

Word Faith Movement



The world's fastest-growing false religion tells us that our faith is a "force," and the words we speak have the power to create something new. The **Word of Faith** proponents promise we can obtain health, wealth, success, and more if we simply have enough faith. Biblical Christianity says no.

Fast Facts:

- Known as Positive Confession, Name-it-and-claim-it, Word of Faith or Word-Faith.
- Fastest-growing segment of Christianity
- Sometimes (but not always) linked with the [New Age](#) and with [New Apostolic Reformation \(NAR\)](#).
- The WOF movement grew out of the [Pentecostal movement](#) in the late 20th century.
- Its founder was [E. W. Kenyon](#), who studied the metaphysical New Thought teachings of Phineas Quimby.
- Mind science (where "name it and claim it" originated) was combined with Pentecostalism, resulting in a peculiar mix of orthodox Christianity and mysticism.
- Kenneth Hagin, in turn, studied under E. W. Kenyon and made the Word of Faith movement what it is today.

Beliefs

"Word-Faith," the supporters of this movement believe that faith works like a mighty power or force. Through faith, we can obtain anything we want — health, wealth, success, whatever. However, this force is only released through the spoken word. As we speak the words of faith, power is discharged to accomplish our desires. Kenneth Hagin's theme, as found in his booklet *How to Write Your Own Ticket with God*, can be summarized as follows (*Christianity in Crisis*, pp. 74-75):

In the opening chapter, titled "Jesus Appears to Me," Hagin claims that while he "was in the Spirit" — just like the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos — a white cloud enveloped him and he began to speak in tongues. "Then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to me," says Hagin. "He stood within three feet of me." After what sounded like a casual conversation about such things as finances, ministry, and even current affairs, Jesus told Hagin to get a pencil and a piece of paper. He then instructed him to "Write down: 1,2,3,4." Jesus then allegedly told Hagin "if anybody, anywhere, will take these four steps or put these four principles into operation, he will always receive whatever he wants from Me or from God the Father." That includes whatever you want financially. The formula is simply: "Say it, Do it, Receive it, and Tell it."

Step number one is "Say it." *"Positive or negative, it is up to the individual. According to what the individual says, that shall he receive."*

Step number two is "Do it." *"Your action defeats you or puts you over. According to your action, you receive or you are kept from receiving."*

Step number three is “Receive it.” We are to plug into the “powerhouse of heaven.”

“Faith is the plug, praise God! Just plug in.”

Step number four is “Tell it so others may believe.” This final step might be considered the Faith movement’s outreach program.

The Deification of Man

Faith teachers like to teach, based upon serious mishandling of passages such as [John 10:31-39](#) and [II Peter 1:4](#), that Christians are “little gods.” [Copeland](#) says, “Now Peter said by exceeding great and precious promises you become partakers of the divine nature. All right, are we gods? We are a class of gods!” (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 116). [Benny Hinn](#) declares, “God came from heaven, became a man, made man into little gods, went back to heaven as a man” (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 382 n. 43). Earl Paulk wrote, “Until we comprehend that we are little gods and we begin to act like little gods, we cannot manifest the kingdom of God” (*Satan Unmasked*, p. 97).

The Humanization of God

While man is glorified, God is humiliated in the Faith system. Copeland claims that God is a being who stands about 6’2”-6’3”, weighing somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple of hundred pounds, and has a hand span of 9” across (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 121). Copeland also declares “Adam was the copy, looked just like (God). If you stood Adam beside God, they looked just exactly alike. If you stood Jesus and Adam side-by-side, they would look and sound exactly alike” (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 137).

Many of the Word-Faith teachers also embrace a heresy known as Tritheism, which in essence teaches that there are really three separate Gods. Hinn, under supposed inspiration, explains:

*“Man, I feel revelation knowledge already coming on me here. Holy Spirit, take over in the name of Jesus. ... God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a person; and He is a triune being by Himself separate from the Son and the Holy Ghost. Say, what did you say? Hear it, hear it, hear it. See, God the Father is a person, God the Son is a person, God the Holy Ghost is a person. But each one of them is a triune being by Himself. If I can shock you — and maybe I should — there’s nine of them. Huh, what did you say? Let me explain: God the Father, ladies and gentlemen, is a person with his own personal spirit, with his own personal soul, and his own personal spirit-body. You say, Huh, I never heard that. Well you think you’re in this church to hear things you’ve heard for the last 50 years? You can’t argue with the Word, can you? It’s all in the Word (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 123-124).*

Hinn, under fire, later retracted his remarks, only to reaffirm them two years later.

Jesus supposedly told Copeland, “They crucified me for claiming that I was God. But I didn’t claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that he was in me” (*Christianity in Crisis*, p. 137-138). Many of the Faith heresies concerning God can be traced to the notes found in *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible*.

The Distortion of the Cross

Four atonement-related errors on the part of the Faith teachers can be documented:

1. Christ was re-created on the cross from divine to demonic. To put it in Faith vernacular, Jesus took on the very nature of Satan himself.
2. Your redemption was not secured on the cross, but in hell. In fact, many Faith teachers claim that Christ’s torture by all the demons of hell was a “ransom” God paid to Satan so that He could get back into a universe from which He had been banished.
3. Jesus was reborn (or born again) in the very pit of hell.
4. Christ was reincarnated through His rebirth in hell and that those who (like Christ) are born again can become “incarnated” as well.

Thus, Faith teachers take Christ, the spotless Lamb, and pervert Him into an unholy sacrifice on the cross (*Christianity In Crisis*, p.153).

Practices

While many, even within the Word-Faith churches, are unaware of some of the doctrinal heresies of the movement, none can plead ignorant of the strange and bizarre practices and emphasis of its leaders. The following things are standard occurrences in virtually every one of their television broadcasts, evangelistic campaigns, and church services.

A Prosperity Gospel

Nothing will create more euphoria in the average person than the promise to make them wealthy, and this the Word-Faith leadership knows very well. The Word-Faith teacher’s lifestyle is clearly identified by opulence, luxury, riches, and the assurance that all of this can be his followers as well — if only they apply certain principles.

Robert Tilton is normative. On a Trinity Broadcasting Network program in 1990 he said:

“Being poor is a sin, when God promises prosperity. New house? New car? That’s chicken feed. That’s nothing compared to what God wants to do for you” (*Charismatic Chaos*, p. 285).

Fred Price on a similar broadcast explains how it works:

“If you’ve got one dollar faith and you ask for a ten-thousand dollar item, it ain’t going to work. It won’t work. Jesus said, ‘According to your [faith],’ not according to God’s will for you, in His own good time, if it’s according to His will, if He can work it into his busy schedule. He said, ‘According to your faith, be it unto you’” (*Charismatic Chaos*, p. 286).

Of course, the road to prosperity somehow always leads to the offering plate of the Word-Faith Movement. Gloria Copeland (Kenneth's wife) pulls no punches in her book *God's Will Is Prosperity*:

"Give \$10 and receive \$1000; Give \$1000 and receive \$100,000 ... give one house and receive one hundred houses or a house worth one hundred times as much. Give one airplane and receive one hundred times the value of the airplane. ... In short, [Mark 10:30](#) is a very good deal" (p. 54).

A Health Gospel

The "name-it-and-claim-it" pundits are not content with mere wealth; they want to feel well enough to enjoy their prosperity. So do most of their listeners. So while you are giving away wealth, why not dispense health as well?

The Word-Faith teachers, as is true of many other charismatics, believe that Christ provided for physical healing at the cross. As a result, not only are Christians saved from sin, they are promised a life of health. Kenneth Copeland writes in *Healed ... to Be or Not to Be*:

"The first step to spiritual maturity is to realize your position before God. You are a child of God and a joint-heir with Jesus. Consequently, you are entitled to all the rights and privileges in the kingdom of God, and one of their rights is health and healing" (p. 25).

But, if healing is part of the atonement, why do Christians get sick? Lack of faith, as Benny Hinn explains:

"The Bible declares that the work was done 2,000 years ago. God is not going to heal you now — he healed you 2,000 years ago. All you have to do today is receive your healing by faith" (Rise and Be Healed, p. 44).

Of course reality, in the form of sickness, has to be faced even by the Word-Faith leaders. Fred Price may proclaim "we don't allow sickness in our home," but his wife still has cancer. Kenneth Hagin brags that he has not had a headache, the flu, or even "one sick day" in nearly 60 years, but he has had four cardiovascular crises. Paul Crouch may have healed Oral Roberts of chest pains on a TBN Broadcast, but it didn't stop Oral from having a heart attack a few hours later (*Christianity in Crisis*, pp. 237-238). How are these things explained away? Predictably, by blaming them on the devil. Sickness in the Word-Faith camp is usually seen as satanic attacks that must be repelled by words of faith (i.e., "positive confession").

Experiences

The faith leaders make some amazing claims. Hagin, for example, has visited (so he says) both heaven and hell as well as had out-of-body experiences (*Christianity in Crisis*,

p. 334). He has had many visits from Jesus and angels. He boasts of the ability to heal, cast out demons, and levitate people (p. 336). Hinn opens his best selling book with these words:

"It was three days before Christmas 1973. The sun was still rising on that cold, misty Toronto morning. Suddenly He was there. The Holy Spirit entered my room. He was as real to me that morning as the book you are holding in your hand is to you. For the next eight hours I had an incredible experience with the Holy Spirit. It changed the course of my life (Rise and Be Healed, p. 1).

Hinn speaks of frequent personal visits from the Lord, the first being at age eleven:

"I saw Jesus walk into my bedroom. He was wearing a robe that was whiter than white and a deep red mantle was draped over the robe. I saw his hair. I looked into His eyes. I saw the nailprints in His hands. I saw everything. ... When it happened, I was asleep, but suddenly my little body was caught up in an incredible sensation that can only be described as 'electric.' It felt as if someone had plugged me into a wired socket. There was a numbness that felt like needles — a million of them — rushing through my body. And then the Lord stood before me while I was in a deep, deep sleep. He looked straight at me with the most beautiful eyes. He smiled, and His arms were open wide. I could feel His presence. It was marvelous and I'll never forget it" (Rise and Be Healed, p. 22).

When Hinn describes his conversion, he does not mention the cross, repentance, or faith; rather, it is all couched in terms of experience:

"What I really felt, though, was that this surge of power was cleansing me — instantly, from the inside out. I felt absolutely clean, immaculate, and pure. Suddenly I saw Jesus with my own eyes. It happened in a moment of time. There he was. Jesus" (Rise and Be Healed, p. 31).

Hinn claims power of a supernatural nature often emanates from his body:

"Once, my mother was cleaning the hallway while I was in my room talking with the Holy Spirit. When I came out, she was thrown right back. Something had knocked her against the wall. I said, 'What's wrong with you, Mama?' She answered, 'I don't know?' Well, the presence of the Lord almost knocked her down" (Rise and Be Healed, p. 42).

Both the appeal of the book and its dangers are evident in this quote:

"Are you ready to meet the Holy Spirit intimately and personally? Do you want to hear His voice? Are you prepared to know him as a person? That's exactly what happened to me, and it drastically transformed my life. It was an intensely personal experience, and it was based on God's Word. You may ask, 'Was it the result of a systematic Bible study?'

No, it happened when I invited the Holy Spirit to be my personal friend. To be my constant guide. To take me by the hand and lead me 'into all truth.' What He will uncover and reveal to you in Scripture will make your study of the Bible come alive" (Rise and Be Healed, p. 48).

Both the Word-Faith leaders and their followers make the same mistake of basing their lives on experiences and feelings rather than upon the inspired Word of God.

Leaders:

Many Word-Faith preachers broadcast their services and campaigns on the largest Christian-based television network in the world: The [Trinity Broadcasting Network](#) (TBN), capable of televising the Faith message all over the world.

Here are a few of the thousands of WOF teachers — in no particular order

- [E. W. Kenyon](#)
- [Kenneth Hagin](#)
- [Kenneth Copeland](#)
- [Robert Tilton](#)
- [Benny Hinn](#)
- [Marilyn Hickey](#)
- [Paula White](#)
- [Joyce Meyer](#)
- [Paul and Jan Crouch](#) (deceased)
- [John Avanzini](#),
- [Jerry Savelle](#)
- [Morris Cerullo](#)
- [Oral Roberts](#)
- [TD Jakes](#)
- [Brian Houston–Hillsong](#)
- [Joel Osteen](#)
- [Rod Parsley](#)
- [Robert Morris](#)
- [Carl Lenz](#)
- [Rodney Howard-Browne](#)
- [Peter Popoff](#)
- [Juanita Bynum](#)

Helpful articles:

- [A Christian Response To The Word of Faith Movement](#) by Rafael D. Martinez
- [Christian leaders: It's about time you test false teachers](#) by Marsha West
- [Contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints](#) by Mike Ratliff
- [Exposing the Word of Faith Prosperity Gospel-doctrines/quotes](#) by Justin Peters
- [Falsified: Word Faith Prosperity Gospel](#) by Ken Silva
- [Gladiator-style takedown of demonic forces, Part 1 Part 2](#) by Marsha West
- [The Great Exaltation – Big "G," little "g"–Let Us Reason](#) **NEW**
- [Heaven Hillsong & Heresy](#) by Costi Hinn **NEW**
- [Is It Always God's Will to Heal?](#) by Costi Hinn **NEW**
- [Joel Osteen and the Prosperity Gospel](#) by Gary Gilley
- [Joyce Meyer and T.D Jakes teaching word-faith "Little Gods" doctrine](#) by Ken Silva
- [Man-Centered Gospel vs. God-Centered Gospel–Apprising Ministries](#)

- The Osteen Predicament — Mere Happiness Cannot Bear the Weight of the Gospel by Albert Mohler
- Prosperity Priestess and the Pied Piper of IHOP by Marsha West
- TD Jakes and Joyce Meyer teaching word-faith “Little Gods” doctrine by Ken Silva
- The True Origins of the Prosperity Gospel AKA Word of Faith Theology by Anton Bosch
- Walter Martin’s Warning to the Church (1988)—Let Us Reason Ministries
- Word-Faith Movement by Gary E. Gilley
- Word Faith Pastrix Paula White Fleeces Flock Using Pentecost by Ken Silva

Video:

- Joel Osteen & His Disciple Steven Furtick Reduce Christianity to Daily Affirmations With Stuart Smalley
- Prosperity Preachers Exposed!

Books:

- The Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs by Ankerberg & Weldon
- The Kingdom of the Cults by Walter Martin
- Know What You Believe by Paul E. Little
- Knowing Scripture by R. C. Sproul

Other Research Sites:

- Apologetics Index
- Apprising Ministries
- Gary Gilley’s Word of Faith resource
- Justin Peters Ministries
- On Solid Rock Resources

What the Bible says:

The Bible defines “faith” as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” ([Hebrews 11:1](#)). Our “faith” cannot override the will or nature of God. But our faith that He is able to accomplish all good things for His glory is a necessity for prayer and petition to God. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Instead of stressing the importance of wealth, the Bible warns against pursuing it.

Believers, especially leaders in the church ([1 Timothy 3:3](#)), are to be free from the love of money ([Hebrews 13:5](#)). The love of money leads to all kinds of evil ([1 Timothy 6:10](#)).

Jesus warned, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” ([Luke 12:15](#)). In sharp contrast to the Word of Faith emphasis on gaining money and possessions in this life, Jesus said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal” ([Matthew 6:19](#)). The irreconcilable contradictions between prosperity teaching and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is best summed up in the words of Jesus in [Matthew 6:24](#), “You cannot serve both God and money.”