

Spirituality and Worldly Desires

Some of today's spiritual teachers give presentations that appeal to people's desires to get more and better stuff — whether good stuff, such as happiness, creativity, and positive relationships, or the usual stuff, such as a more expensive car, house, or watch. Certain modern-day “prophets” are even willing to bend the highest spiritual and religious teachings to get more profits.

Some metaphysical prosperity teachers take valid belief systems — such as the idea that that whatever you focus on expands — and turn these spiritual principles into infomercials that focus on triggering and gratifying people's lower desires.

I've even received email solicitations from “spiritual” companies and teachers who are offering courses on how to bypass customers' conscious minds through hypnotic techniques to make them want to buy your wares on subconscious levels, even if they don't really need or want your products consciously. For spiritual people to use metaphysical or hypnotic techniques to fool people into buying things is, as they say, all kind of wrong.

Today's prosperity teachers may guide people to use spiritual principles to satisfy material desires with different positive or negative intentions.

Some teachers may teach prosperity for positive reasons, assuming that once you fulfill your worldly desires, you'll be in a better position to seek the “higher Kingdom.” After all, if you're hungry and worried about how to feed your children or pay this month's electricity bill, these concerns may keep you too preoccupied to give you the freedom to focus on spiritual matters.

Although conversely, times of need can also encourage you to stay even more focused on connecting and conversing with God in a very raw and real way through prayer and paying attention to your thoughts and actions. For someone who understands metaphysical laws, living on the edge can be somewhat like being in a spiritual marathon or on probation for a job — you may become extra vigilant about your thoughts and actions when there is no visible security net below to catch you if you were to fall over that edge (although of course the big divine universal safety net is always there).

An Indian sage named Sai Baba of Shirdi was famous for giving blessings that helped improve people's outer lives, although his deeper purpose was to guide people to spiritual liberation. When asked about his methods, Sai Baba of Shirdi said, “I give people what they want so they'll want what I have to give.”

Others who teach people how to use spiritual principles for material desires may mostly be “seeking first” the best approach for ensuring their own mass-marketing financial success.

Don't Forget

Regardless of what anyone else's approach is, you are responsible for your own spiritual journey. Just because people you know may be jumping up and down over the latest fad doesn't mean you have to jump with them. Respect that everyone is in a different place on their spiritual journey, requiring different kinds of teachings and incentives to entice them to grow.

You are the one who can keep your spiritual approach free from lower pulls such as greed and jealousy. You are the one who can discern the difference between useful empowerment techniques and methods that are designed to hook your mind and your wallet.

Does God want you to be rich?

Well, I'm not in a position to speak for the almighty, but based on historical research into His saints and sages, I would say that a lot more spiritual stars have lived simply than in huge mansions and palaces, although exceptions do exist.

My guess is that God is more concerned with the state of your heart and spirit than the numbers in your bank account, and that He (She) is just fine with you being either poor or wealthy, as long as you take care of what's more important — your soul's journey.

You are the one who can cut through the rinds of materialism to get to the delicious fruit of authentic spirituality.

After you have read all the books and heard all the lectures, you must still be the judge of what is for you. Only if something within you says, "This is truth - this is for me" does it become a part of your experience.

—Peace Pilgrim