

One Way

Religious Comparison: Compare & Contrast What the Bible Says

What Does the Bible Really Say About Prosperity?

Some churches teach what's called "the prosperity Gospel," also known as the "Word of Faith Movement." According to this teaching, if you believe in Jesus, you will never be poor or suffer. It claims that God wants all His children to be rich, healthy and happy. This idea has become common in many churches in Nigeria. *But is it really what the Bible teaches?*

Let's take a closer look:

Does God Promise Wealth?

Teachers of the prosperity Gospel urge Christians to pray and give money with the expectation of becoming wealthy. But Jesus warned against greed, saying: *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions"* (Luke 12:15 NIVUK). Instead, Jesus encouraged His followers to store up *"treasures in heaven"* rather than focus on things that fade away (Matthew 6:19-20).

What Kind of Blessings Did Jesus Bring?

Some claim that Jesus came to give people money and material wealth. But the Bible demonstrates that God gives believers *spiritual blessings* through Jesus. These blessings are far greater than anything money can buy.

The most important gift is the forgiveness of sins, which is available to anyone who believes (Ephesians 1:3,7; Romans 3:22). Jesus also gives His followers love, joy and peace, and He promises to be with them always (John 15:10-11; Matthew 28:20). Even when life is hard, our spirits can be renewed every day (2 Corinthians 4:16).



What About Suffering?

According to the prosperity Gospel, believers should never suffer. However, Jesus stated that those who are persecuted for following Him are *"blessed"* and will receive a great reward in heaven (Matthew 5:10-12). Life can be difficult, and Christians may face many challenges, but Jesus gives us the inner strength and peace to overcome (Philippians 4:12-13; John 16:33).

Looking Ahead to Heaven

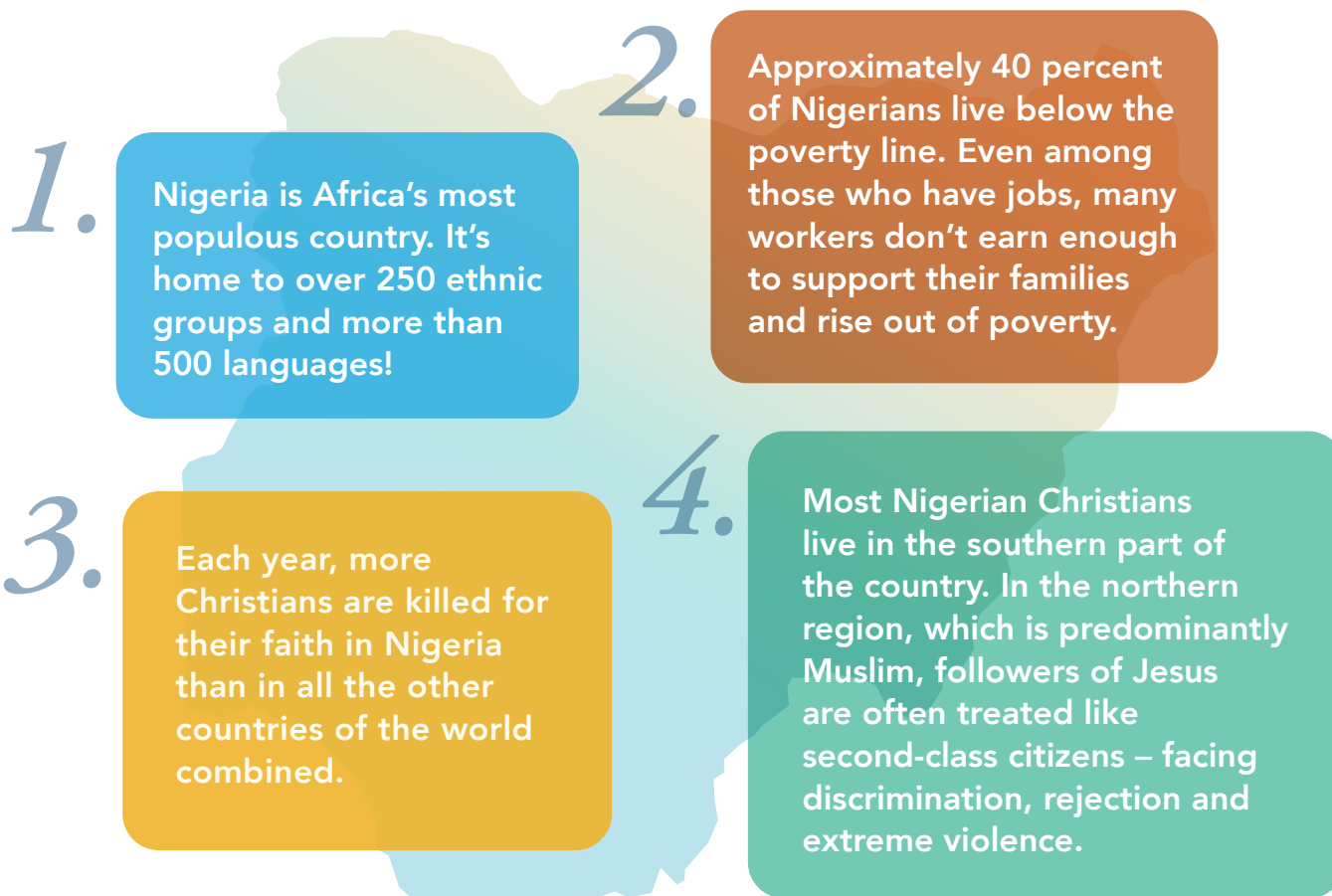
Prosperity teaching focusses on getting blessings now. But Jesus points us to the future. He is preparing a place – a new heaven and earth – for His followers (John 14:2-3). The joy we will experience in eternity far outweighs any pain we may face today (Romans 8:18).

The Truth About the Christian Life

The Bible teaches that, although life includes trials, God provides Christians with everything they need to live for Him – including a peace that *"surpasses all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7 ESV). Jesus encouraged His disciples with these words: *"I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33 ESV). A Christian's true hope, lasting wealth and eternal home are found in Christ alone, not in the temporary things the world calls success.

Weigh In

Weighing the facts
about Nigeria



Corresponding Question Points:



(1) How do you think so many different people groups came to exist in one geographical area? Have you ever experienced communicating across language barriers? What challenges might a missionary face in a country with such a diverse population?

(2) How would you respond if you knew you could never earn enough money to take care of your family? What are some long-term ways that governments can help reduce poverty? How do you think Christians should treat individuals living in difficult economic circumstances?

(3) Courage in the face of danger is a powerful testimony to God's faithful presence and strength among His people. What questions might non-believing Nigerians have when they see Christians staying strong during hard times? Consider Philippians 1:14. Have you ever felt inspired by someone else's courage?

(4) Do you think Christians in northern Nigeria should flee to safer regions? Reflect on the Apostle Paul's journeys in the book of Acts. What are some reasons God might call believers to stay in – or leave – dangerous places?