

How to Start a Mega-Church



By Todd Friel

This might seem a little strange, but hang in there ‘til the end because I think this has a powerful punch line.

Proof-texting is one of the main reasons false teachers can find a home inside of evangelicalism. The false teacher can take a verse out of context and apply it to a teaching that the verse was never intended to support. Prosperity teachers love to do this with the Old Testament, especially the Proverbs. How do they get away with this? Most pew-warmers don’t understand what the Proverbs are.

Proverbs are written in a catchy way (the shorter they are, the less likely they are to contain a thorough theology on an issue) that help us remember GENERAL truths that if applied faithfully will TYPICALLY (but not always) make life better. There is a heavy emphasis on physical well being and wealth in the Proverbs and we have to be careful to not pull out these individual guiding PRINCIPLES and turn them into a GUARANTEE.

We must balance the promises of prosperity in the Proverbs with other Proverbs and with the rest of the Bible’s teachings on blessings. Let me give you an example and then I will show you how easily this can be done...and why we must be good Bereans.

Proverbs 10:3 says, “The Lord will not let the Godly starve to death, but He refuses to satisfy the craving of the wicked.” The smiling prosperity preacher will announce, “If you are a Christian, you have God’s favor and He won’t let you starve to death.”

Wrong.

That is not the PRINCIPLE of the verse. The principle is: God is on the side of His children and He stands opposed to the wicked. How do we know that?

1. The Proverbs are designed to be general principles that typically make life better.
2. Proverbs are not individual promises that guarantee you will always succeed.
3. From a practical standpoint, many Godly Christians have starved to death, or worse.
4. When I read this verse with the rest of the Bible in view, I know that this single verse cannot be a guarantee I will never starve and the wicked will go hungry.

Let’s just take a look at the life of Job. Didn’t he understand this Proverb? What about Psalm 73? Asaph laments that the wicked seem to prosper while he, a Godly man, seems to struggle. That appears to be in direct conflict with this verse IF you teach that the Proverbs are individual guarantees of success.

So what does this have to do with the price of corn in Oklahoma on a Tuesday? It means that we must always, always, always read every verse in the Bible in its

immediate context and in context of the whole Bible. If you fail to keep the rest of Scripture in view, you can twist Scripture and the next thing you know, you will have a mega church.

Do you remember the movie *The Shining*? It was the creepiest, scariest horror movie of the '70's (and yes, I saw it before God saved me). It was dark, bloody and downright evil. I would like you to watch the attached re-made movie trailer for *The Shining*. (There is nothing offensive about what you are going to watch and this is NOT an endorsement of the movie.)

What you are about to witness is movie proof-texting. A clever individual pulled out little snippets of this gruesome movie to make it look downright charming. As you view this, keep the context of the whole movie in view. And keep this in mind, if you do not keep the entire context of the Bible in mind when you read Scripture, you might not end up twisting Scripture yourself, but you may be duped by someone who does. Now go click on the link for the movie trailer.

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