Prosperity Gospel Danger

Televangelists and proponents of the **Prosperity Gospel** rely on a technique called "proof-texting"—taking a single verse completely out of its historical and grammatical context to make it say what they want. When trying to fund things like private jets, these ministries heavily cycle through several specific verses, distorting their original meanings:

1. Luke 6:38 — The "Investment Formula"

- **The Verse:** *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."*
- **How it's twisted:** Televangelists use this as a literal transaction or seed-faith model. They promise that if you send money to *their* ministry, God is legally bound by this verse to multiply it and return it to your bank account.
- **The Real Context:** If you read the verses immediately before and after, Jesus isn't talking about money at all—**He is talking about forgiveness and judgment.** He is telling His followers that if they are generous with mercy and forgiveness toward others, God will be overwhelmingly generous with mercy toward them.

2. Malachi 3:10 - The "Windows of Heaven" Threat/Promise

- **The Verse:** *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse... Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."*
- **How it's twisted:** This is the ultimate fundraising verse. Preachers use it to claim that if you are experiencing financial hardship, it is because you are "robbing God" by not giving enough money to the church. They frame it as a literal guarantee of individual riches.
- **The Real Context:** Malachi was written to the ancient nation of Israel under the Old Covenant. The "storehouse" was a literal granary in the temple used to feed the local Levitical priests, orphans, and widows. Furthermore, the "blessing" God promised wasn't luxury or gold - it was rain for their crops so the agricultural nation wouldn't starve.

3. Philippians 4:19 - The "Blank Check"

- **The Verse:** *"And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."*
- **How it's twisted:** Preachers extract the word "riches" and equate it directly to a high material standard of living, luxury, and financial wealth.
- **The Real Context:** The key word in the verse is **"needs,"** not "greeds". Ironically, the Apostle Paul wrote this letter from a miserable Roman prison cell. Just a few verses earlier, he writes that he has learned to be content while starving and facing extreme poverty. Paul was thanking the Philippians for sending him basic provisions, promising that God would take care of their basic survival needs in return - not buy them a chariot fleet.

4. 3 John 1:2 - The "Health and Wealth" Mandate

- **The Verse:** *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*
- **How it's twisted:** This is used as proof that God's top two desires for your everyday life are financial prosperity and perfect physical health.
- **The Real Context:** This is simply **a standard first-century greeting**. In the ancient Greco-Roman world, letters routinely began with a polite phrase wishing the recipient good health and general well-being (similar to starting an email today with, *"I hope this finds you well"*). John is wishing his close friend Gaius good health, but he notes in the very next verse that his actual joy is that Gaius is "walking in the truth" not that he is getting rich.

By isolating these passages, televangelists manage to transform the Bible from a book about self-denial and spiritual salvation into a manual for corporate wealth accumulation.