

Practice of Thriving

Opening to Divine Abundance Everywhere

1.0

Based on the book
by Edwene Gaines

The Four *Spiritual* Laws of Prosperity

Board Workbook





www.ThrivingInUnity.org

Introduction

The Art & Spirit of Prosperity

Too often when we think of prosperity we think of it in terms of what we have or don't have or by what we can or cannot do. This causes us to measure our abundance by external circumstances. When we look at abundance as something that occurs outside of ourselves, we will forever find ourselves chasing an illusion of prosperity that simply does not exist.

Rather than focusing on what we have or what we wish to do, we can shift our focus on what we choose to be. Placing our focus on “being that which we have come to be” allows us to connect deeply and powerfully with our divine purpose. When we are on purpose and in the flow, everything we need to accomplish that purpose is brought forth to us.

The Thriving Ministry Model™ is about linking our abundance to who we are and what we have come here to be. The first step in that process is remembering that God is our Source. Our prosperity comes only from Source—not our paycheck, not our congregation, not our job, not anything but Source. Scripture tells us that by returning to God the first 10% of our income, we will be forever blessed with the abundant flow of divine prosperity. Yet tithing continues to feel like a taboo subject rather than the gift that it is.

The 2008 Practice of Thriving course is based on the book by master prosperity teacher Edwene Gaines *The Four Spiritual Laws of Prosperity*. This program aims to support your ministry in opening fully to divine abundance. With both a board component and a congregational component, your ministry can step fully into demonstrating prosperity laws in action.

The Role of the Board of Trustees

A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

It can be said that the most critical group of lay leaders in any ministry is its Board of Trustees. Whether they know it or not, board members serve as role models for other congregants. Together with the minister, the board serves as a resonant core, setting the vibration or consciousness at the core of the ministry which in turn affects the vibration or consciousness of the organization as a whole. Research shows that consciousness of the congregation as a whole, and of the ministry as an organization, will not rise above the level of consciousness

demonstrated by its leaders. If the board operates from fear in how it makes decisions, its likely that fear will spill out into the general congregation. If the board holds the high watch and is demonstrating spiritual principles and modeling best practices, this too will spill out and influence the general congregation.

Thriving ministries, by design or by chance, are congruent and in integrity from their most committed leaders through to their newest members. In other words, thriving ministry leaders live the wise words of Mahatma Ghandi, "We must be the change we wish to see." Rather than just talking about spiritual principles they live them. Rather than just teaching spiritual principles, they demonstrate them. They lead by example, asking only that which they are willing to do themselves. Any shift in consciousness within the congregation must first be present at the board level. It is for this reason that, as with any consciousness raising initiative, our focus on enhancing a ministry's abundance must begin at the top.

Many people have had limited exposure to charitable giving, and fewer still may be familiar with the spiritual practice of tithing. Some may understand that giving is an important and good thing to do, yet they may have no sense of why or how to proceed, nor have a full grasp of the connection between personal finances and spiritual principles. As ministers and spiritual leaders, one of the greatest gifts we can ever offer to those we serve is prosperity education. If you yourself are practicing prosperity principles, you know how powerful this is. Yet, often in ministry we shy away from sharing this blessing with others for fear it will be interpreted as "just a push for more money."

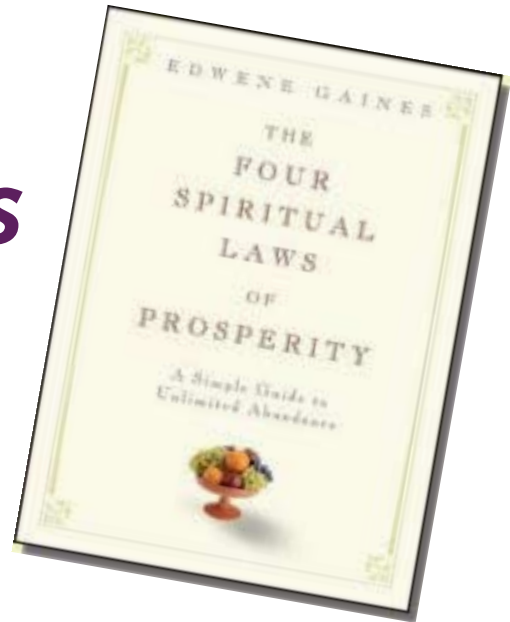
In order to help people understand more about this important spiritual practice, they must not only hear it spoken about from the platform and take training classes, but they must witness to it happening in practice. They will take their cues from what they see and hear being authentically practiced by the leaders in the church.

The board sets the tone for the rest of the ministry. They lead in creating the field of consciousness, along with the ministerial staff. Simply energetically, as the leadership moves through the material in this program and builds or strengthens its prosperity consciousness with a disciplined spiritual practice, the effects will be felt across the entire ministry.

As a board member, approach the work in this course from the perspective as an officer of the organization. While you will most certainly find applications for your own personal finances, and you will be challenged to personally demonstrate prosperity principles, the main focus is on the financial health of the ministry rather than your own. For this reason, all board members are encouraged to enroll in the congregational course as well. Not only will you be served personally, but it will benefit others in the congregation to see board members at the classes and to interact with you on the subject of prosperity principles.

The Four Spiritual Laws of Prosperity

Much of the material in this workbook comes from Edwene Gaines' book. It has been used with permission.



Prosperity

Edwene Gaines wrote this prayer for the beginning of her book:

Opening Prayer

Father/Mother God, I invite the Holy Spirit to take charge of my journey to prosperity. I let go of all that has gone before and I now begin anew. I am free and forgiven for all the mistakes I have made in the past. I open myself now to expressing a brand-new magnificence. I open myself to the infinite possibilities that are mine to choose. I open myself to receiving all the goodness I can have and to all of the greatness I can achieve. I invite the Holy Spirit to heal my body, to harmonize my emotions, to renew my mind, to fill me now with a mighty faith that empowers me and allows me to commit to be all that I can be.

And so it is.

For the purpose of this training, use “we” or the name of your church in the place of “I” to make it your board’s own prayer.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness

Holding on to resentment is like taking poison and hoping the other person will die. —Carolyn Myss

On our spiritual journey toward prosperity, we are aspiring to a forgiveness that is so deep, so full, and so complete that no traces of any bad feeling at all will remain within us. —Edwene Gaines

Why should we forgive ourselves or the people who have done us wrong?

A church has a group consciousness. Everything that pertains to an individual pertains to the church. You as a board have a group consciousness that reflects on the church as a whole. So the statements below do pertain to the church and board.

Harboring a grudge completely blocks our ability to have peace of mind. All sorts of studies indicate that negative thoughts, feelings, words, and behaviors affect our mental and physical health, our success, and our self-worth. Forgiveness is not something we do for the sake of another person. Forgiveness is something we do for ourselves.

Forgiveness and Financial Debt

Forgiveness is a wonderful gift that will help you achieve greater serenity and peace of mind. But the rewards you get from it are not just emotional; they are financial, too. If you are carrying debt around, the quickest way to get out of that debt is to forgive. And where did that debt come from; unforgiveness with yourself.

Forgiveness is a wonderful gift that will help your church achieve greater serenity and peace of mind. But the rewards your church will receive from it are not just emotional; they are financial, too. If the church is carrying debt around, the quickest way to get out of that debt is to forgive. And where did that debt come from? Unforgiveness somewhere in the historical consciousness of the church.

The practice of forgiveness is our most important contribution to the healing of the world.

—Marianne Williamson

Forgiveness Techniques

Forgiveness Technique Number 1

Writing, speaking and listening to forgiveness affirmations are all effective ways to begin the process of forgiveness. You can use the ones below or create your own. Always remember to say what you want to be true as if it is already true.

- We forgive ourselves completely for every mistake we have ever made.
- We forgive others, knowing that we all did the best we could at that time.
- We let go of guilt, blame, shame, judgment, and hurt.
- We are free from condemnation or complaining about the past.
- We forgive everyone who did not show up as we desired.
- We forgive ourselves for unconscious behaviors of the past.
- We forgive others for their unconscious behaviors of the past as well.
- We allow ourselves to feel forgiven and to move forward in life.

Forgiveness Technique Number 2

Every board meeting ask prayerfully, “Have we put anyone outside our hearts today?” If so, take time to forgive yourself for this judgment made in an unconscious moment, and to release your need to control others’ behavior. Come again to the realization that how others act, drive, dress, speak, spend, vote and generally behave is none of your business. Then invite them back into your hearts, looking to see what caused you to toss them out, forgiving them and yourself, making a new commitment to be more awake and aware.

Forgiveness Technique Number 3

If there is something or someone you are still having a hard time releasing, ask God for help. Maybe it is time to ask God, or Jesus, Mary, or Buddha or whomever you chose to sit with you while you consciously forgive yourself or another. Feel that Presence holding your hand, reminding you that you are whole, perfect and complete. “I love you just the way you are and all is forgiven.” Next, call to mind anyone that you need to forgive but who you have not been able to. What you cannot do, God can. Imagine that person right there with you and tell that person whatever you need to tell them in order to forgive them.

Edwene also offers a wonderful CD on forgiveness entitled “Deep Profound Forgiveness” that can be ordered at www.prosperityproducts.com

Forgiveness: A Journaling Exercise

When we have carried a grudge it can be hard to know how to let go. As a board, discuss and consider the congregation, staff and board. “What issues of forgiveness does the church have?” Do this prayerfully and be honest with yourselves. Have each board member write out exactly what it is you want to forgive. Seeing a statement of forgiveness clearly written in black and white can be a powerful way to help you forgive. Fill in the following blanks and see if that simple act does not help you start to release long-held grudges. Discuss as a board.

Today I put _____ out of my heart and now I am ready to forgive:

I am over being the victim of my own unforgiveness: _____

I am no longer going to hold unforgiveness towards _____ for:

I forgive previous board members or ministers for: _____

Above all, I forgive myself once and for all for:

It is done!

Forgiveness Exercise

The Bible says we must forgive “seventy times seven.” This is another simple exercise you can do in order to release and let go of something you no longer have peace with. Have each board trustee write what you wish to release 70 times during the day for one week or until you have fully let it go.

1. _____	23. _____
2. _____	24. _____
3. _____	25. _____
4. _____	26. _____
5. _____	27. _____
6. _____	28. _____
7. _____	29. _____
8. _____	30. _____
9. _____	31. _____
10. _____	32. _____
11. _____	33. _____
12. _____	34. _____
13. _____	35. _____
14. _____	36. _____
15. _____	37. _____
16. _____	38. _____
17. _____	39. _____
18. _____	40. _____
19. _____	41. _____
20. _____	42. _____
21. _____	43. _____
22. _____	44. _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 45. _____ | 58. _____ |
| 46. _____ | 59. _____ |
| 47. _____ | 60. _____ |
| 48. _____ | 61. _____ |
| 49. _____ | 62. _____ |
| 50. _____ | 63. _____ |
| 51. _____ | 64. _____ |
| 52. _____ | 65. _____ |
| 53. _____ | 66. _____ |
| 54. _____ | 67. _____ |
| 55. _____ | 68. _____ |
| 56. _____ | 69. _____ |
| 57. _____ | 70. _____ |

And it is done!

Now check out how you feel both physically and mentally. Discuss this exercise together at your next board meeting.

Divine Purpose (Mission)

My Hero List

(Adapted by Gary Simmons)

Do this exercise individually and discuss as a board.

Name	Three qualities that make the person my hero		
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3
	1	2	3

Repeating Qualities—those qualities that have been listed more than once, above.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Now transfer these to the top of a 5x8 card leaving the top line blank.

Now print on the top line:

“This is who I came here to be.”

Is this how I am showing up as a board member?

Divine Purpose

Charles Fillmore said: “I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm and I spring forth with a mighty faith to do the things that ought to be done by me.” Your purpose is that which is yours to do. It might be changing the world as a whole or changing the world of one. What is your church’s divine purpose/mission?

We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

—Marianne Williamson - A Return to Love

Divine Purpose

What is your church's divine purpose? It is simply the way in which you live as a community. Your divine purpose is something that you will be working with and growing with the rest of your church's life. And in finding your divine purpose, one of the most important steps is making a commitment. A commitment to yourself, God, and the universe. The truth about your church is that you are a spiritual being in a spiritual universe, governed by spiritual law. You came together to play at the highest level that has ever been played. Eric Butterworth wrote, "God can do no more for you than God can do through you." This is also true of the church. The divine purpose for the church is another term for the church's mission.

When your church chooses its divine purpose/mission, it is framing its life with meaning. It is also taking an important step in spiritual development: to demonstrate as a church a divine call and to prove you have the power to affect change—and you are bigger, stronger, more powerful, and more creative than you thought.

—Edwene Gaines

We are here on this planet to discover and demonstrate our divinity. Let's start working on our divine purpose/mission by answering these questions honestly, then discuss as a board:

1. What is your church's purpose/mission?
2. What is your part as a board member to see that purpose/mission accomplished?
3. What one challenge seems most important to us as a church?
4. What would be the perfect solution to this challenge?

5. Can we visualize it solved and see it clearly in our mind's eye?
6. Can we write a description of what it would look like if the transformative work were complete and perfect?
7. What do we need to know/have/be in order to begin?
8. Is it time to go back to school, read the books, study with the experts, or learn the realities of the problems from those who have gone before?
9. Is it time to do the research, the investigation, and the questioning?
10. What is the first step, and how soon are we going to take it?
11. Are we willing to do what it takes?
12. Will we commit to staying the course, working in integrity, and standing alone in the mission if necessary?

Divine Purpose

God has given us an inner guidance system to help us find our divine purpose. Whatever you choose to do, it has to be fun, fun, fun!

Maybe you are in the middle of working on your divine purpose/mission and you get in a rut. When you do not know what to do—do nothing. When you do—go. Then there are times when you might just have to make it up. You can make it up to be anything you want it to be. It is your life.

Living with integrity

Part of your new plan to live in alignment with your divine purpose/mission is to start living with integrity. Integrity simply means wholeness, oneness, completeness. When living in integrity the outside of your life matches that which you profess to believe.

These affirmations for integrity come from Tolly Burkan, founder of the Firewalking Institute of Research and Education where Edwene studied. He says, “This is how you walk on fire, and this is how you walk through life.”

1. Always pay attention
2. Always tell the truth and tell it quickly
3. Always ask for what you want and when you want it
4. Always take total responsibility for your own experiences
5. Always keep agreements

Goal Setting (Strategic Plan)

Goal Setting

The message has been sent and your words have been spoken. Do you know what we are really doing as we write our goals/strategic plan? We are simply directing our faith. We are getting on with our divine purpose/mission.

Edwene states: “Having directed faith means having a heart-felt specific desire, coupled with a deep and abiding trust in the goodness and generosity of God, and therein lies the magic and power of setting our goals.”

Your heart’s desire is just God knocking at your heart. Always follow your heart’s desires. You do not have to know how. God already knows how. Just simply go the way your heart leads you. For the church, this means understanding how God’s leading is speaking through the heart of the ministry.

“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it will be opened to you. For whoever asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, the door is opened.” Matt. 7:7-8

The real search (desire) of all people is for God. They may think they are looking for other things, but must eventually admit that it is God they seek.

—Charles Fillmore

Goal Setting

Goal setting/strategic planning is a wonderful, fun and creative part of the prosperity process. This is where we get to ask God for exactly what we want. How fun! Some of us know what we want and others have not a clue. That is why it is so important that while working on your goals/vision you take as much time as you need for yourself. Spend time alone with just you and God.

Ernest Holmes shares with us “We can do anything we want as long as it doesn’t harm anyone.” I can do anything I want!

Before we get started, let us explore some of the:

Essential Elements of Setting Goals

1. Casting aside your limitations
2. Opening yourself up to possibility
3. Being specific is crucial
4. Letting go of judgment
5. The 21-Day Challenge (not complaining)

Why is it good to have goals?

It is necessary to have desires. Charles Fillmore states “Desire is the onward impulse of the ever-evolving soul.” Aren’t we all evolving souls (growing)? If we’re not growing, we’re dying. This is also true of a church. We choose to grow, so let’s start by writing and manifesting our goals.

Catherine Ponder in her book *Dynamic Laws of Prosperity* calls goal setting the “Creative Law of Prosperity.” Her three basic steps are below:

Step 1

Having a plan, writing your desires concerning that plan and constantly expanding on that plan.

My plan is: _____

Step 2

Mentally imaging that plan as fulfilled.

I see it looking like _____

Step 3

Constantly affirming its perfect fulfillment.

I affirm _____

You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you; so light will shine on your way. —Job 22:28

And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. —Matt 21:22

Tithing

Tithing Questions and Answers

By Edwene Gaines

1. What is a tithe?

The word tithe means a tenth. To tithe is to return 10 percent of all we receive to the person, place or institution where we have received spiritual food.

2. What is the purpose of the tithe?

The purpose of the tithe is to acknowledge that God is the source of our good. The purpose of the tithe is not to build churches or to pay ministers' salaries although tithes do help to do these and other good things.

3. Why 10 percent?

The first recorded tithe in the Bible is discussed in Gen. 14 when Abraham took his tithe to his spiritual teacher, Melchisedek. We are not told why 10 percent, only that it is 10 percent.

4. What is "spiritual food"?

Spiritual food is that which inspires us, teaches us, reminds us of the Truth, causes us to remember who we are.

5. What if I receive spiritual food from several places?

It's perfectly acceptable to split your tithe and send a portion of it to all those persons, places, and institutions which have fed us spiritual food.

6. What if those I tithe to don't need it or don't use it the way I want?

Our tithes must go to those who have fed us spiritual food. We must not earmark it, suggest how it is to be used and most certainly not consider whether they are rich or poor. That is not our concern. Our concern is to acknowledge God as our source by giving 10 percent to those who feed us spiritual food.

7. Do we tithe gross or net?

The answer is found in the question, "Do you want to prosper a little or a lot?" Emerson says that we cannot out-give God. Tithe on gross.

8. What if my partner (spouse/family) doesn't believe in tithing?

We are responsible for obeying spiritual laws as we understand them. It is appropriate for you to share with your partner your commitment to tithe and ask your partner what portion of the income is yours to tithe on.

9. When do I tithe?

The sooner we tithe on income received, the sooner we receive more. You may choose to write your tithe checks and send them out immediately after receiving income. If you have a regular place of worship, you may take your tithe to the ministry for class or worship service.

10. What do I tithe on?

Everything you receive. Salary, bonuses, interest, monetary gifts, borrowed money, sale of house, money found, inheritance—everything!

11. How do I tithe on gifts (not money)?

Hold in mind that there is no such thing as personal property. Gifts then are yours to use and enjoy and pass on when you are through with them. You are the temporary steward of property. Enjoy and share.

12. God doesn't need my money. Why should I tithe?

Of course, God doesn't need your money. You need to give! Tithing is a beginning discipline in giving and receiving. Before we're through, we will enjoy giving much more than 10 percent.

13. What is the promise? Malachi 3:10

If we tithe, we prove God in our lives and the windows of heaven open for us.

14. What about people who tithe and don't prosper?

The windows of heaven open for us in the ways that we are willing to have them open. We must ask for what we desire and expect to receive.

15. Did Jesus teach tithing?

Jesus did not need to teach tithing because it was so much a part of his religious heritage that it was taken for granted.

16. How do I overcome my fear of tithing?

By tithing.

17. What about people who don't tithe and prosper any way?

Prosperity includes perfect health, satisfying relationships, right joyous work and financial abundance. While there are those who may have mastered money (in childhood or, possibly, previous lifetimes), money alone is not true prosperity.

18. Is it OK to tithe one percent or five percent? Do I have to tithe ten percent?

The word tithe means “tenth.” Anything less than 10 percent is not a tithe and does not fulfill the law. All giving is good, however, and opens the way for greater receiving. Many find it difficult to allow themselves to have it all because, not tithing, they feel out of integrity with spiritual law.

19. What if I can't pay my bills now? How can I tithe?

Unless you tithe, you probably will never be able to pay your bills. Tithe first and trust God to assist you in paying the bills. Be responsible about money and refuse to create debts that you feel guilty about. Ask for wisdom.

20. Can I be excused from tithing?

“I'm retired (on welfare, not working, etc.) and I'm on a fixed income. If you are on a fixed income, it is because you “fixed” it. No one is excused from obeying spiritual law. Lack of faith will cause you to justify not tithing, but that thinking will keep you from your unlimited good.

21. Are gifts to charity considered tithes?

No. A tithe goes where you are fed spiritually. A tithe says, “I want more of this!” Consciously choose the “this.” Jesus told us, “Put God first and all else will follow.” What is your God? Your debt? Charity?

Note: If your church is not providing spiritual food, the Board of Trustees is responsible.

22. Do churches tithe?

Successful ones do.

Sample Tithing Policy

Below is the tithing policy of our Association home office as a sample.

Tithing Policy of our Association of Unity Churches International

Tithing by the Association of Unity Churches International is guided by the following understandings: Tithing is the giving of 10% of all unrestricted donations received by the Association to organizations or individuals who provide inspiration or support to the Association, the Unity movement or leadership of the Association. That giving is not a substitute for purchase of goods or services.

Tithes go to individuals or organizations that provide inspiration or support for the Association's functions, mission, leaders, or goals in consciousness. A member church or other organization may inspire our work by showing us new ways to communicate our Unity message, positively impact our communities, or in other ways help transform lives and co-create a world that works for all. There are organizations that can be viewed as assisting Unity in establishing a change of consciousness which is a part of the Association's mission.

Tithes do not go to social service needs or organizations, or functions that are the organization's responsibility (operational expenses) and could be funded from its income. A tithe is not appropriate for a function that is the duty of the Association to provide.

Questions to Ask Yourself About Tithing

1. Are you willing to come into integrity about money by acknowledging God as the source of your good?
2. If you are a tither, why and how does it fulfill you?
3. If you're not a tither, what fears surround this?
4. Are you willing to have the windows of heaven open for you? Are you truly ready to receive all the good God has prepared for you?

When you tithe it is done according to your faith. Heb:11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
as it was the substance of things which have come
to pass; and it is the evidence of things not seen.”

Isn't that beautiful? Faith expands when you give. The more you give, the more faith you're going to have. You'll find out that Emerson spoke truth when he said, **“You can't out-give God.”** There is a law of compensation. The more you give, the more you receive. God will provide it.

And so it is!

Master Prosperity Affirmations

I know who I am. I am the beloved of the Creator. It is the Father-Mother-God's good pleasure to give me the kingdom of all good-perfect health, loving relationships, creative work, divine purpose and mission. I am deeply, unconditionally and everlastingly loved.

I now give myself permission to prosper in all ways, to accept the world of lavish abundance that is here for me. I will share this abundance by teaching all who will listen.

I am filled to overflowing with love, wisdom and integrity. I can be trusted to keep my commitments.

I listen within. I ask and receive. I release any thought or feeling that my good can be withheld from me.

I forgive and I am forgiven completely. I now let go of all pre-conceived notions of who I thought I was before now and I invite the Holy Spirit to redefine me.

The power that is within me is greater than any power in the world. I can do all things through Christ, the perfect pattern of my divinity.

I am a delightful and loveable expression of the miracle-working power of love and wisdom. It is safe for me to be my own unique self. This is a friendly and welcoming universe.

Everything I would possibly need or desire is always at my fingertips and I am grateful. Thank you, Infinite Spirit of Truth.

Love and wisdom dissolve all blocks to my God-ordained success. I serve God. Money serves me.

God is my Source. God is my supply. God is my substance. I am rich in all things and all is well, now and forever!

Prosperity Promises from the Bible

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” 3 John 2

“...no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Psa 84:11

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life” Psa 23:6

“The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.” Psa 115:14

“And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house” Deut 26:11

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13

“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” I Cor 2:9

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isa 41:10

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Luke 7:38

For more on prosperity go to www.unity.org/prosperity and sign up for the Power of Prosperity email newsletter.

