
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
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EVALUATING THE HEALTH AND WEALTH GOSPEL
IFCL 15 (Advanced Lecture 9)

INTRODUCTION:

These notes are taken from a book entitled “A Different Gospel.” The author did a lot of research into the history of the Faith Movement, which teaches that any Christian can be wealthy and healthy if he applies certain faith principles without doubting.

I. SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FAITH MOVEMENT

- A. Kenneth Hagin did not author the writings that bear his name, therefore he is not the father of the Faith Movement.
- B. The real father of the Faith Movement is E.W. Kenyon who developed most of the teachings upon which the Faith Movement is built.
- C. Kenyon admitted to close friends that he drew upon cultic, metaphysical practices when developing his teaching.
- D. While in Boston, Kenyon exposed himself to the metaphysical cults, Unitarianism, and New Thought.
- E. Kenyon believed the church of his day was impotent in the areas of divine healing and supernatural manifestations.
- F. Because of the growth of the metaphysical cults with its divine healing and supernatural manifestations, Kenyon formulated a “new type of Christianity,” which included these manifestations in order to compete with the New Thought cults.
- G. As a result, Kenyon’s Faith Movement is a mixture of New Thought metaphysics and radical fundamentalism, and it promotes “a different gospel.”

II. DOCTRINE OF FAITH: FAITH IN GOD VS. FAITH IN FAITH

- A. Faith Movement preachers teach that God spoke and it happened. Therefore, God had faith in His words. That is what we call having faith in faith.
- B. The cultic nature of the doctrine of faith
 1. These false teachers teach faith as a formula: “Say it, do it, receive it, tell it.”
 - a. They say that Christians and non-Christians can use the law of faith to get results; to get what they want including healing, a job, a car, a home, or anything else.
 - b. This is the metaphysical cult way of dealing with God. God is not a person as much as an impersonal set of laws. They say, “Follow the laws of faith and you will get you what.”
 2. Faith as positive confession: Kenyon, not Hagin is the father of this doctrine.
 - a. Kenyon wrote: “What I confess, I possess.”
 - b. Kenyon wrote: “Affirming something we believe...testifying to something we know...”
 - i. Know one’s “identity” and “rights” in Christ
 - ii. Confess verbally the provision of Christ in every need and problem in life.
 - c. Positive mental attitude is important. You must believe what you confess.

- d. A cult leader, Fillmore, Unity School of Christianity said, “. . .words bring about in our life and affairs whatever we put into them.”
 - e. Faith-theology: What you say is what you get, good or bad.
 - f. Charles Capp: “Man is the last creator in the universe. God created with words. Now man does.”
3. The force of faith
 - a. Kenneth Copeland: “The force of faith is released by words. (This is not biblical.)
 - b. Kenneth Copeland: “Since God is a faith being, and since man is a faith being, man has the faith to operate in the same way that God operates.” (This is not biblical.)
 4. The God kind of faith
 - a. Kenyon wrote: “We have God’s faith produced in us by His living word, by his nature that is imparted to us.”
 - b. Hagin says it this way, “The kind of faith that spoke the universe into existence is dealt to our hearts.” (In other words, the same kind of faith God had we have.)
 5. Faith in the name
 - a. The Faith Movement teaches that when the believer uses Jesus’ name, God must respond favorably because all authority is in that name.
 - b. Kenyon: “. . .when we pray in Jesus’ name we are taking the place of the absent Christ; we are using his name, his authority to carry out his will on earth.”
 6. Faith and the authority of the believer: Faith-theology teaches, “. . .when Christ ascended, He transferred His authority to the church.”

C. BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH

1. Is God sovereign, or is He obligated to follow certain laws of faith?
 - a. Faith-teachers teach that God must obey these laws. However, this destroys His sovereignty, His right of self-determination, and His self-rule in the universe.
 - b. “But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. (Psalm 115:3)
 - i. No man can force God to do anything with some set of formulas
 - ii. There are no spiritual laws apart from his will. (Daniel 4:34-35)
 - iii. God “works after the counsel of His will” not according to the formulas of man’s will. (Ephesians 1:11)
2. Is God a person or a formula?
 - a. Faith-theology makes God an impersonal force that must do what man tells Him to do if that man is following the formula of faith mentioned earlier.
 - b. Faith-theology teaches how to manipulate the faith-god with positive confession.
3. Taking Jesus’ name in vain
 - a. In the Ten Commandments it says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...” (Exodus 20:7)
 - b. The intent is broader than just a warning about cursing

- c. It also prohibits and threatens to punish any attempt to use a divine name to manipulate or control God.
- d. Faith-teachers imply that God will answer any selfish prayer if the one praying uses Jesus' name. In John 14:14 Jesus says, "if you ask Me anything in My name I will do it," but it must be compared with the following:
 - Abide in Me, My words in you (John 15:7)
 - Keep My commandments (1 John 3:22)
 - Pray according to His will (1 John 5:14-15)
 - Pray for the right things with right motives (James 4:3)
- e. If someone tries to manipulate God, he is practicing witchcraft or magic.
- 4. Is man a creature or a creator? The concept that a believer has "creative powers" is cultic in origin.
 - a. The Father alone is the source of creation (Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:5-6; Psalm 90:2)
 - b. The Son is the only agent of creation (John 11:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2)
 - c. The Spirit is the exclusive executor of creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30)
 - d. Man's creative power is in procreation (Genesis 1:28)
 - e. Only God can create something from nothing.
- 5. God's Word and God's will
 - a. God did not need faith to create the world.
 - b. Man's positive confession of the Word of God has power if what he is confessing is the will of God.
 - c. God is faithful to his Word, but he is not a slave to it.
- 6. A faith-teacher's concept of the "God-kind of faith" illustrates the man-centered nature of the Faith Movement's theology.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF HEALING: SICKNESS, SYMPTOMS, AND SATAN

- A. Healings are claimed within the Faith Movement
- B. Some of the Faith Movement's doctrines of healing have roots in the metaphysical cults.
- C. Do miracles prove truth?
 - 1. If you answer "YES," then Christian Science and other cults teach truth because apparent healings occur within Christian Science.
 - 2. Not all who seem to be doing miracles are saved. (Matthew 7:21-23)
- D. What is the source of the healing according to the cults?
 - 1. Metaphysical cults use PMA (Positive Mental Attitude) and positive confession to heal disease.
 - 2. The occult openly invokes satanic power in its practice of healing.
- E. The cultic nature of the doctrine of healing
 - 1. Faith Movement teaches that the atonement provides forgiveness and healing of disease. Texts they use include the following: Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24.

2. The Faith-teachers also believe that diseases are healed by Christ's spiritual atonement in hell, not his physical death on the cross. (They teach that Christ went to hell to pay for our sin.)
3. The Faith Movement teaches that disease is spiritual, not physical.
 - a. They teach that all disease comes from the spiritual realm of Satan.
 - b. Hagin: "Because all disease is spiritual in origin, God's method of healing must be purely spiritual as well."
 - c. So the Faith-teachers conclude that since Christ's atonement provides physical healing, and since all disease is has a spiritual cause, then the atonement had to be a spiritual act, not a physical one.
 - d. Faith-theology and the metaphysical cults both teach that disease is spiritual, therefore the highest form of healing must be spiritual as well.
4. The Faith Movement teaches that a sick believer is not normal
 - a. Faith Movement teachers claim that sickness is always caused by unbelief and sin.
 - b. Faith Movement teachers claim that God has done all that He is going to do to provide healing and it is up to the believer to appropriate the perfect healing that is in the atonement.
5. The Faith Movement teaches that negative confession produces sickness
 - a. They believe that verbal acknowledgment of a disease gives Satan the "right" to inflict it.
 - b. They teach that when a believer worries or complains about an illness, he has forfeited his "right" to the perfect healing redemption in Christ.
6. The Faith Movement teaches that believers should deny symptoms
 - a. They teach that symptoms are not the disease, they are spiritual decoys with which Satan is attempting to trick the believer into making a negative confession, thereby forfeiting his healing.
 - b. Hagin wrote: "The symptoms should be denied because they are not real."
7. The Faith Movement teaches that believers should endure pain
 - a. Hagin: "It is easy to believe God for healing when there is not pain; the real test of faith comes when one must deny pain to make a positive confession."
 - b. The idea that a believer should never acknowledge or talk about symptoms of illness is also cultic. Christian Science rejects the reality of the physical body altogether
8. The Faith Movement teaches that we can mature beyond the need for medical science
 - a. The attitude of the faith-teachers toward the medical profession also has strong parallels in the metaphysical cults.
 - b. Fred Price often depicts medicine as a crutch upon which the immature believer relies
 - c. Fred Price also puts medicine in the "gray" area where the believer ought to be persuaded in his own mind.
 - d. Fred Price suggests that by refusing to take medication when you have small illnesses like a cold will prepare you for the time you might have a terminal illness.
 - e. Faith-theology of healing is based upon the ability to deny symptoms.

- f. Faith-theology: “Physical symptoms are not real, but they become real when the believer acknowledges their existence and fails to apply the principles of spiritual healing.”
- 9. The Faith Movement teaches that believers should never die before age 70
 - a. Minimum of 70. God...in the Old Testament said the number of your days shall be 120 years.”
 - b. Fred Price : “The only reason people die before their time is because they do not understand how to exercise their faith according to the Word to prevent death, or they choose to die before their time.”
- F. Biblical analysis of the doctrine of healing
 - 1. Does God always have to heal a believer?
 - a. Healing is a central doctrine of the faith-theology (if we follow the formula).
 - b. They teach that it is impossible that God would fail to comply with these Scriptural formulas.
 - c. They also teach that the believer has only himself to blame for sickness.
 - d. They also teach that healing is not a sovereign miracle bestowed by a merciful God. Healing is a cause-and-effect formula that works every time the Christian applies it in “faith.”
 - 2. Do believers suffer in their bodies? Kenyon’s and Hagin’s thesis that believers can be fully redeemed from bodily suffering in this life directly contradicts Pauline teaching on bodily redemption.
 - a. Believers await completion of redemption “the redemption of our bodies.” (Romans 8:19-21)
 - b. “Our outer man is decaying,” (2 Corinthians 4:16) our hope is in the fact that there will be a bodily resurrection, (2 Corinthians 5:1-4), and God will give us a new body in which suffering and sickness will be “swallowed up by life.” (2 Corinthians 5:4-5)
 - c. Our frail, weak bodies will be transformed into a body where disease and death will have no place. (Philippians 3:21)
 - d. “It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body...” (1 Corinthians 15:42)
 - e. Contrary to the Faith Movement’s teaching, the believer’s body remains a “perishable” body of “weakness” and “dishonor.” But at the return of Christ, the mortal body will undergo incredible change. (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)
 - f. The error of faith-theology is that it ascribes a power to faith healing that will manifest only at the end of the age.
 - 3. Were believers always healed in the Bible?
 - a. Trophimus left sick at Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20)
 - b. Epaphroditus was deathly ill (Philippians 3:25-27)
 - c. Timothy was to take wine for his stomach (1 Timothy 5:23)
 - d. Paul had a doctor as a traveling companion (Colossians 4:14)
 - e. Paul went to Galatia the first time to recover from illness (Galatians 4:13)
 - 4. Consider the sickness and suffering of Paul. (Galatians 4:13-15). He suffered from illness. (2 Corinthians 11:7) He was given a thorn in flesh by God.

5. The sickness and suffering of Job
 - a. The Faith Movement teaching about Job
 - i. Faith-teachers say that Job brought all of his problems on himself through negative confession and unbelief.
 - ii. Faith-teachers say Satan, not God, afflicted Job. Job's fear allowed Satan to work. "For what I fear comes upon me..." (Job 3:25)
 - iii. They also teach that when Job finally repented of his fear and prayed for his friends, God restored his health and fortunes (Job 42:1-10)
 - b. Biblical truth regarding Job:
 - i. God WAS involved in Job's suffering.
 - ii. God was the one who removed the "hedge" and who placed Job under Satan's power. Satan could not have touched Job without God's permission. (Job 1:12; Job 2:6)
 - iii. God gave permission in order to test Job's faith (Job 1:9)
 - iv. Job recognized it was God: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken. Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:20-21)
 - v. Also: Later he says to his wife, "Shall we accept good from God and not...adversity?" (Job 2:10)
 - vi. God took the blame. "... although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause" (Job 2:3)
 - vii. There is nothing in Job 1 or 2 to indicate that he caused his own problems through fear or unbelief. Quite the opposite is true: Job "was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil." Fear did not cause Job's problems, nor did his problems cause fear or sin. (Job 1:1)
 - viii. Consider also:
 - Job did not sin or blame God (Job 1:22)
 - Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:10)
 - His hope in God was strong throughout (Job 13:15)

G. A concluding, non-theological point:

1. One of the most dangerous practices encouraged by the faith-teachers is denial of physical symptoms of illness. In diseases like cancer, where early detection is proportional to cure rates, it is dangerous and deadly to deny the symptoms.
2. Another practice common in the Faith Movement is the refusal to seek medical care for illness.
3. Those in the Faith Movement and the metaphysical cults have three general similarities.
 - a. They rarely seek medical care and when they do they wait as long as possible.
 - b. They feel a strong sense of guilt and failure when their faith "fails" and they are forced to go to the doctor.
 - c. When they finally do go to the doctor, they are often reluctant and uncooperative patients.
4. The most consistent reports of abuse of the Faith doctrine of healing comes in the area of chronic and/or terminal illness. Because of the belief that listening to a "negative confession" can inflict one's faith, not many in the Faith Movement are willing even to be around, much less listen to, those who are seriously ill in their

own churches. Basically, the Faith churches have little or no concept of pastoral care for the chronically and terminally ill believer.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF PROSPERITY

- In its infancy, the Faith Movement was known for its radical emphasis upon healing. Today the Faith Movement is one of the major sources of prosperity teaching.
- A. The cultic nature of the doctrine of prosperity
 1. Two types of teaching:
 - a. Egocentric: God promises success and prosperity to those who give to the evangelist's ministry.
 - b. Cosmic: God promises success and prosperity to those who know the spiritual laws of the universe that govern financial prosperity. Faith Movement teachers are primarily in this category.
 2. Copeland's principle of giving based on Mark 10:30 known as "the hundredfold return." Gloria Copeland explains: "You give \$1 for the gospel's sake and \$100 belongs to you; give \$10 and receive \$1000; give \$1000 and receive \$100,000... Give one house and receive one hundred houses or one house worth one hundred times as much."
 3. This cosmic type of teaching about prosperity is another example of the influence of metaphysical cults on the Faith Movement.
 - a. Charles Fillmore, the founder of Unity, in his book "Prosperity" insists that Unity's "law of prosperity has been proved time and time again. All men who have prospered have used the law, for there is no other way."
 - b. Long before Copeland's claims about prosperity, Fillmore wrote that "everything is governed by law" and that "there is a law that governs the manifestation of supply."
 - c. Like Copeland, Fillmore claims that to operate the law of prosperity, first one must understand it, then have faith in it, and finally apply it to one's need.
 - d. Copeland links prosperity to one's attitude and confession: "You can have what you say! . . . If you are living in poverty and lack and want, change what you are saying. It will change what you have..."
 - e. Many years before Copeland's statement, Trine (another cult leader) wrote: "This is the law of prosperity: When apparent adversity comes, be not cast down by it. . . To hold yourself in this attitude of mind is to set into operation subtle, silent, and irresistible forces that sooner or later will actualize in material form that which is today merely an idea. But ideas...are the seeds that actualize material conditions."
 - f. Hagin comments: "Most of us are not so poor because we have honored God – but because we have dishonored Him."
 - g. Fred Price teaches that God wants to provide luxury automobiles. He asks, "...if the Mafia can ride around in Lincoln Continental Town Cars, why can't King's kids?" On the contrary, "King's kids ought to ride in a Rolls Royce."

- B. Biblical analysis of the doctrine of prosperity
1. How much do we really need?
 - a. Faith-theology's errors center on its definition of "need."
 - i. Jesus limited "need" to food, drink, and clothing. (Matthew 6:25-33)
 - ii. Paul limits "need" to two: "And if we have food and covering" (1 Timothy 6:8)
 - iii. Those who seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness can expect God to supply their "needs." (Matthew 6:33)
 - b. In defining "need," faith-teachers have gone far beyond Jesus and Paul. They teach that new houses, fancy cars, and fine clothing all qualify as "needs."
 - c. The doctrine of prosperity fails to make any distinction between a need, a want, or a lust.
 - d. God has promised to meet legitimate needs, and has stated His desire to fulfill many of our wants. But nowhere has God given any indication that He would ever cater to our lusts. In fact, God has promised to crucify our lusts (Romans 6:1-14; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-24)
 2. Was Paul prosperous?
 - a. Faith-teachers' doctrine of prosperity is a direct contradiction of Paul's teaching and lifestyle.
 - b. Paul often "suffered need" and knew lack (1 Corinthians 4:9-13)
 - c. The Corinthians were a lot like the faith-teachers of today. They were embarrassed by the sacrificial life and suffering of the apostle Paul, and were impressed only by preachers who possessed power, prestige, and prosperity.
 3. Prosperity and the cross
 - a. The Corinthians, like the faith-teachers today, misunderstood Paul because they misunderstood the cross.
 - b. They misunderstood the gospel which was "the word of the cross." (1 Corinthians 1:18) This word of the cross was about a crucified Messiah. (1 Corinthians 1:23)
 - c. Paul did not preach "in cleverness of speech that the cross of Christ should not be made void." (1 Corinthians 1:17) He claimed to know only Christ, and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)
 - d. Faith-teachers take the message farther than Paul. They proclaim the benefits of the cross of Christ for the believers, such as prosperity and healing. But they do not submit to the claims of the cross which include suffering, hardship, and perhaps even poverty.
 4. The believer and the cross
 - a. To believe in the cross meant the death of the believer's claim on his own life.
 - b. Anything less "nullifies" the grace of God and makes the death of Jesus meaningless. (Galatians 2:20-21)
 5. The demands of the cross (Galatians 6:14; Galatians 5:24)
 - a. Paul did not conceive of Jesus' cross in terms of its worldly benefits.
 - b. Paul realized that identification with the cross of Jesus included the crucifixion of the believer's relation to the world and its lusts.

- c. Paul's boast was that the cross of Jesus had crucified both his desire for the world and the desire of the world for him.
- 6. The Bible and the poor
 - a. It ignores the demands the New Testament places on the affluent towards the poor.
 - b. It actually degrades the poor, claiming that their poverty is the result of "dishonoring" God.
 - c. Faith-teachers call poverty a curse that God inflicts on people.
 - d. The prosperity doctrine cannot hold up when one reads the Bible.
 - i. Prosperity is based on a very selective set of biblical texts, the majority of which are from the Old Testament, and they all are taken out of context.
 - ii. Faith Movement teachers avoid the countless passages in the Bible that address the subject of wealth and poverty.
 - iii. The following verses reflect God's concern for the poor and his warning to the rich.
 - (1) Concern for the poor: Luke 6:20; Luke 4:18; Mark 10:21; Mark 14:7; Mark 12:43-44; Galatians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 11:22; James 2:5
 - (2) Warning to the rich: Luke 6:24; Mark 10:25; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 6:24; Mark 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; James 5:1-3
 - e. Conclusion, the doctrine of prosperity is the result of two influences, one cultic, the other cultural.
 - i. First, it is the result of metaphysical influences upon the founding father of the faith-theology, E.W. Kenyon. The metaphysical cults, particularly New Thought and the Unity School of Christianity, were the first to propagate the idea that God will make rich all those who know "the laws of prosperity" which govern the universe. Through Kenyon, this cultic belief entered the Faith Movement and was expanded by Hagin and the other faith-teachers
 - ii. Second, the doctrine of prosperity is a gross example of the church's cultural accommodation to the worldly values of American materialism. It is a direct contradiction of the examples of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul, and all the heroes of faith, who were "destitute, afflicted, ill-treated men of whom the world was not worthy." (Hebrews 11:37-38)

CONCLUSION:

- A. James admonishes his worldly readers: "...do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?" (James 4:4)
- B. John teaches that the love of God and the love of the world are mutually exclusive. (1 John 2:15-17)
- C. Jesus prompted this teaching when he taught, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other... You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24)
- D. Jesus did not endure the cross so His followers could indulge in the lusts of the world. Anyone teaching that the purpose of the cross was to bestow worldly prosperity on believers should heed again the words of the crucified Messiah: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34)