine. Almost all of the adherents of this religion, view this a common bond between those that claim this as their theology.

In his book *The Laws of Prosperity*, Kenneth Copeland lays out the fundamentals of his belief and the foundational scriptures in which he is going to build from, to show how to achieve the favor of God and prosper, both financially and spiritually in the kingdom of God. As we look at this teaching remember his claim that, "this is the foundation of the doctrine" and is what he deems "foremost throughout the study" and is the "scriptures on which our (*his*) whole study is founded".

It is my contention that the Word-Faith apologist builds his doctrines by reading his assumptions into the scriptures; this has been demonstrated upon several occasions. The *Eclectic Theology* of the Word-faith religion works upon this very basic mistake. Instead of letting scripture build it, it reads into the scriptures and all supporting materials what is found within the basic teaching. Let us examine that this is indeed what is happening and that instead of proving his points, he instead builds upon poor logic, poor principles of handling the Scripture and an overall, albeit unknown, dishonesty in doctrine.

Copeland starts his teaching with the following:

"As we begin this study of prosperity and how it functions according to the Word of God, let's read the basic scriptures on which our whole study is founded. Let me mention here that we are putting the Word of God first and foremost throughout this study, not what we think it says, but what it actually says! When we see it in the Word, believe it, and begin to act on it, faith is created. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)⁴. (Emphasis mine.)

He is stating, a foundation to build upon, and saying that "faith" is something that is created within the believer by certain actions that person makes, namely that the believer "believe it and begin to act upon it". "It" is the word of God. He appeals to a verse that says faith is created by "hearing" the word of God. That is, faith comes by comprehension of the word of God through a

⁴ *Laws of Prosperity*, by Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1974: p. 9.

Please note that this same book is still being offered through Mr. Copeland's ministry. It is promoted as the foundation to financial success and sound instruction and guidance regarding finances.

process of hearing it. This is a foundational scripture to what he is going to build upon, and is for the most part a truth that is fundamental within all of the Christian faith. That is, that it is believed that faith comes from hearing the message of God. It is common among all of the Protestant church to read this scripture as the means of proclaiming the gospel message to bring people into the kingdom of God or into “*the faith*”. So that those who hear the message will be strengthened and be built up in their faith.

He Continues:

“As you read our basic scripture text, remember Jesus said in [John 17:17](#), “Thy word is truth.” For a clearer meaning substitute the Word for truth as follows: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth [the Word] that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth [the Word]. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth [the Word]” ([3 John 2-4](#)).”⁵

Now Mr. Copeland’s own words say that this is “the foundation” and “the foremost” principle of his teaching, that is that scriptures are to be believed and acted upon. These verses and his premise is what he is going to build one of the “unique doctrines” of the Word-Faith Religion on. He being one of the prominent leaders of this religion is stating that he views these scriptures to be what is foundational to the Word-Faith *theology of prosperity* and a fundamental truth to the Christian believer. He even implies that the scriptures are the “truth of God” and he is confident that the truth is a sure thing to build his doctrine upon. And with this he has brought three verses together as the foundation of his doctrine.

Here they are for clarity and focus.

So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ([Rom 10:17 KJV](#))

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ([Joh 17:17 KJV](#))

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. ([3Jo 1:2-4 KJV](#))

And Copeland leaves us with the impression that this is all well and good, and he is going to begin his doctrine upon sound scripture and truth, not building upon what “we think” these verses say, but we will “believe them and act upon them”. Let us examine his premise and see how sound this teaching is, in an honest and straightforward manner. Seeking the truth of the teaching and most importantly the truth of the Bible, the word of God. This is what he wants us to do, he said it himself, believe the Bible and not what someone thinks it says, I would hope he would apply that principle to himself as well.

His first assumption: “Faith”, is a creation from taking scripture and “believing it and then beginning to act on it”. If you do this then, according to him, a person will “*create faith*”. This is the beginning of *the many assumptions* the Word-Faith apologist makes as he teaches the traditions and beliefs of those that taught him. I would have you note that he *has not shown that*

⁵ Ibid

faith is created by *believing and acting* upon the word, because the scripture he uses for this assumption says nothing like that. Notice what it says, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God”. Where does this verse say that faith comes from “believing and acting upon the word”? It doesn’t, actually this verse tells us something very different, that is, that faith comes from hearing the Gospel message of Christ, and the meaning here is comprehending the message of Christ, which sets all others apart from those that are believers. Any man can hear and act on the word of God, but only the believer can hear and comprehend the word of God. Consider this in the context it was written:

But what saith it? **The word is nigh thee, *even in thy mouth, and in thy heart***: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? **So then faith *cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*** (Rom 10:8-17 KJV)

Faith is a product of hearing do you see that? Mr. Copeland’s beginning premise is a reading into the scriptures, *eisegeisis*, and is not at all “putting the Word of God first and foremost throughout this study” as he claimed he would be doing. Instead he substitutes his meaning at the onset of his foundational teaching, “*believe and act*”, in a most deceitful way, although I believe that it is unknown to him of this deceit he has been taught it by his mentors and teachers. The Word-Faith theology holds true to its agenda, that is, to prove itself at all cost just like E. W. Kenyon demonstrated in its beginning. And this is not splitting hairs finding a problem, but is in fact a fundamental flaw in the teaching and apologetic methods employed within the theology, *from its beginning*. Mr. Copeland is parroting the method he learned from his predecessors and mentors of his religion.

Instead of assuming, as Mr. Copeland does that faith is created by some action of man, “*believing and acting*”, and not supporting that claim with scripture, let us look at what this scripture says about where faith comes from. The scripture is clear that this “faith” comes from **that which you already heard**. The Apostle is referring to the message that was already proclaimed to those that were reading this. He, in context, is talking about what is it that has given you the ability to “call upon the name of the Lord” for salvation. And that which gave you that “faith” was “the gospel of peace”. A message that is near you and in your heart already, that is the message that the Apostle preaches. Read Romans 10:8-17 again and see if that is what the Apostle is teaching within the context of these verses.

But what saith it? **The word is nigh thee, *even in thy mouth, and in thy heart***: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (Rom 10:8 KJV)

And,

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that **preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!** (Rom 10:15 KJV)

Please note here, faith is a fruit of the Spirit of God and bore or produced in the believer. A fruit that is born out of the Spiritual Life of God and the believer's life with that Spirit. It comes from, not "believing and acting", but instead by comprehending the gospel of peace, realizing that we have it in our hearts. This is something that the believer has *already received* when he accepted the message of the Apostle, the gospel message of peace, glad tidings and good things. A message of reconciliation between those that believe and the Giver of Life. It is that we can comprehend the peace and good news of the message of Christ that is the source of our faith. We shouldn't put the cart before the horse here, but instead put the scripture before the teaching.

The Apostle is telling us faith's source is in the fact that the believer has already heard the Gospel of peace and glad tidings, and it already exists within him, not something to be created by works and actions, but something *already created* and near the believer. It is in his mouth and heart already, because they had already heard the "word of faith", the message of the peace between man and God. What could bring more confidence and trust (faith), than knowing that the enmity between you and God is healed, and you are in right standing with God because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. The believer already has this in his heart, as it is what he has been established upon in the first place.

But what saith it? **The word is nigh thee, [even] in thy mouth, and in thy heart:** that is, the word of faith, which we preach; (Rom 10:8 KJV)

And because they had already heard that message of peace and glad tidings, that was brought to them by the Spirit of God through the Apostle's message, they would bear fruit of that union between man and God, produced not from the action of man, but by the effort of God that had brought them the message of liberation, hope, trust and confidence. In other words, men don't hear the message and then act upon that message to create "faith" and then again to create "more faith". Instead, they have already received the message and can have confidence in the fact that they are reconciled to God and faith springs forth from that fact. The action will be a fruit of what is already received, not what they can produce through their own actions. The word is near the believer, already, even in our mouth and heart. We are reconciled to God through Christ and the message of justification and reconciliation has already given us the faith to proceed on. And the Apostle confirms this fact, that faith is Spiritual fruit that is bore by the believer. Fruit that is produced by the Spirit, not by "believing and acting", but by being a person that has the gospel message in their heart and mouth. Consider the Apostles words:

Stand fast therefore in **the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free**, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Gal 5:1 KJV)

And,

But **the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, **faith**, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23 KJV)

And, that by grace salvation is realized through faith, this being a gift from God. Both the salvation and the faith resulting from God's grace, *is not something* born from a man's effort to

believe and act upon the word of God. But he believes and acts because of the word of God that he has already received, producing what it is designed to do within the heart that has received it.

It is here where we find the Pelagian⁶ tendencies of the Word-Faith religion, that is that man produces within his own effort that which is needed for life and salvation. It is here that we find that faith is not a Spiritual fruit created when the Gospel message was preached and comprehended, but is instead something that the believer manufactures through the effort of “believing and acting”. This is a self-determining action rather than a Spiritual result. The Word-Faith religion is teaching a basic belief inherent in it and that belief is determining the how the scripture is being read and understood from the Word-Faith perspective.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *[it is]* the gift of God: (Eph 2:8 KJV)

This is something that is an already realized fact, that God has already dealt to the believer the measure of faith. Created, not by “believing and acting”, but by grace, that is realized through sober thinking devoid of the pride that the Word-Faith religion comes to the scripture with. Thinking that doesn’t push us to create a pride in our own effort, but through the already grace dealt faith measured to the believer. “God has dealt”, and that is contrary to the Word-Faith teaching that we deal and create faith by “believing and acting”. It is an unbridled mind and one that thinks more highly of itself than it should when it attributes to man what God has done. Two mutually exclusive ideas, the idea taught in the scriptures that finds God as it’s source and creator of faith, and that of the Word-Faith adherent that attributes to himself the ability to create what is pleasing to God by reading his theology into the scriptures.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *[of himself]* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as **God hath dealt** to every man the measure of faith. (Rom 12:3 KJV)

Let me continue with the Apostles thoughts that faith comes from the Gospel you have already heard.

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17 KJV)

The first “hearing” is a genitive. It is showing an action coming away from the subject, toward the predicate, or toward an object. The faith is coming from the subject, which in this portion of scripture is the gospel (the word of God) that has been already received, and toward the object, which is the one hearing, comprehending the gospel of peace and reconciliation. The Genitive is showing possession, they already possess both the gospel and the faith that came from that message. Now think about this for a moment. The gospel is what produces a salvation-al faith in the hearer, not the one that hears the word, causing himself, to “believe and act”. That is, the gospel message causes faith in the one hearing the message and it is that hearing which causes one to “believe and act”. The gospel has caused faith through hearing it, and the Apostle is telling the Roman believers they already have received the gospel of peace and glad tidings, because he knows they already have received that message from him.

⁶ Pelagius, was a teacher in the late 4th and early 5th centuries. He denied the teaching of original sin and the results of that teaching. Thus he taught that man has a God given freewill to choose spiritual things according to that will. To him faith is the result of will and determination, as apposed to faith being the result of God regenerating the heart of man. I would recommend reading R. C. Sproul’s short essay, *The Pelagian Captivity of the Church*.

Mr. Copeland's first premise is faulty, he plainly states that a person can hear the word of God and then he can believe and act, *creating faith*. But the scripture says that it is not something that comes from the believer's side, like Copeland is teaching, but from the other side, that is, that faith is a result of the gospel. Believing and acting is not creating faith, but instead hearing the gospel message and the fruit of that hearing is what causes our faith, our confidence that cause us to believe and act. We remember that consistently the scriptures teach us that **faith is a fruit, not a work**. ([Gal 5:22](#)) In other words, Christian faith is not something that comes from the effort of man, but is instead something that comes from God through the means He has created and given to create that faith. Faith's source is God and its object is God.

II. Synonyms and Truth.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ([Joh 17:17 KJV](#))

Mr. Copeland says that we should remember that the scriptures say, "Thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)). I agree, we should remember that the Lord's word is truth. Not Mr. Copeland's traditions of men and teachings that are imposed into the scriptures. Not his learned teachings from his mentors and teachers. Not the philosophies that he attempts to read into that word, but the word is truth. He tells us, "Let me mention here that we are putting the Word of God first and foremost throughout this study, not what we think it says, but what it *actually* says!" But in fact, he is doing just the opposite. And if we do put the word of God first, it tells us something very different than his foundational assumption. That is, that faith is a result of hearing the gospel message, not a result of "believing and acting" which he claims creates faith. He is doing just what he said we *shouldn't do* and that is that he is telling us what he thinks the scripture says, not what it actually says. He is bound by his traditions and philosophies, and can't see beyond them. Mr. Copeland's foundational verse, at this point, would read, "*Faith is created by believing and acting upon the word of God*". But the word of God says, "**Faith comes by hearing**", and the Apostle has taught us that the hearing was from the already received and believed gospel of peace. Because the Roman believer had heard the gospel message, he had faith that was already in his mouth and heart.

Mr. Copeland then continues, because the scriptures say that the "word is truth", we can then substitute the word "truth" with "word", they are interchangeable and synonymous based upon this verse. Now because he is building on a faulty beginning premise, he has no objection to continue that same building plan. And instead of letting the scripture tell him what to believe (as he claimed he was), he now wants to redefine the scripture to make it say what he believes. He is now, in a blatant manner, reading his belief into the word, without a single justification of doing so other than stating [John 17:17](#) declares, "Thy word is truth". This seems to be a declaration of freedom, for Mr. Copeland's assumptions. So from this point he can substitute *word* and *truth* as synonyms. But in fact the scripture is making a declaration of the integrity and nature of the word of God, not telling us that *word* and *truth* are synonymous ideas that can be switch at will.

Let me take a moment and look at the Greek grammar of this verse, before we go further with it.

αγιασον αυτους εν τη αληθεια ο λογος ο σος αληθεια εστιν ([Joh 17:17 GNT-WH](#))

Literally this says: **The logos the thine truth are.**

It is translated in the King James Version as follows:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. (Joh 17:17 KJV)

To translate into English we could say: *your word is truth* or *the word is your truth*. And in that we read that the verse says this: Make them holy through your truth (Father); your word is your truth. Here is a declaration of the integrity and quality of the word of God. It is “truth”, because it is the Father’s word. His word is truth, which is based upon and founded in the character of God, something that is impeccable and infallible, because the Father’s character. Consider this in context.

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. (Joh 17:14-19 KJV)

Consider this statement in light of the testimony of the Apostle Mark:

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mar 16:15 KJV)

The commission of Christ is to preach the word of God, which agrees with Him as the Word of God the gospel of peace. That is that He is the reconciliation and the expiation of the believer’s sin and trespasses with his God. And Christ’s commission is to preach that He is the reconciliation and expiation of man to God. And that message is to be taken to every creature and every corner of the earth. What sanctifies and makes man one with Christ, like Christ is with His Father. None other than this message of the gospel of peace, which is a demonstration of the power of God and the source of all of the Spiritual blessings provided to the believer.

For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16 KJV)

“Thy word is truth”, Jesus is talking about the integrity of the Father and His relationship with His disciples. Jesus has given His disciples God’s word, the gospel message of peace and reconciliation, and is preparing Himself for the sacrificial atonement the He will soon be undertaking to finish that work of reconciliation. The atonement that will ensure and forever establish the message that His disciples will be preaching to the world. It is the very same gospel message that the Apostle Paul was talking about in Romans 10 when he said faith comes from the gospel of peace and those who carry the message of glad tidings and good things. This is a sanctifying truth, a truth that makes the believer holy, a truth that is united with the character of the Father and his desire. This is a truth that comes from God to the believer and causes him to act accordingly; it will produce Spiritual fruit in the faithful. There is absolutely nothing different in this message that Jesus says is truth, and the one that Apostle’s says is the source of our faith. It is in fact the word of God, the message of reconciliation and peace between man and God. The Apostle Peter says:

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is **the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.** (1Pe 1:25 KJV)

“Thy word is truth”, is this a declaration that “truth” and “faith” are synonymous? And a declaration that we can go into the scripture and swap these terms to get a “clearer meaning” what God means? NO Mr. Copeland, we cannot use your poor principle of word swapping to make the word of God “clearer”. God had said what He meant and doesn’t need a philosophical trick to make what He said more clear. What you are doing **is not** “*putting the Word of God first and foremost throughout this study*”, but is rather the agenda of your theology and the means necessary to support it have been put foremost. Please tell us by what device we can use the word “is” to redefine meanings of words without so much as an explanation of such tactics. That is, you are creating ways to read into the scripture to show what your theology teaches. Aletheia (truth) and logos (word) are not synonyms, but are two completely and distinct ideas. If we apply Mr. Copeland’s hermeneutic of finding the word “is” and then swapping the words, what kind of mischief could we create? What manner of evil could come from such a practice that can be imposed upon the scripture? Mr. Copeland’s desire of putting the “Word of God first and foremost” is in reality at this time taking a backseat to a poor use of the scriptures, and worse hermeneutical practices, that lead a person into all kinds of trouble if it is applied consistently. This practice doesn’t make the word clearer; it distorts it according to the purpose of the one that is using this technique. One can remain true to his *Eclectic Theology*; pick what word to redefine by finding it connected by the word “is”, and then reading the new word into its place. This is clarifying, not the word of God, but the theology that is being read into the scripture.

Consider the following examples.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love.** (1Jo 4:8 KJV)

Can we now use “love” and “God” as synonyms that we can insert into various passages to “get a clearer meaning” of those passages? Let’s see:

And because iniquity shall abound, the love (*God*) of many shall wax cold. (Mat 24:12 KJV)

For the love (*God*) of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1Ti 6:10 KJV)

Does this make these passages clearer? No it distorts them into new meanings that can be very misleading to those that use such a practice. I think that you can realize very quickly that doing this form of theology would lead a person into trouble very quickly, and is in fact mishandling the word of God for personal reasons, trying to make it say something that it doesn’t say. I think God is capable of putting the right words into the right places making it an infallible statement that relates His meaning as He intended.

Here in the second paragraph of the first chapter of his book, he is already asserting his philosophies and teachings, and reading them into the scriptures in a blatant and ugly manner. He says, “**For a clearer meaning substitute the Word for truth as follows:** “*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth [the Word] that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth [the Word]. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth [the Word]*” (3 John 2-4).” (Emphasis mine)

No Mr. Copeland, that is not a clearer meaning; it is a clear redefining of God's word and an attempt to read your theology into the Bible. You are trying to make your theology define the word of God and what it says. Although the Word is truth, they are not synonymous, and God did not intend for His word to be used in such a blatant attempt to create a false teaching. God's word is always "truth" and never would He lie to us in it, but not all truth is the word of God and truth can stand outside of God's word. God's word and truth are not synonymous, but certainly they can partially be defined by those words.

Is what he doing a "clearer meaning" of scripture, or is it reading into the scriptures for his own purpose? Be honest with yourself at this point. Is he letting the scripture tell him what to believe, or is he now redefining words and reading those words into the scripture with his own agenda? I will submit that he is now redefining words and reading his belief into the scriptures in a *blatant and forceful manner*. In fact, he is now *assaulting the word* that he said he would let tell us what to believe. He is changing the meaning of God's words into something to meet his theological agenda and *Eclectic Theology*. He is trying to show his belief as infallible, and not the word of God as truth as he had claimed. When he says, "for a clearer meaning" what he is really saying is "*for his meaning*" which he is forcing into the text. He assumes, because of the traditions and teachings of the men he follows, that he can now, at will, change the infallible word of God, into something he wishes it would say, based on nothing more than a misreading of scripture and asserting his poor hermeneutical practices and beliefs.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. ([Joh 17:17 KJV](#))

God's word is truth, not Mr. Copeland's words. His word is to change the scriptures to find his theology in it and use the word of God for his own purpose.

III. Prospering God's Way.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. ([3Jo 1:2-4 KJV](#))

Mr. Copeland continues his technique of redefining and looking for his theology with his third "proof scripture". He continues to build on the same faulty foundation with the same building material he started with. That is, he is building from his presuppositions and *Eclectic Theology*. He continues:

"As you read our basic scripture text, remember Jesus said in John 17:17, "*Thy word is truth.*" For a clearer meaning substitute *the Word* for *truth* as follows: "*Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth [the Word] that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth [the Word]. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth [the Word]*" (3 John 2-4)."

With two faulty views, 1) that we can build our own faith by "believing and acting" upon the word of God, and 2) that we can swap words as we decree from a theology, we can now proceed to the finished view of the foundation and read those principles into the scripture.

Mr. Copeland now gives a third scripture that states that the Apostle John wishes that this beloved believer would prosper and be in health, even as his soul was prospering. What does this mean?

I have already shown that the gospel of peace and reconciliation is the foundation for all of what God is building in the believer, that is, all that is needed for “faith”. Both the Apostle Paul and John, when they were referring to the gospel truth, were referring to the already received message that the believer has. It is a message that brought the believer fruit, and bore in him something that God intended, not something the person would create by his own actions. The result of God is light and life, and is only wrought in the believer through the Spirit of God and the gospel message, 2 Tim 1:9-10. A person prospers in the Kingdom of God through the gospel message that Jesus Christ has wrought healing and benefited the believer at His cross and with His shed blood. It is the message that proclaims that this reconciliation and restoration of fellowship has occurred at the cross that the Apostles were claiming as the message of God, Col 1:20. It was the message that the believer was prospering, not with earthly wealth and health necessarily, but with the prosperity of the kingdom of God and the health of a restored relationship with the Father. Consider:

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but **to preach the gospel**: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but **unto us which are saved it is the power of God.** (1Co 1:17-18 KJV)

Consider the Apostles words carefully; the gospel is to the believer the power of God. Now let me ask you, what is the power of God to the saved? If you have answered something other than the gospel of Jesus Christ, you have missed my point. Consider again:

For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16 KJV)

Again the Apostles tell us that the power of God to the believer is the Gospel message of Christ. Now once again I am compelled to ask, what is the power of God to the saved?

Also, let’s not make the same mistake that Mr. Copeland has made. That is, let’s not assume we can read our theology into the scriptures and think we have set a foundation for what we believe, but let us instead let the scripture make it perfectly clear, and then believe them. The Apostles have made it perfectly clear on numerous occasions that the gospel message is both the source of our faith and the power of God. Can you imagine that, that is that we already have received that which is needed in building our faith and establishing us in the kingdom of God, and it was received when we believed the gospel of Jesus Christ and His shed blood upon the cross? That was where we were reconciled to God, and through that message of healing and good tidings we as believers can have full confidence that we are justified in God’s eyes. We can come to God, through that effort of Christ and God accepts us for what we are in Christ.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world. (1Jo 2:1-2 KJV)

That is the Gospel message that we have received. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and that He advocates our innocence before the Father. Our faith rests in the gospel of Christ. That is why the Apostle declares to us that we should not rest in the wisdom of men, wisdom that has no

hesitancy to change the word of God on a whim or wisdom that reads its philosophies and traditions into the scriptures. But wisdom that is found in a unique message that every believer has already encountered and believed, that is the gospel of peace and good news of Jesus Christ.

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1Co 2:5 KJV)

The power of God to the saved is the message of the Gospel, and if I ask you what is the power of God to the saved, you should declare it is the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. It is there that we realize our reconciliation with the Father through Him. And scripture explicitly states that our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. What is the power of God? It is the gospel message of peace. That is where our faith rests, that is the source of our faith and that is where the prosperity and health of the believer is found. It is a message that confuses all worldly thinking and those that approach the scripture with human philosophies and human born effort. And it is this fact that Mr. Copeland has missed with his philosophy. That is, he believes that man can create faith by “believing and acting”. But the Apostles teach us that we cannot create faith from our side, it is something that is bore as fruit in the heart of those that have comprehended the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Copeland continues, that he is free to substitute words because he has established upon his philosophy and tradition that “truth” and “word” are synonymous terms. And so he asserts his belief into the scripture.

“For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth [the Word] that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth [the Word]. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth [the Word]”

Now, remember he has stated that the believer can create faith. It comes down to a responsibility of the believer; **“When we see it in the Word, believe it, and begin to act on it, faith is created.”** Not what scripture tells us though, and honestly this is a contrivance to assert a doctrine in a most deceptive manner. Nothing more than what was attempted in the beginning when the serpent beguiled the woman and man fell into his trespass and sin. That is, man thinks he can do what is reserved for God, and assumes the role of the Creator. He says to himself, I want to be like God and partake of the things that are reserved for Him alone. And so he creates a doctrine of justifying his rebellion and contrary thinking to the purpose of God. Reading the word of God in a manner never meant, and for his own purposes. Man continuously returns to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, hoping to find in his own reasoning justification for his actions and empowerment from his *own* ability. And Mr. Copeland continues in this same thinking. Trying to attribute to man what is reserved for God alone. That man is trying to create his faith from his own inventions rather than letting it be a fruit that is produced from the union and fellowship of God and man. And as Mr. Copeland has no ill feelings about changing the word of God to fit his theology and purpose, so man had no problem in the garden to change the word for his own purpose either. He has listened to the serpent and allowed him to define the word of God, not as God has said, but as he has said and in so doing has bought into the evil that is created with it.

The *Eclectic Theology* has now enabled Mr. Copeland’s mind to justify the 1) belief that we create our own faith, and 2) change the word of God for his own purpose, and now 3) read the changed word of God as though it was stated by God, in the manner he wishes it. And this he claims is “putting the word of God first and foremost” in the study of his doctrine. But actually what he has done is listen to the subtle lie that changes the word of God and the voice that whispers to the human heart, “hath God said”? (Gen 3:1)

The Apostle when he was talking to the “wellbeloved Gaius” in 3 John was not equating the word and truth as a synonymous idea. But he was writing through the inspiration of the Spirit of God, and relaying to him what God had spoken. This was a consistent message from the beginning. A message the Apostle had heard from the Lord’s lips, and a message of the gospel of peace. Gaius’ soul prospered because he had the gospel already in his heart, and the Apostle was greeting him in this epistle, not to wish that he would gain health and wealth from the world, but that he wished he would prosper like he knew his soul had prospered from the message of Christ. And how was his soul prospering? It was prospering because Gaius was walking in truth, truth that existed within the heart of Gaius, *already*. And this is the message of God to him and us, there is no greater joy to God than the believer walking in the truth, and the truth is the gospel message of Jesus Christ. When we walk recognizing that the power of God is already in our heart and mouth, and that we can rest in the assurance that man and God are reconciled through Jesus Christ, we are prospering as our soul prospers. The Apostle was not establishing a principle that temporal health and wealth was something he wished upon the believer, but instead he was wishing that he were prospering in truth. *Truth* being the health and wealth of the believer in Christ, a purchased gift that can’t be measured in temporal wealth and health, given to the him in the gospel.

The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (3Jo 1:1-4 KJV)

Man doesn’t create faith for the kingdom of God. That is something provided by God’s grace found in the gospel message when it is comprehended. Man doesn’t have the ability to act and find that he is strengthening himself with faith in a spiritual kingdom, (John 18:36). That is something provided by Spirit of God and through grace found in the gospel message. Man doesn’t have the ability to act and find him strengthening himself in a spiritual kingdom by what he does in this temporal one.

Mr. Copeland has at the outset of this teaching started off on the wrong foot, with the wrong understanding and with an agenda to support an aberrant theology. He has at the outset done exactly what he didn’t want to do, that is he forgot that he was going to put the word of God foremost in his study. Instead he has taken liberty with the scripture and put his theology foremost and then looked for a way that he could then support it. It is a subtle but dangerous technique that is being shown in this essay about his doctrine. But it is something that is consistent within the Word-Faith adherents and apologist. That is that in an effort to prove the *Eclectic Theology* there are logical mistakes and flaws in its apologetic.

If the foundation of this teaching is done in such a sloppy manner, and the foremost scriptures in the teaching are misapplied, and there are logical fallacies that are used to build it upon within the first few words of it, how can we trust it at all? How can one trust something that is built upon sand and with materials of such poor design? I will propose we can not take this teaching with anything other than distrust and the realization that well meaning men can be deceived and lead many into error and deceit. The Prosperity Doctrine of the Word-Faith movement, a defining doctrine of this sect, is shown defective and aberrant, something every believing Christian should avoid, keeping the Gospel message of Jesus Christ first and foremost in our preaching and teaching. Never taking away from that message and realizing that all is built upon one sure foundation:

That God sent his Son, who shed His blood upon a cross, to bring to His people the promise and assurance of their God that they stand before Him being justified through His blood and broken body. This is the faith that every Christian believer has in common, and it is the source of all the health and wealth in the kingdom of God.

Blessings.