

One contemporary expression of this desire for relief from the difficulties and hardships of life is found in the Prosperity Gospel. This theology proclaims that God wants all of His children to be healthy, wealthy, and happy.

In an editorial in Christianity Today, Kenneth Kantzer quotes a typical Prosperity Gospel evangelist, as he shouts to his listening audience:

"God loves you! He loves you and he wills for you to enjoy perfect health. And he wants you rich. After all, the cattle on a thousand hills belong to him. Would an earthly millionaire make his own children eat poor food, wear shabby clothes, and ride in a broken-down family car? Of course not! Neither will your heavenly Father give you anything but the very best.

"What is the desire of your heart? Name it, claim it by faith, and it is yours! Your heavenly Father has promised it. It's right there in the Bible."

Kantzer says that "the danger of this perverted gospel of health and wealth is that it makes false promises. These in turn lead to unscriptural desires for wealth and material prosperity, to false hopes for perfect physical health, and in the end to false guilt and despair."

Adding to Kantzer's evaluation, I would say that the Prosperity Gospel appeals to this desire for relief from the difficulties and hardships of life, the very desire Paul points to and tells us to avoid, since it led the Israelites to draw away from God and toward idolatry!

A fifth desire that tends to draw us away from God and toward idolatry is: