

IS JOYCE MEYER WORD OF FAITH?

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Abstract

Those wanting to know if Joyce Meyer adheres to Word of Faith theology face challenges. A careful investigation is needed. In this paper, four lines of evidence are analyzed to determine if she is, in fact, Word of Faith. These areas are: (1) her education, (2) her teaching, (3) her platform and (4) her lifestyle. It can be concluded that, while not as radical as other modern Word of Faith teachers, Joyce Meyer is certainly Word of Faith.

About Joyce Meyer

Joyce Meyer is one the most influential religious teachers of our day. Her radio ministry reaches an estimated three billion people worldwide. She has become a New York Times bestselling author, with 70 books to her name and is received with “rock star” status at over a dozen worldwide conferences each year.¹ Many are inspired by her story: nearly her entire childhood marred with horrific sexual abuse, she overcame, and maintaining a positive attitude, has attained unfathomable success. Her transparent, direct, highly practical teaching style appeals to many.

Controversy

Yet her teaching is not without controversy. Websites, articles, books and video documentaries can be found which attempt to connect Joyce Meyer to outspoken Word of Faith teachers. Some material is more balanced than others. This paper is an obvious attempt to answer the question “Is Joyce Meyer Word of Faith?” while remaining as fair to Joyce Meyer as possible.

¹ “FAQ,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.joycemeyer.org/aboutus/faq.aspx>, FAQ item 1.

First, What Does She Say?

If we were to ask Joyce, “Are you a Word of Faith teacher?” how would she respond?

Apparently, many *have* asked her this question—it’s listed on her “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) page. Her response:

Joyce Meyer Ministries believes in the Word of God. Joyce teaches that God has made promises to us in His Word and as believers, we should trust His promises (see 2 Peter 1:3,4). However, it can be damaging when people place their faith in faith alone instead of placing their faith in God. Misappropriation of God’s promises solely for personal gain is not scripturally supported.²

What about whether she is a “prosperity gospel” preacher? There’s an entry for that too:

Joyce Meyer Ministries believes that God desires to bless His people. Joyce teaches that God’s blessings and prosperity apply to the spiritual, emotional, physical and financial areas of life. These blessings and prosperity are then to be used to bless others (see Genesis 12:2). A “prosperity gospel” that solely equates blessing with financial gain is out of balance and could damage a person’s walk with God.³

I’m convinced that the many people who took the time to ask these questions want concrete answers, and that they will find both statements the same way I do: unsatisfactory! Is that a yes? Or a no? What exactly is she saying? Worse, on her FAQ page it says she is non-denominational.⁴ Then where did her enormous ministry come from? Which group, exactly, is she aligned with?

A Careful Investigation Is Needed

Serious challenges await anybody wanting to know Joyce’s position on the Word of Faith movement. She’s not a theologian and her teaching is not systematic. Therefore, we only get bits and pieces of her theology at any given time. The phrase “Word of Faith” is completely absent from her written teaching. She does not mention any Word of Faith teachers by name.

² Ibid., FAQ item 13.

³ Ibid., FAQ item 14.

⁴ Ibid., FAQ item 12.

She seems to be acutely aware that her doctrine is under heavy scrutiny and seems to craft her opinions in a way which avoids dividing her fan base. It's clear that a more careful investigation is needed. Therefore, four categories will be examined to see whether Joyce Meyer is indeed Word of Faith or not. These areas are (1) her education, (2) her teaching, (3) her platform and (4) her lifestyle. First is her education.

1. Joyce Meyer's Education

A person's education can reveal much about what they believe and value. Joyce's website says she "holds an earned PhD in theology from Life Christian University [LCU] in Tampa, Florida."⁵ Anybody visiting the site will soon find the school's distinguished list of graduates; Joyce's name is listed here alongside radical Word of Faith icons Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn, Rodney Howard-Browne and others.⁶ The site also shows that Copeland and Hinn have *the exact same degree* as Joyce (a PhD in Theology).⁷ If she studied the same material, this would certainly indicate she shares many of the same beliefs these Faith radicals; or would it?

It's possible that Copeland, Hinn, et. al., ventured into Word of Faith territory *after* receiving their degree. The question is *How Word of Faith is the school?* What kind of theology do the students learn? I contacted the school to find out. I was told, "Most of the books we use as textbooks are from Brother Hagin, Brother Copeland, and other faith ministers. We are definitely Word of Faith" (emphasis theirs).⁸ That would have been enough proof—Kenneth Hagin is considered the Father of the Word of Faith Movement. However, the school added:

⁵ Ibid., FAQ item 6.

⁶ "LCU's Distinguished Degree Holders," Life Christian University, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.lcus.edu/lcu-distinguished-graduates/index.php>.

⁷ Ibid. This is significant; quotes from Copeland and Hinn will be given in the next section.

⁸ Life Christian University, Deborah J. Smith (Campus Representative), e-mail message to author, November 4, 2014.

“Those interested in attending are encouraged to take the free Principles of Faith course syllabus and outline. That will give you an idea of what type of University we are.”⁹

Looking at the sample class, it’s indeed clear what kind of school they are. It’s easy to identify the Word of Faith formula of believing (belief), then speaking faith-filled words (faith) in order to bring something to pass (possessing):

C. Step Three: The Prayer of Faith... *The prayer of faith releases your power to receive a covenant promise of God by faith. You take spiritual possession of a promise before you take actual possession in the natural, visible realm.* D. Step Four: Confession. *Confession is speaking the Word after you have believed it and before the answer has come or the promise has been manifested. It is also referred to as the “confession of faith...”* Confession is where the battle is won or lost. *Many Christians undo their prayer of faith by negative thinking and confession.* E. Step Five: Possession... Possession is when the promise has manifested – you can see and touch it.¹⁰

I was also told I could download a free copy of *Divine Faith & Miracles* by Dr. Douglass Wingate, the school’s founder and acting president. In it Wingate states that “divine healing and health is a great passion of mine.”¹¹ He claims the book “will cause you to walk in divine health, divine prosperity”¹² And he clearly teaches “God wants to bless you financially.” Wingate is not alone. Looking at the faculty page, six of the eight senior faculty members hold degrees from Kenneth Hagin’s very own Rhema Bible Training College¹³ or another called Word of Faith Bible Institute.¹⁴

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ “Course Syllabus: Principles of Faith,” Life Christian University, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.lcus.edu/videos/th-101_free_course/pdf/th-101_outline.pdf, emphasis mine.

¹¹ Douglas Wingate, *Divine Faith* (Tampa, FL: Life Christian University Press, 2010), Kindle Location 532.

¹² Ibid., Kindle Locations 267-268.

¹³ Hagin founded the school in 1974.

¹⁴ “LCU Faculty and Administration,” Life Christian University, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.lcus.edu/lcu-faculty-and-administration.php>.

At this point, it was unsurprising to find a list of core classes that include “TH-102 Biblical Finances” which “reveals God’s plan of provision and abundance for His people” and “TH-104 Divine Healing” which “reveals that physical healing has been provided for every believer in the redemptive work of Christ.”

The material is clearly Word of Faith. The faculty is clearly Word of Faith. It’s safe to say, the school where Joyce earned her PhD in Theology is Word of Faith. She clearly has been educated in the Word of Faith tradition.

2. Joyce Meyer’s Teaching

Can we see evidence of Joyce’s Word of Faith education in her teaching? Before answering this, it will be helpful to identify the teachings we’ll be looking for. Joyce would have certainly studied the teachings of Kenneth Hagin in school; therefore, Hagin’s teaching is primarily what will be examined. Now, Hagin’s mentor was E. W. Kenyon. Kenyon is widely considered to be the Grandfather of the Word of Faith movement and is responsible for some of its doctrine and terminology. Kenyon taught we can use positive confession to bring about health and wealth; God Himself used faith to create the world; and Jesus died spiritually taking on Satan’s nature.¹⁵ Kenneth Hagin is considered to be the Father of the Word of Faith movement. Hagin “borrowed” (or plagiarized) much of Kenyon’s teaching, while adding “new revelation” of his own: humans are little gods; God has a physical body; and the spirit should rule over mind (reason). Time does not permit a comparison of everything. Six central teachings will be examined. The biblical position will be given first to establish a baseline, followed by Hagin’s position, then Meyer’s. Points of similarities and differences will be emphasized. Quotes from more radical Word of Faith preachers will occasionally be added for further comparison.

Appendix 1 contains a helpful summary chart.

¹⁵ Ron Rhodes, “Contemporary Cults, Lecture 5” (Veritas Evangelical Seminary, Murrieta, CA, 2013).

(A) Spoken Words Change Reality

Biblical Position

Rather than trying to speak reality into existence, believers are to look to God for provision (Matt. 6:11; 25-33), knowing God's will always supersedes ours (Matt. 6:10; Lk. 22:42; Jam. 5:13-16). We do not always get what we want (Rom. 12:1; Acts 16:6). Often His will involves hardship and suffering for our good (Heb. 12:5-11; Rom. 5:3). The Bible does not speak of a "force of faith" which can be activated with spoken words.

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin believed that a person could speak words to change reality. Hagin referred to "the law of faith" as some intrinsic force which could be activated through confession. Spoken confessions alter reality and bring things to pass; people predestine their future by what they say. Speaking faith-filled words or positive confession is the key to success in life. He even encouraged his followers to have "faith in your faith."¹⁶ In his view, belief is different from faith. Belief is internal while faith is external. People must activate this law by first believing something internally in the heart (belief) and then speaking it out loud (faith).

First, a man believes with his heart. Second, he believes with his words. It isn't enough just to believe in your heart. In order to get God to work for you, you must believe with your words also... The God-kind of faith is the kind of faith in which a man believes with his heart and says with his mouth that which he believes in his heart—and it comes to pass.¹⁷

This teaching is central to the Word of Faith movement and is held by all. Fellow LCU graduate Kenneth Copeland says, "Faith is a power force. It is a tangible force. It is a conductive force."¹⁸

¹⁶ Kenneth E Hagin, *Having Faith in Your Faith* (Tulsa, OK: K. Hagin Ministries, 1980), title.

¹⁷ Kenneth E Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1985), 81, emphasis mine.

¹⁸ Kenneth Copeland, *The Force of Faith* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1989), 10.

This force “originates from God”¹⁹ and “makes the laws of the spirit world function.”²⁰ In addition to positive confession, Kenneth Hagin also taught that negative words release power as well:

Wrong confession is a confession of defeat and failure... Talking about how the devil is keeping you from success, holding you in bondage, or keeping you sick is a confession of defeat. And such a confession simply glorifies the devil... *Many people lose the blessing that God has for them just by making a wrong confession.*²¹

And again,

If you *confess sickness*, it will develop sickness in your system. If you talk about your *doubts and fears*, they will grow and become stronger. If you confess *lack of finances*, it will stop the money from coming in. Although that may sound like a paradox, it is not. It is the truth. I have proven it true again and again.²²

Joyce’s Position

This doctrine is central to Joyce Meyer’s teaching. The phrase “words are containers of power” occurs some two dozen times throughout Joyce’s books. She frequently speaks on the need to think positive and guard the tongue.

The power of life and death is in the tongue... *Words are containers for power*, and they can carry either creative or destructive power, as we choose. Choose your words carefully and speak them with caution.²³

Repeated elsewhere:

¹⁹ Kenneth Copeland, *Forces of the Re-created Human Spirit* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1982), 8.

²⁰ Kenneth Copeland, *The Laws of Prosperity* (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1974), 19.

²¹ Kenneth E Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1985), 50-51, emphasis mine.

²² Kenneth E Hagin, *How to Write Your Own Ticket with God* (Broken Arrow, OK: Faith Library Publications, 2000), 10, emphasis mine.

²³ Joyce Meyer, *The Love Revolution* (New York: FaithWords, 2009), 221, emphasis mine.

With words, we can reach into that spiritual realm, and we can begin to pull things out that are God’s will for us, and get them over here into the realm where we can make use of them. *Words have power.*²⁴

Many fans might be thinking that they are getting a “positive message.”²⁵ Little do they know Joyce’s “positive message” is based on the Word of Faith concepts she learned from Hagin at Life Christian University.

Like Hagin, Joyce teaches that God Himself used faith-filled words when creating the universe: “*He [God] created the world with faith-filled words* (see Genesis 1).”²⁶ And humans have this same ability: “We are created in His image, and we can also call things that are not as though they are. *We can speak positive thoughts about ourselves into the atmosphere and thereby ‘prophesy our future.’*”²⁷ Joyce agrees with Hagin that “*faith has to be activated* if it is to work, and one of the ways we activate it is *through our words.*”²⁸ Positive confession is what she calls this act of speaking faith-filled words. Joyce freely shares her own confessions over the years which she believes have helped her achieve success in all areas of life. They include “I prosper in everything I put my hand to. I have prosperity in all areas of my life—spiritually, financially, mentally, and socially.” And, “I receive speaking engagements in person, by phone, and/or by mail every day.” She covers all areas of her life with positive confession: personal, professional, financial, spiritual, physical and mental (see Appendix 4). She also has an entire

²⁴ Quoted in Tim Martin, “Examining the Teachings of Joyce Meyer,” YouTube, January 25, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07ABT1O2D4>, 16:53 - 17:13, emphasis mine.

²⁵ Joyce’s books are typically found under the “Christian inspirational” category in bookstores. So successful is this market today that her publisher, Hachette Book Group, has created an entire subdivision called FaithWords under which they publish 87 of Joyce’s books. She is the most published author under their inspirational brand, the second being Word of Faith teacher Creflo Dollar with 74 books, followed by Joel Osteen, Copeland and others. See “FaithWords,” Open Library, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://openlibrary.org/publishers/FaithWords>.

²⁶ Joyce Meyer, *Life in the Word Devotional* (Tulsa, OK.: Harrison House, 1997), 2, emphasis mine.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2, emphasis mine.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 123, emphasis mine.

book devoted to this called *The Secret Power of Speaking God's Word*.²⁹ She also holds to Hagin's belief that confession works both ways; i.e., there is also negative confession. "If I'm speaking right things I'm going to have right results. *And if I'm speaking wrong things I'm going to have wrong results.*"³⁰

(B) God Himself Uses Faith

Biblical Position

Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Faith is synonymous with believing and is always used in this sense (Rom. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:8-9; Eph. 2:-9; Jam. 1:2). Nowhere does the Bible say faith is an intrinsic force.

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin taught God Himself uses faith. "*God is a faith God.* All He had to do was simply say, 'Let there be light' (Gen. 1:3), and there was light. God created everything except man by speaking it into existence. He's a faith God."³¹

This is *the kind of faith that spoke the world into existence!* ... God believed that what He said would come to pass. He spoke the Word, and there was an earth. He spoke the vegetable kingdom into existence. He spoke the animal kingdom into existence. He spoke the heavens, the moon, the sun, the stars, and the universe into existence. He said it, and it was so! That is the God-kind of faith. *God believed what He said would come to pass, and it did.*³²

²⁹ See Joyce Meyer, *The Secret Power of Speaking God's Word* (New York: Warner, 2004).

³⁰ Joyce Meyer, "Mind, Mouth, Moods and Attitudes," tape 2 of 4, the "Mouth," emphasis mine.

³¹ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Zoe: the God Kind of Life* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1981), 36, emphasis mine.

³² Kenneth E Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1985), 81, emphasis mine.

One Faith teacher even went so far to say that Jesus was brought into the world through God's positive confessions recorded throughout the Old Testament.³³

Joyce's Position

Joyce has at least on one occasion taught this: "Words contain creative power. They contain creative or destructive power. If we would *go to Genesis 1* you would see that each thing that God created the Bible says, 'And God said.' ... *It doesn't say God thought a thought, doesn't say God waved his hands, it says, 'and God said.'*"³⁴

(C) Humans Are Little Gods

Biblical Position

The Bible teaches that there is only one God (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 44:6; 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jam. 2:19) There never was or will be any other God in the past or the future (Isa. 43:10).

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin taught that humans are equal with God. This view is clearly heretical. He said man "was created on terms of *equality with God*, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority... God has made us as much like Himself as possible... *He made us the same class of being that He is Himself...* Man lived in the realm of God. *He lived on terms equal with God.*"³⁵ Mankind had potential to rule as little gods but this was

³³ Charles Capps, *Dynamics of Faith and Confession* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1987), 86-87; cf. Charles Capps, *Authority in Three Worlds* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1982), 76-85.

³⁴ Quoted in Tim Martin, "Examining the Teachings of Joyce Meyer," YouTube, January 25, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07ABT1O2D4>, 8:33 - 9:13, emphasis mine.

³⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Zoe: the God Kind of Life* (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library Publications, 1981), 35-36, 41, emphasis mine.

thwarted by the Fall. Therefore, “Man lost his place by high treason against God.”³⁶ As a result, man took on the nature of Satan. However, through Jesus mankind is restored and has potential to become little gods once again. LCU graduate Kenneth Copeland adds:

God's reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself, I mean a reproduction of Himself. And in the Garden of Eden He did just that. He was not a little like God. He was not almost like God. He was not subordinate to God even... *Adam is as much like God as you could get, just the same as Jesus... Adam, in the Garden of Eden, was God manifested in the flesh.*³⁷

Likewise, LCU graduate Benny Hinn also commits blasphemy:

When you say, 'I am a Christian, you are saying, 'I am mashiach' in the Hebrew. I am a little messiah walking on earth, in other words That is a shocking revelation... May I say it like this? *You are a little god on earth running around.*³⁸

Joyce's Position

Joyce seems comfortable placing humans in a “god-kind” category. However, she seems to try to distance herself from Hagin, Copeland and Hinn blasphemous statements:

I was listening to a set of tapes by one man and he explained it like this and I think this kinda gets the point across. He said, ‘You know, why do people have such a fit about God calling his creation, his man, not his whole creation, but his man, little gods. If he’s God, *what’s he gonna call them but the God kind.* I mean if you a human being have a baby you call it a human kind. If cattle has another cattle they call it cattle kind. So what’s God supposed to call us? Doesn’t the Bible say we’re created in his image? Now you understand, I’m not saying you are God with a capital G. That is not the issue here, so don’t go trying to stone me or yell blasphemy at me.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., 36.

³⁷ Kenneth Copeland, "Following the Faith of Abraham I" (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1989), audiotape #01-3001, side 1, emphasis mine.

³⁸ "Praise-a-Thon," Trinity Broadcasting Network, November 6, 1990, emphasis mine.

³⁹ Quoted in “Joyce Meyer Says We Are Little Gods,” YouTube, December 7, 2011, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YvYVeNLHBU>, emphasis mine.

(D) Jesus Was Born Again In Hell

Biblical Position

The payment for the sins of all mankind was paid for when Jesus cried out “It is finished.” (Jn. 19:30; Col. 2:14) The day Jesus died he went to paradise (Lk. 23:43) and was returned to glory (Jn. 17:5). Jesus did not take on the nature of Satan (Heb. 13:8).

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin taught Jesus’ redemption was not completed on the cross, but he also had to suffer an eternity in hell on our behalf. “His spirit, His inner man, went to hell in our place.”⁴⁰ In hell, he took on the nature of Satan⁴¹ but finally overcame and was “the first person ever to be born again.”⁴²

Joyce’s Position

Initially Joyce did teach this doctrine. However, Tim Martin, who has been studying Joyce Meyer since early 2008, has received confirmation from Joyce Meyer Ministries that she has officially reversed her position. The teaching is prominent in the 1996 version of her book *The Most Important Decision You’ll Ever Make*, going so far to say a person must affirm it to be saved. After this, the teaching began to disappear from newer revisions of her books. As late as 2003 the teaching could still be found in chapter four of *The Most Important Decision*. But by 2005, the spiritual death of Jesus doctrine is completely gone.⁴³ In 2008, Martin contacted Joyce Meyer Ministries for clarification on her position and they did, in fact, confirm that Joyce now

⁴⁰ Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 2007), 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁴³ Tim Martin, “Examining the Teachings of Joyce Meyer,” YouTube, January 25, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07ABT1O2D4>, 16:53 - 17:13.

rejects this doctrine with this reply: "We do not believe that Jesus had to be tortured in hell to pay for our sins. When He said 'It is finished!' on the cross, the price for salvation was paid."⁴⁴

(E) Physical Healing Is Guaranteed

Biblical Position

At the Fall, the entire world was subjected to privation and decay (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:20-22). Satan, demons and evil men and women continue to work evil acts within the world (1 Pet. 5:8; Rom. 1:18-31) which can introduce even more suffering, sickness and disease. However, God will quarantine evil in the future (Rev. 20:11-15) and there will be a new heaven and new earth where there will be no more evil, sickness and suffering (Rev. 21:1-5).

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin taught that physical healing is presently guaranteed for believers. People need to positively confess their healing to receive it. Isaiah 53:5, "by his stripes we are healed," is one primary passage which he used to support his belief. A person's mind might rationally tell them they are sick, but a person should be led by their spirit and reject the sickness. If a person gives into their sense, then the healing is prevented.

If instead of confessing that *Jesus 'took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,'* we declare that we still have them, we will remain sick. But *when we start confessing that He already has done something about our sicknesses, we will receive healing.* Too often we accept the testimony of our physical senses instead of the testimony of God's Word. We must practice God's Word for it to work for us.⁴⁵

Hagin was careful to add that healing could take time:

⁴⁴ More of this important e-mail: "Dear Tim, In response to your email, we want to let you know that we do not believe that Jesus had to be tortured in hell to pay for our sins. When He said 'It is finished!' on the cross, the price for salvation was paid. However, the question of whether Jesus went to hell after He died on the cross has many varied opinions. We'll do our best to address the issue as we see it [explanation of 1 Pet. 3:18-20; 5:8; Psa. 22] We have listed some Scriptures that will help you with your further study in this area." Joyce Meyer Ministries, e-mail message to Tim Martin, July 30, 2008.

⁴⁵ Kenneth E Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1985), 53, emphasis mine.

Some things, such as some financial needs and the *manifestation of some healings*, etc., *may take time to develop*. Then the four steps [confession; acting as though it's been received; receiving it; and telling others] become principles that you *must put into practice over a period of time*.⁴⁶

LCU graduate Kenneth Copeland talks about the need for persistence this way:

Pain has come, disaster has come. Now for a while you're going to have to stop and control and discipline yourself. And every time you're going to have to make the decision: *I refuse to consider my body*, I refuse to be moved by what I see and what I feel.⁴⁷

It is worth noting that Fred Price carries the guaranteed physical healing doctrine to its logical conclusion. If faith has been guaranteed to the believer, ultimately, it is the Christian who is to blame if they are sick. He said:

Some people get upset and say, 'I don't believe that [that all believers should be healed]. Go ahead and die then. The Bible says, 'according to your faith, be it unto you.' ... If you don't believe in that, go ahead and die. I will believe and be healed... You can die of cancer; you can die of a stroke. That's ok... *If you don't believe then stay sick*.⁴⁸

Price goes so far to say, "How can you glorify God in your body when it doesn't function right? How can you glorify God? *How can He get the glory when your body doesn't even work?*"^{49 50}

Joyce's Position

Joyce holds to this position but is careful, like Hagin, to emphasize that God doesn't always heal instantly. Her belief in this teaching can be seen in her statement that sickness is illegal and reference to Isaiah 53:5:

⁴⁶ Kenneth E Hagin, *How to Write Your Own Ticket with God* (Broken Arrow, OK: Faith Library Publications, 2000), 6, emphasis mine.

⁴⁷ Kenneth Copeland, West Coast Believer's Convention (lecture, Anaheim, CA, June 13, 1991), emphasis mine.

⁴⁸ Fred Price quoted in audio clip from Ron Rhodes, "Contemporary Cults, Lecture 5" (Veritas Evangelical Seminary, Murrieta, CA, 2013), emphasis mine.

⁴⁹ Fred Price, "Is God Glorified through Sickness?" Tape FP605 (lecture, Crenshaw Christian Center, Los Angeles, CA, n.d.), emphasis mine.

⁵⁰ As one with a devoted Christian quadriplegic grandfather who died when I was young because of a surgical complication related to his paralysis, I am horrified and greatly angered that any preacher would suggest it was my grandfather's fault he was paralyzed because he did not have enough faith.

It is vital for us to understand that *it is illegal for Satan to put sickness on us, and there is no good reason to let him do it...* The moment we begin to recognize the symptoms of sickness, we need to stand against them—we need to resist them in the same way we would resist the temptation to sin... I believe that by the stripes of Jesus, I am healed.⁵¹

She uses the argument that since Jesus apparently healed all that God always wants all to be healed:

Some people believe God wants them to be sick... *If God wants people to be sick, why did Jesus heal people?* It is important we know God's will; otherwise we cannot release our faith to receive it.⁵²

She draws a distinction between her position on the topic and the traditional “man-made” teaching (God does not always heal but uses suffering for our good):

I decided I would believe the Word of God rather than man-made doctrines that had no power. Like multitudes of other seekers throughout history, *I discovered wonderful truths that promised me* eternal life, victory, peace, joy, righteousness, justification, freedom from guilt and condemnation, hope, *prosperity, healing*, power, and authority. And I discovered these things were for my life here on earth, and not just for when I die and go to heaven, as so many people believe.⁵³

Finally, like Hagin, she teaches that people can use positive confession to appropriate the healing:

I always encourage people to confess God's Word out loud... When people call our office for prayer when they are sick, we often send them a list of healing Scriptures *we recommend they confess out loud*. We tell them to do it as diligently as they would take medicine.⁵⁴

⁵¹ This has since been removed from www.joycemeyer.org but can be found on the Internet Archive at Joyce Meyer, “Practical Steps to Understanding and Experiencing Healing,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, accessed May 6, 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090406172733/http://www.joycemeyer.org/OurMinistries/Magazine/0703/Healing+and+Wholeness.htm>.

⁵² Joyce Meyer, *I Dare You: Embrace Life with Passion* (New York: FaithWords, 2007), 305, emphasis mine.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 119, emphasis mine.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 169, emphasis mine.

(F) Financial Wealth Is Guaranteed

Biblical Position

God indeed does bless people with wealth and many of them are recorded in the Bible (e.g., Abraham, David, Solomon, Lydia). However, the Bible warns against the danger of making money a high priority (1 Tim. 6:10). It is forbidden to trust in riches (2 Tim. 6:17) and those with means are to share with those in need (1 Tim. 6:18). Christians are commanded to not love worldly things (1 Jn. 2:15-17) and lovers of the world are identified with the great harlot, Babylon, or the world system which will ultimately be destroyed (Rev. 18:3).

Word of Faith Position

Kenneth Hagin taught that financial wealth is guaranteed. According to Hagin, the promises of God to bless His people in the Old Testament apply to us today. “Abraham's blessing—the blessing for keeping God's commands, His Word—is ours because of Jesus Christ! ... *Abraham's blessing includes financial prosperity, and it's for us today.*”⁵⁵ God “wants His children to eat the best, He wants them to wear the best clothing, He wants them to drive the best cars, and He wants them to have the best of everything.”⁵⁶ However, Hagin preached that balance was needed. He said people should never give just to get something in return⁵⁷ and it's important to “keep your attitude and motives right.”⁵⁸

Some people are more interested in making a dollar than they are in serving God. But *spiritual things must come first* if you are going to be spiritual. You must esteem the things of God—spiritual things—more than earthly things. One qualification for prospering is to *esteem earthly things lightly*. You cannot put earthly things above spiritual things and expect to prosper as God desires you to. No, it's not wrong to have

⁵⁵ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Keys to Biblical Prosperity* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1995), 26, emphasis mine.

⁵⁶ D.R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), 175.

⁵⁷ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Keys to Biblical Prosperity* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1995), 23.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

money. It's wrong for money to have you. It's wrong for money to be your ruler or master or for you to consume finances on your own lusts.⁵⁹

But if a person's motivation and spiritual priorities are in their proper place, Hagin said God will give the increase. How? Simply confess and claim it.

The Lord spoke to me and said, 'Don't pray for money anymore. *You have authority through my Name to claim prosperity...* all you need to do is say, "Satan, take your hands off my money." *Just claim what you need.*'⁶⁰

Hagin held a moderate view of prosperity when compared to other modern Word of Faith teachers. In contrast, Robert Tilton says that "being poor is a sin when God promises prosperity!"⁶¹ And Fred Price audaciously boasts:

The whole point is I'm trying to get you to see-to get you out of this malaise of thinking that Jesus and the disciples were poor and then relating that to you thinking that you, as a child of God, have to follow Jesus. The Bible says that He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. *That's the reason why I drive a Rolls Royce. I'm following Jesus' steps.*⁶²

Hagin was concerned about such extreme positions. Before his death in 2003 he reportedly "summoned many of his colleagues to Tulsa to rebuke them for distorting his message. He was not happy that some of his followers were manipulating the Bible to support what he viewed as greed and selfish indulgence."⁶³

Joyce's Position

Joyce Meyer seems to waiver a bit on this teaching. The majority of her teaching seems to indicate that she believes all will prosper financially. The idea of a Christian being poor is "a

⁵⁹ Kenneth E. Hagin, *Keys to Biblical Prosperity* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1995), 32, emphasis mine.

⁶⁰ Kenneth E Hagin, *New Thresholds of Faith*, 2nd ed. (Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1985), 57-58, emphasis mine.

⁶¹ Robert Tilton, "Success in Life," December 27, 1990.

⁶² Fred Price, "Ever Increasing Faith," TBN, December 19, 1990, emphasis mine.

⁶³ J. Lee Grady, "Kenneth Hagin's Forgotten Warning," CBN, accessed November 16, 2014, http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/churchandministry/Grady_Hagin_Prosperty.aspx.

life from the pit of hell.”⁶⁴ This is because, like Hagin taught and Life Christian University teaches, God’s promises of prosperity for the Israelites apply to believers today:

Verse 3 [referring to Joshua 1:3] says every place on which the sole of your foot shall tread that I have given unto you as I promised Moses. So basically what he said to Joshua was... *Every promise in the Word of God is available to you, every promise.* Wisdom, strength, joy, peace, righteousness, creativity, *prosperity*, good health, long life, favor, good friends, great relationships, hearing from God, being led by the Spirit. Just an overall blessed, wonderful life.⁶⁵

That said, there may be some indication she might hold that it is not *always* God’s will to bless financially—or at least that it can be necessarily limited by God.

I do believe you will prosper in all you lay your hand to. *I am not suggesting that everyone will be a multimillionaire*, but I do believe everyone can have his needs met and have an abundant supply left over so he can help those in need.⁶⁶

She also at times seems to hold to Hagin’s moderate view: “The Bible teaches us to guard against greed and keep ourselves free from all covetousness (the immoderate desire for wealth and the greedy longing to have more.)” And, “Some wealthy people are still miserable because money does not make people happy.”

Regardless of her position on whether it is always God’s will or how much can be obtained, one thing Joyce is clear about is that money should *not* be the believer’s focus; at least it should not come before God. Unlike some of her peers, she emphasizes a relationship with God over money. She discourages seeking money in place of God.

Our pursuit of money can ruin our relationship with God, but it doesn’t have to... *as long as we keep things in balance* and don’t let ourselves crave money more than we crave God.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Joyce Meyer, “From the Cross to the Throne” (Life Christian Center, Saint Louis, MO, n.d.). She also says in this quote “I am not a sinner” but has since repudiated this statement.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Tim Martin, “Examining the Teachings of Joyce Meyer,” YouTube, January 25, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07ABT1O2D4>, 27:01 - 27:59, emphasis mine.

⁶⁶ Joyce Meyer, *I Dare You: Embrace Life with Passion* (New York: FaithWords, 2007), 303, emphasis mine.

In terms of how a person obtains this financial prosperity, her teaching lines up with Hagin; if one's priorities are in order, it can come through faith-filled words:

Maybe you need to get your checkbook out and say, '*Oh you checkbook, hear the word of the Lord, you are NOT going to stay empty all of your life... You listen to me checkbook... you are going to be full to overflowing. And I am gonna be blessed.*'⁶⁸

Similar to Hagin, Joyce teaches that a person must be careful that they do not undo positive confession by making negative confession. This is very serious, as God Himself cannot do anything for a person if they make negative confession:

You know you get into these little prayer groups at church. And you have somebody pray that you'll prosper, and pray that you'll succeed and then you don't help the process at all with the words of your mouth. *God himself cannot do anything for you* if you're gonna ask him for it and then turn right around and talk him out of it.⁶⁹

Finally, those who say negative things regarding financial confession are actually helping Satan keep them poor: "As long as you cannot see yourself having abundance and prosperity, you will say things that hinder God from blessing you and *help Satan keep you poor.*"⁷⁰ It is God's plan for people to be rich; Satan's to keep people poor.

Is She Word of Faith By Her Teaching?

The evidence strongly shows that Joyce Meyer affirms much of the Word of Faith doctrine she learned from Hagin at Life Christian University. In short, she clearly holds four of the six teachings: (A) spoken words change reality; (B) God Himself uses faith; (E) physical healing is guaranteed; and (F) financial wealth is guaranteed. As to point (C) it is simply unclear

⁶⁷ Joyce Meyer, *My Personal Notes On Finances* (Fenton, MI: Joyce Meyer Ministries, 2013), 20, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.joycemeyer.org/content/downloads/finance/Personal_Finance_Booklet.pdf, emphasis mine.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Tim Martin, "Examining the Teachings of Joyce Meyer," YouTube, January 25, 2013, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07ABT1O2D4>, 18:45 - 19:27, emphasis mine.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18:45 - 19:27, emphasis mine.

⁷⁰ Joyce Meyer, *I Dare You: Embrace Life with Passion* (New York: FaithWords, 2007), 242, emphasis mine.

to what extent she believes humans are little gods. Therefore, based on her teaching, she is Word of Faith.

3. Joyce Meyer's Platform

As already mentioned, Joyce Meyer has an enormous fan base of millions, perhaps billions of people. With that kind of notoriety, a Christian leader must be careful with whom they share the stage; an appearance with unbiblical minister or ministry would naturally be seen as an endorsement. While not often, Joyce has shared the stage with Word of Faith teachers. Most notable was her participation at the 2008 Word of Faith Conference where. With a name like that, it ought to be clear what the speakers affirm. Joyce spoke alongside Kenneth Copeland, Gloria Copeland, John Hagee and other prominent Faith preachers. Her session was between two sessions by Kate McVeigh on "Faith and Healing."⁷¹

Then there is the affiliation with her long-time friend, Don Clowers, who has toured with Joyce in the past and actively sits on her board of directors. Clower's ministry covers topics such as "I Think Myself Happy," "God's Seven Laws of Increase," and "God's Prescription to Health and Healing."⁷² He writes in his book, *God's Seven Laws of Increase*, that "many Christians do not know that it is God's will for them to have financial increase and to prosper spiritually, emotionally, and financially." Among other topics, he promises in his book to show that "God wants you to prosper" and "what the spirit of lack and poverty is—and how to be set free from it."⁷³

⁷¹ See online store at "2008 Word of Faith Convention, Faith Food Store," Word of Faith Intl. Training Center, accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.woficc.com/estore/index.php?cPath=153_170.

⁷² "About Don Clowers," Don Clowers Ministry, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.donclowers.com/page.asp?nvc=952&page=3500&topic=About>.

⁷³ "Request a Free Book," Don Clowers Ministry, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://donclowers.com/request-free-book.asp>.

Perhaps most alarming in terms of who she shares her platform with is her endorsement of Life Christian University, her alma mater. The school clearly boasts a list of alumni that make up some of the strongest Word of Faith preachers in the country. And it requires students to study books by more radical Faith teacher Kenneth Copeland. And Joyce Meyer endorses this school? She allows her trademarked picture to be used alongside Kenneth and Gloria Copeland and Benny Hinn (see Appendix 2). She also has recorded an endorsement video where she highly recommends the by school saying,

I'm honored to be an LCU graduate. It is an institute of excellence and I'm thrilled to see how God is expanding it so quickly around the world. There's such a need today for *intelligent, well-informed Christians* who not only know what they're talking about but can also relate to people. The world *needs to hear the truth* and the truth has to be real.⁷⁴

The question must be asked, if Joyce is not Word of Faith, then why does she periodically share her platform with Word of Faith preachers? Why does she have at least one board member who promotes the prosperity gospel? And why does she endorse the school that produced Faith radicals Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn?

4. Joyce Meyer's Lifestyle

Finally, what does Joyce's lifestyle reveal about her position on Word of Faith doctrine?

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch detailed her extravagant lifestyle in 2003.⁷⁵ First listed is her transportation:

Meyer drives the ministry's 2002 Lexus SC sports car with a retractable top, valued at \$53,000. Her son Dan, 25, drives the ministry's 2001 Lexus sedan, with a value of \$46,000. Meyer's husband drives his [\$107,000] Mercedes-Benz S55 AMG sedan... The Meyers keep the ministry's Canadair CL-600 Challenger jet, which Joyce Meyer says is

⁷⁴ "Dr. Joyce Meyer Video," Life Christian University, accessed November 20, 2014, https://www.lcus.edu/videos/promos/meyer_video.php, emphasis mine.

⁷⁵ Carolyn Tuft and Bill Smith, "From Fenton to Fame," *Post-Dispatch*, November 13, 2003, accessed November 14, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070101030337/http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/special/joycemeyer.nsf/0/18C14871599F61AC86256DDD0081B42B>. Note that data is from 2003; items listed here appear cheaper than 2003 due to inflation.

worth \$10 million, at Spirit of St. Louis Airport in Chesterfield. The ministry employs two full-time pilots to fly the Meyers to conferences around the world.⁷⁶

Next is Joyce's three-story ministry headquarters which "has the look and feel of a luxury resort hotel" and is furnished with

a \$19,000 pair of Dresden vases, six French crystal vases bought for \$18,500, an \$8,000 Dresden porcelain depicting the Nativity, two \$5,800 curio cabinets, a \$5,700 porcelain of the Crucifixion, a pair of German porcelain vases bought for \$5,200. The decor includes a \$30,000 malachite round table, a \$23,000 marble-topped antique commode, a \$14,000 custom office bookcase, a \$7,000 Stations of the Cross in Dresden porcelain, a \$6,300 eagle sculpture on a pedestal, another eagle made of silver bought for \$5,000, and numerous paintings purchased for \$1,000 to \$4,000 each. Inside Meyer's private office suite sit a conference table and 18 chairs bought for \$49,000. The woodwork in the offices of Meyer and her husband cost the ministry \$44,000. In all, assessor's records of the ministry's personal property show that nearly \$5.7 million worth of furniture, artwork, glassware, and the latest equipment and machinery fill the 158,000-square-foot building.⁷⁷

Finally, there are the homes for Joyce and her children:

Since 1999, the ministry has spent at least \$4 million on five homes for Meyer and her four children near Interstate 270 and Gravois Road, St. Louis County records show. Meyer's house, the largest of the five, is a 10,000-square-foot Cape Cod style estate home with a guest house and a garage that can be independently heated and cooled and can hold up to eight cars. The three-acre property has a large fountain, a gazebo, a private putting green, a pool and a poolhouse where the ministry recently added a \$10,000 bathroom. The ministry pays for utilities, maintenance and landscaping costs at all five homes. It also pays for renovations... Even the property taxes, \$15, 629 this year, are paid by the ministry.⁷⁸

(Also see Appendix 3.)

The reporter quotes Joyce as saying, "We teach and preach and believe biblically that God wants to bless people who serve Him... so there's no need for us to apologize for being blessed." The reporter added, "Joyce Meyer says *God has made her rich.*"⁷⁹ To substantiate this

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, emphasis mine.

she pointed to a then recent conference where Joyce had said, "If you stay in your faith, you are going to get paid... I'm living now in my reward."⁸⁰

Final Conclusion

There are some positives with Joyce Meyer. She emphasizes the importance of not seeking prosperity in place of God. She also encourages people to develop a closer walk with God and even warns people about the dangers of lusting after money. She is also to be commended for changing her position on the spiritual death of Jesus, which is not an easy thing for such a prominent, well published author to do.

However, she has an earned PhD from a Word of Faith seminary that primarily uses textbooks authored by the Father of the Word of Faith, Kenneth Hagin. This degree is the exact *same* degree from the *same* institution as Kenneth Copeland, Benny Hinn and other strong Word of Faith teachers. She clearly holds to central Word of Faith doctrines from Kenneth Hagin. The bulk of her teaching centers on the Word of Faith dogma that spoken faith-filled words have power to change reality. She distances herself from the more radical Word of Faith teachers but it is clear that the bulk of her “positive” message is based on the Word of Faith worldview. She has appeared at a Word of Faith conference, has at least one “prosperity preacher” board member, and endorses a seminary where traditional and radical Word of Faith doctrine is taught. Joyce Meyer is Word of Faith. Therefore, she cannot be recommended.

⁸⁰ Ibid.





Appendix 1: Joyce Meyer compared with Word of Faith Teachers

Belief	Word of Faith	Joyce Meyer
(A) Spoken Words Change Reality	Affirms	Affirms
(B) God Himself Uses Faith	Affirms	Affirms
(C) Humans Are Little Gods	Affirms Exact duplicates	Unclear Humans are “god-kind”
(D) Jesus Was Born Again In Hell	Affirms	Once Affirmed; Now rejects
(E) Physical Healing Is Guaranteed	Affirms	Affirms Emphasizes could take time
(F) Financial Wealth Is Guaranteed	Affirms	Affirms Conflicting view; Emphasizes spiritual growth more important

Appendix 2: Joyce Meyer Endorsing Life Christian University

Joyce Meyer appears alongside strong Word of Faith teachers Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn to endorse Life Christian University, her alma mater. Joyce holds an earned PhD from LCU—the same degree as Copeland and Hinn.⁸¹

Join Our Distinguished Degree Holders!

			
WATCH THE VIDEO!		WATCH THE VIDEO!	
DR. KENNETH COPELAND Ph.D. in Theology Life Christian University	DR. GLORIA COPELAND D. Min. in Theology Life Christian University	DR. JOYCE MEYER Ph.D. in Theology Life Christian University	DR. BENNY HINN Ph.D. in Theology Life Christian University

Prepare for your supernatural destiny!
Take that step of faith... begin the journey...
and see what God will do with your life!

⁸¹ See scrolling banner at “Homepage,” Life Christian University, accessed November 20, 2014, <https://www.lcus.edu/homepage/index.php> or direct link at https://www.lcus.edu/homepage/images/rounded_slides/dist_grads.png.

Appendix 3: The Meyer Family Compound



“Joyce Meyer Ministries bought these 5 homes for Meyer and her family. The ministry pays for all expenses, including landscaping and lawn care, property taxes and rehab work. Meyer, her husband and each of their four married children live in the homes—free of charge.”⁸²

1. **Residence of: Joyce and Dave Meyer**

Bought: April 27th, 1999

Purchase Price: About \$795,000

Square Footage: 10,000

Cost of Improvements: \$1.1 Million

Features: 6 Bedrooms, 5 Bathrooms, Gold Putting Green, Swimming pool, 8 Car Heated and Cooled Garage, Guest House with 2 more bedrooms, Gazebo.

2. **Residence of: Daughter, Sandra McCollom and her husband Steve**

Bought: February 12, 2002

Purchase Price: \$400,000

Square Footage: About 5,000

Cost of Improvements: About \$250,000

Features: 4 Bedrooms, 3 full and 2 half Bathrooms, All-Seasons room, Prayer Room, Media Center and a Home Office.

⁸² Entire appendix from “The Meyer Family Compound,” Post-Dispatch, accessed January 13, 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20040113205701/http://graphics.stltoday.com/infographics/joycemeyer/joycemeyer4.html>.

3. **Residence of: Son, David Meyer and his wife Joy Meyer.**

Bought: June 18, 2001

Purchase Price: \$725,000

Square Footage: 4,000

Cost of Improvements: Unknown

Features: 2 Story Colonial, 4 Bedrooms, 2 1/2 Bathrooms, 2 Garages and a Utility Shed

4. **Residence of: Daughter, Laura Holtzmann and her husband Doug**

Bought: March 7, 2001

Purchase Price: \$350,000

Square Footage: 2,358

Cost of Improvements: \$3,000

Features: 3 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms with a Fireplace.

5. **Residence of: Son, Dan Meyer and his wife Charity**

Bought: Mar 13, 2000

Purchase Price: About 200,000

Square Footage: About 2,000

Cost of Improvements: \$33,000

Features: Brick Ranch With Full Finished Basement

Appendix 4: Favorite Positive Confessions of Joyce Meyer

These are statements that Joyce has “positively confessed” over the years.⁸³ By speaking statements like these out loud she believes that she is releasing power through her faith-filled words to alter reality and bring what is spoken to pass.

I prosper in everything I put my hand to. I have prosperity in all areas of my life—spiritually, financially, mentally, and socially.

All my children have lots of Christian friends, and God has set aside a Christian wife or husband for each of them.

I take good care of my body. I eat right, I look good, I feel good, and I weigh what God wants me to weigh.

I am a giver. It is more blessed to give than to receive. I love to give! I have plenty of money to give away all the time.

Work is good. I enjoy work. Glory!

Pain cannot successfully come against my body because Jesus bore all my pain.

I do not allow the devil to use my spirit as a garbage dump by meditating on negative things that he offers me.

I don't speak negative things.

My children love to pray and study the Word. They openly and boldly praise God.

I walk in the spirit all of the time.

All that I own is paid for. I owe no man anything except to love him in Christ.

I receive speaking engagements in person, by phone, and/or by mail every day.

⁸³ Joyce Meyer, “List of Confessions by Joyce Meyer,” Joyce Meyer Ministries, 2008, accessed November 1, 2014, http://www.joycemeyer.org/content/articles/ea/list_of_confessions_by_joyce_meyer/ListofConfessionsByJoyceMeyer.pdf.

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