

Is Hinn renouncing prosperity gospel?

by [Adelle M. Banks](#) and [Emily McFarlan Miller](#)

This article appears in the [October 9, 2019](#) issue.



Pastor Benny Hinn leads a service on Jan. 27, 2014 (Photo by House of Praise / Creative Commons)

Prominent televangelist Benny Hinn has captured headlines recently for seemingly renouncing the prosperity gospel on which he built his ministry.

“I’m sorry to say that prosperity has gone a little crazy, and I’m correcting my own theology,” Hinn said in a recent *Your LoveWorld* broadcast shared September 2 on the Benny Hinn Ministries Facebook page and YouTube channel, “because when I read the Bible now I don’t see the Bible in the same eyes I saw the Bible 20 years ago.”

But some have questioned whether the announcement is the about-face it has been presented as, pointing to similar statements Hinn made more than a year ago.

Hinn, who cofounded the LoveWorld USA TV network in 2017, has traveled the world preaching the prosperity gospel and stressing miraculous healings for more than 40 years, according to Debra J. Mumford, professor of homiletics at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and author of *Exploring Prosperity Preaching: Biblical Health, Wealth, and Wisdom*.

The prosperity gospel is a theology that teaches that God wants people to have health and wealth, Mumford said. In Hinn's case, the promise of healing has been tied to requests for sometimes large sums of money.

"He's an international icon for the prosperity gospel in the sense that he has influenced so many people. That's one of the reasons why, with him saying something like he said, there are reverberations not just in the United States, but pretty much around the world," she said.

In the September 2 video, Hinn said he is now breaking with friends in Christian ministry who preach a prosperity gospel focused on wealth.

"I think it's an offense to the Lord; it's an offense to say, 'Give a thousand dollars,'" he said. "I think it's [an] offense to the Holy Spirit to place a price on the gospel. I'm done with it. I will never again ask you to give a thousand or whatever amounts because I think the Holy Ghost is just fed up with it."

The televangelist said his thoughts about the prosperity gospel have changed over time.

"If you are not giving because you love Jesus, don't bother giving. I think giving has become such a gimmick it's making me sick to my stomach," he said. "And I've been sick for a while, too. I just couldn't say it. And now, the lid is off. I've had it."

Though Hinn said he was "making this statement for the first time in my life," he has previously suggested he was rethinking his interpretation of certain passages in the Bible often used to defend prosperity gospel teachings.

Following the death of Billy Graham in February 2018, he said in a Facebook Live video that, while he believed the Bible does teach prosperity, "I think some have gone to the extreme with it, sadly."

"It's not God's word that is taught, and I think I'm as guilty as others," he said in the 2018 video. "Sometimes you go a little farther than you really need to go, and then

God brings you back to normality and reality.”

At the time, he said, he had come to believe that prosperity means not “palatial homes and cars” but rather “no lack.”

Hinn’s ministries have been the subject of investigations over the years, by the Internal Revenue Service in 2017 and by Sen. Chuck Grassley (R., Iowa), who concluded a three-year inquiry of alleged lavish spending by six prominent broadcast ministries in 2011. Hinn’s was one of two ministries that were found to have made “significant reforms” to their operations, according to a report released after Grassley’s probe.

Mumford said it’s too soon to tell how Hinn’s announcement will impact other prosperity gospel preachers around the world—or even Hinn’s ministry.

As recently as three weeks ago, she said, Benny Hinn Ministries posted a video in which the televangelist said “a financial miracle demands a financial act.”

Others have claimed online that Hinn’s ministry posted and then deleted a video in which he asks viewers to send him \$120 even after his most recent announcement. They’ve also said that his previous statements are proof this week’s disavowal isn’t genuine.

“My question to Benny Hinn is: You’ve benefited from this for 40 years. What is your repentance going to consist of?” Mumford said. “Is it just words? Is this just a symbol, or are you somehow going to pay back some of that money that you received from people who believed in your message?” —Religion News Service