

MANIFESTING AN ABUNDANT LIFE

Week #1 of a 3-Week Series, "Lessons Learned from Our Lived Experience"

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Well, tonight, everyone, we're talking about prosperity and how to manifest more abundance in our lives. Anyone want more abundance, more prosperity in your lives? Yeah, almost every hand here.

And there's a lot of talk in the news right now of people struggling financially or even feeling emotionally depleted, sad or lonely. And so, I don't want to downplay or bypass their reality of their situation or their feelings. And I do want us to have this opportunity tonight to shift our consciousness around -- our understanding around the topic of prosperity.

Specifically, we're going to explore: What part do our thoughts, our beliefs, our actions play in creating just how prosperous we feel or have the potential to feel? Why being able to receive from others is a part of our prosperity consciousness. And how when we honor those laws of inflow and outflow -- along with gratitude practices -- we can open ourselves up to a greater good and sense of wealth in every area of our life.

Because when I say prosperity, probably most of you are thinking money. Is that true? When we say prosperity, most of the time we're thinking money. So that's one of the big ideas I want us to really have a change in thought here tonight -- a new understanding around. By the end of my talk, okay? By the end of my talk, we're all going to have a different understanding of prosperity.

Because abundance/prosperity, it's not just about money. We can be prosperous in friendships; in our connections with other people; in our family relationships. We can be wealthy in joy; wealthy in health; wealthy in life experiences; wealthy in a spiritual community. There's a whole host of areas in our lives that give us a sense of well-being and abundance.

So, here's what the Latin translation of the word "prosperity" is. It's here on the screen for you. It translates in these different words: success, good fortune, well-being, good health.

So, I want you to really now think, *"Wow; how are all the different ways I'm prosperous?"* Just take a moment right now. Create a mental list -- of all the areas in your life that you're currently abundant according to those words. So, where in my life am I successful? Do I have good fortune, good health, good wealth, good well-being?

Do you have at least a few items where you're prosperous? Currently prosperous? Now thinking of this mental list you've just made, did any of those areas not include money? Did you have areas that weren't money-related? Yeah, I see a lot of head nodding. And so just like that, our definition of prosperity expands.

Because as I like to remind you all, you're part of the magical design of the universe. You are all one with that One Power and Presence: that Divine Presence, Divine Intelligence. So therefore, knowing your connection to this Allness, you are worthy of -- have the opportunity to receive -- the riches of life itself. You are worthy of all the opportunities to receive the riches of life. I want you to really breathe that in.

So, in his book, *"Discover the Power Within You,"* Eric Butterworth writes this. He says, *"There is no absence of God in the universe and there is no shortage of God. The only lack in life is the thought of lack."*

The only lack in life is the thought of lack. In other words, it's our own "stinking thinking." It's our own consciousness of "not enoughness." That's what limits our prosperity.

And yet here's what Matthew says: Chapter 7, verses 7-8. You can follow along on your screen. It says, *"Ask and it will be given. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you. For*

everyone who asks, receives. And everyone who searches, finds. And for everyone who knocks, the door will be open."

Yay, Matthew! He just pointed out a few ways that we can manifest more prosperity in our lives! Ask, search, take action, and know -- have faith.

So, for example on that -- ask, search, know -- if you want more friends ... because, again, we're looking outside of money. But you can apply this to money! But if you want to have more friends, well, the first action would be to ask someone to go to coffee or lunch with you. Then you would take the action. You would search, find a place and a time to meet up and have that coffee or lunch. And then you would have the faith: *"Hey, here's a new friendship that could be developing!"* Or maybe there's another one that would be for the highest good for everyone here involved.

So, this idea of ask -- that's powerful. That's the power of our words. The world -- our immediate world, the larger world -- is created by our words. Remember: In the beginning there was the Word. And our words, especially those held in mind.

So this is known in Unity/New Thought religions as The Law of Mind Action. What we focus our thoughts on, we attract more of into our lives. You may also hear this as, *"Thoughts held in mind take after their own kind,"* or, *"Where my thoughts go, my life flows."*

But one of the first and most powerful ways to create prosperity of any kind is to monitor our thoughts. Monitor our thoughts around money. Monitor our thoughts around any area where we feel like we don't have enough, where we're lacking.

Here's what Unity co-founder Charles Fillmore writes in "Keep a True Lent" here on your screen. He writes, *"Watch your thoughts when you're handling your money, because your money is attached through your mind to the one source of all substance and all money. When you think of money, which is visible, as something directly attached to an invisible source that is giving or withholding according to your thought, you have the key to all the riches and the reason for lack."*

We can also say this about our health. This is one I think I've shared with a couple of you even tonight. How are you talking about your health? How are you talking about aging? I was just sitting here talking about, *"I've got to get progressives. I've got the CPAP."* [Congregants laugh] I'm starting to be like, *"I don't like the aging thing."* *"I'm waking up. I slept wrong. I've got aching this. Arrgghh."* I'm like ... right?

Stop the thought. Stop the thought! I keep catching myself. The beauty of aging is I get another day to live. I get another day to be with my people. I get another day to express what I'm here to express and be. Stop the thought -- and the energy: the energy around that thought.

We also do this, you know, with our thoughts about our own confidence level, about our love, about our money. So, what is the energy that you're tying to that thought? Because remember, we're energetic beings. So whatever that energy is that we're putting out ... You can say whatever word you want to say; what's the energy underneath it? What's the energy tied to that thought?

This is where our third Unity principle comes into play. Unity has five principles. And so, our third one is that our thinking creates our reality. You attract the energy that you put out. You attract your belief system. What is your belief system? The more you focus on that, that's what you're going to bring into your life.

So, if the thought is, *"I need to hold on to my money. I can't spend any money"* -- It's almost like a hoarder mentality or just, *"I don't have enough. I can't spend another dime."* Or maybe it's even, *"I don't have enough friends,"* or, *"I don't have enough health,"* or, *"I don't have enough love."* Well, if that's where your focus is, and that's where all of your energy is, then what you're looking for will find you. What you're looking for, you will find! Your mind will find evidence of whatever it is that you're claiming to be true.

Abundance -- it might be right in front of you! But if you're so busy looking at the "not enough," that's what you're going to find: the not enough. So, the evidence that you're focusing on is what you're going to find.

And this also works with visualization -- those images that you're focusing on or keeping in your mind's eye. That's our spiritual power or spiritual quality of imagination, and it's strong! And it can work for us or it can work against us. So, you can imagine something beautiful -- artwork, maybe a garden you want to create -- or you can create something really scary. There's a scary noise on your window. *"Oh, my gosh, is someone going to be breaking into my house?"* Or maybe it's just a bird or a branch. But we can use our imagination for us or against us.

And, of course, the Olympic athletes, the professional athletes -- all of them use their imagination to their advantage. Michael Phelps, the Olympic -- highly decorated Olympic swimmer -- he will focus/visualize. Visualize from beginning to end before he gets even out where the pool is. He visualizes what it feels like, the temperature, the sound of everyone in the stands. The lights, what he's going to be listening to, what it's going to feel like when he's on that platform. What the water feels like, each arm stroke.

And that's, these professional athletes, that's how they use their imagination to their advantage to create an abundance of success in their profession. That's how they become the experts. They use their imagination -- their focus -- to their advantage for more prosperity of success.

Edwene Gaines is one of Unity's powerful teachers in the area of prosperity. She's got some great books, if you want to read more about this. But in one of her books, she shares this great story about a woman who really, really, really wanted to go on one of Edwin's prosperity workshops. It was going to be at a retreat center. It was going to be in a different state.

And she didn't have the funds for this trip, but she just really believed that she was going to make that trip. In fact, every time she spoke with Edwin, she claimed that she was going to be going on the trip. She hadn't signed up yet, hadn't paid yet, but she just kept saying, *"I'm going on that trip."* She gathered clothes. She packed her bags a few days before the trip. Mind you, didn't have the ticket; hadn't paid yet.

A couple of days before the group was scheduled to leave, someone calls Edwene Gaines up and says, *"I can't make it, but please give my paid trip to somebody else."* Edwene calls up the woman, and the woman answers and says, *"I know why you're calling. My bags are packed. I'm ready to go."*

That woman saw herself in her mind going on that trip. She took the action and prepared for it. She believed at a very deep level; had that faith that that was going to happen. Ask, search, know.

So, take a moment right now. I want you to take a moment right now. What is an area of your life where you would like to experience more prosperity or more abundance? Everyone have one area? You can work on all the rest when you get home. But just one area tonight: **an area where you'd like to have more prosperity or abundance. And now I want you in your mind's eye to visualize what would that look like.**

If you right now have that, what would that look like? What would you look like? And, more importantly, what do you feel? How would you feel if you received that? So, taking a moment: What would that look like from the outside? What would that look like for me? How would that feel for me? What would be the energy around that?

And you can take this and do this in meditation. This is a great way for a prosperity meditation -- to sit and really visualize, using that power of imagination/visualization, and to place a feeling and energy around it.

You can also create what's known as a treasure map. Back in the day, we used to have magazines. Does everyone remember magazines? Where we'd cut out the pictures and some words, and then we'd glue it on a piece of 8-1/2"x11" paper, just so that we could get in our mind's eye a visual of what we wanted,

what we wanted to focus on. Now, of course, you could do it on Pinterest. You could create your own Pinterest board.

But building these mental images for yourself to really keep your focus on what it is that you want to manifest. This is how you help yourself attract and manifest what you want. It's this great power of our thoughts/our imagination, combined with deep faith, deep knowing that it can happen. If not this, something better.

But before your eyes can see it, we have to take the action. You've got to pack the bags before you even have the ticket. And this is the part I really want to emphasize. It's our fifth Unity principle: taking action.

So, you may be sitting there and going, *"Yep, I know everything she's saying. I've heard this before. I've read lots of prosperity books. I'm nodding in agreement."* But you've got to take action. You have to take action with your thoughts and physically. Take the action. You can't just stare at the treasure map or the Pinterest board. You've got to go out and do it. Make it happen. Pack the bag.

So, action could look like -- if we're talking about finances -- making a budget. Another action could be following the budget. [Congregants laugh] Got some laughter on that one. It could be sharing your time volunteering if you want more connection and community. It could be sharing your money with an organization that you love or buying groceries or gas for a friend in need. It's taking the action, though, to continue to build upon what it is that you want to attract more of into your life.

Eric Butterworth in "Spiritual Economics" writes, *"If ever there is a lack of any kind, whether it is a need for employment or for money or for guidance or even for healing, something is blocking the flow. And the most effective remedy? Give."*

I've shared this story before, but it emphasizes a great point here. About 15 years ago, my husband Juan and I -- we were having some bumps. We had little kids. He was going through his MBA program. I was a stay-at-home mom at that time. And there were some weeks of really struggling through, like, how are we going to get through this week with \$25?

And then we -- and when I say we ... Juan -- realized that we had stopped tithing. And I'm not talking about just putting the \$5 or the \$10 in the offering plate, but I mean 10%. Now, if you've got \$25 for the rest of the week, 10% feels like a lot. But we started doing that again. And suddenly, that \$25 lasted -- with two small kids -- an entire week.

But that's because, see, we changed our attention. We changed our focus. We changed the words we said to ourselves. Because the mindset then there was that, *"I'm supported by an abundant universe. There is plenty."* The vibration now -- our frequency that we are putting out -- was calm, not stress. Faith, not fear. So, then we end up attracting just that: more calm. More enough. More of what we needed. More of, *"we're supported."* We placed ourselves in that divine flow.

In the book, "The Energy of Money," it's by author Maria Nemeth, she writes, *"The act of giving establishes balance and allows energy to flow freely, coming in and going out. When you are balanced, you naturally open to the miracles that surround every moment of your life."*

Isn't that beautiful? And it also leads me to something else that I find people have a hard time doing, and that is receiving. How many people have a hard time receiving? Someone tries to give you a gift or something -- *"No, no, no!"*

And yet here -- also from Eric Butterworth's "Spiritual Economics" -- here on the screen, because I really wanted to drive this point home. From "Spiritual Economics." It says, *"The divine flow requires but one thing of you: your consent to be a receiving channel."*

If you just give and give and give of your time or your love, without receiving, then you run out of funds. You run out of energy. You end up depleted.

I was thinking about this. Think about a lake. It has an inflow. It has an outflow. So, if water only flows into the outlet, eventually it's going to overflow, and then the flooding is going to damage everything around it. If there's only an outflow and nothing coming in, then it's going to eventually dry up, leaving nothing to nourish everything around it.

So, the same is true for us. We're meant to both give and receive. So, **abundance isn't just about generosity and giving, but it's also about being able to be open to receiving.** So, when someone says, *"Hey, let me buy you lunch,"* your response is, *"Thank you!"* When someone wants to give you a gift, your response is, *"Thank you."*

Because so often our first response is, *"Oh no, you shouldn't have,"* or, *"I can't accept that."* But when you do that, not only are you blocking your own ability to receive more goodness, kindness, nourishment, prosperity, we're also interrupting that other person's opportunity to give.

Let that sink in for a minute. By refusing their gift, you're disrupting their prosperity cycle. You're denying them the joy of generosity, the blessing of giving, and that experience of living from a consciousness of abundance.

So, receiving generously is not selfish. It's actually an act of trust. It actually is you saying to the universe, *"Yes! I'm worthy of receiving. Yes! I love receiving. I'm open to receiving more."* It also says, *"I receive with gratitude, and I know the flow of good continues to come to me."*

And so that brings us to this last piece of the abundance manifestation puzzle -- and that is **gratitude and celebration.** The more we give thanks for, the more we have to give thanks for ... to be thankful for. The more we look around and find the glimmers in life, the more abundant we are in the miracles and the blessings of life.

I kind of planted that with our meditation tonight -- really sitting in gratitude and thanksgiving and looking at: What are the glimmers? What are the miracles? What are the blessings? What are all the ways I'm already blessed and prosperous?

So, I'm going to invite you to really, at the end of each day, look back and see: Where were the blessings? Where was I abundant? And what was I abundant in? And then celebrate that. Celebrate the wins. *"Hey, I didn't have to think about my rent or my mortgage payment."* *"I ate nourishing, delicious food."* That's usually me -- ha! [Congregants laugh] *"I spent time laughing with my friends."* *"My partner or my family member, they showed their love for me through this action or with this gift."*

So, even right now, reflect back on the last 24 hours or this day. And I want you to just kind of look back and see: What are all the different ways you were fortunate? What are all the different ways today that you were fortunate? Different areas in your life today that you were blessed, that you can say, *"Yeah, I was successful. I have well-being in that area."*

Every day brings wealth, but it's up to you to find it, to discover it, to bring more of it into your life through your thoughts, your visualization, your faith, your action. Your words and the energy and old beliefs you hold on to affect your feeling, your wealth, your abundance, your success.

Here's from Psalm Chapter 37, Verse 4. It says, *"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."* Metaphysically, it would say, *"Take delight in the divine essence that you are, and you will receive the desires of your heart."* Turn within and know you are worthy. You are worthy of divine life, as a being of divine life.

As Eric Butterworth said, *"You are always as rich as you think you are, and the only poverty is of spirit."*

Abundance is so much more than financial prosperity. It's the abundance, the wealth, the gratitude in every area of our life. And our thoughts, our words, our visions shape our experience. Our gratitude opens us up to even more greater good. And learning to receive is just as important as learning how to give.

So, I'm going to invite you this week to discover just how abundant you already are in your life. Each day, reflecting back: *"Just how abundant am I already in all these different areas of my life?"* And then celebrating it. Because as you open yourself up, again, you start to receive even more.

Confidently welcome in even more abundance. Celebrate what you have. Know you're worthy of more. And so, please hear that. You are worthy! You're worthy of health, of love, of joy, of the fullness of life in all of its experiences. Any of the experiences of your heart, you are worthy of that.

So, now is your time, friends, to be in the divine flow of that universal abundance and claim it. Are you ready to go claim it? [Congregants murmur]

[Laughs] I'm talking about an abundance; I want an abundance of yeses! Ready? Are you ready to go claim it? [Congregants – loudly: "Yes!"] That's what I thought! Blessings, everyone.

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