

*Faith Is A Force Which*  
**God Must Obey!**

Really?

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# **The Word of Faith Movement with a Biblical Critique**

The Word of Faith movement is a charismatic theology that teaches adherents can access divine healing, financial prosperity, and personal success by speaking positive confessions aloud, treating faith as a tangible force. Often called the "prosperity gospel," it emphasizes that believers can "name it and claim it" to bring desired blessings into existence.

The term "believers", as applied to followers of Word of Faith beliefs, is changed to "practitioners" since these folks appear to be practicing personal attainment and practice of godhood versus salvation by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

The Word of Faith movement is a modern theological doctrine—often called the "prosperity gospel"—that teaches that practitioners can attain health, wealth, and success through "positive confession" and spoken, faith-filled words. Founded by Kenneth E. Hagin, it claims that faith is a spiritual force used to command realities into existence.

### **Key tenets and characteristics of the Word of Faith doctrine include:**

**1 Salvation:** Word of Faith (WOF) theology teaches that salvation is a comprehensive, holistic experience that extends beyond the forgiveness of sins to include immediate, tangible benefits in this life, such as physical health, financial prosperity, and spiritual well-being. Founded in the 1960s by Kenneth Hagin with roots in E.W. Kenyon's teachings, this movement emphasizes that Christ's atonement provides "total health" (spirit, soul, and body) for believers.

### **Key aspects of the Word of Faith teaching regarding salvation include:**

- **Holistic Deliverance (Soteria):** WOF defines salvation as "deliverance" from all curses, including sickness, poverty, and spiritual death. It is seen as a "total" rescue, addressing not only the soul for eternity but also the current, daily life of the believer.
- **The "Finished Work" and Confession:** While recognizing that Jesus's death and resurrection bought salvation, WOF emphasizes that this salvation is activated by faith and positive confession.

Believers are encouraged to "confess" the Bible's promises regarding healing and prosperity as a sign of their faith.

- **Physical and Financial Provision:** A core belief is that it is always God's will for believers to be in perfect health and financial abundance. Because Jesus took on infirmities (Isaiah 53:5), physical healing is considered a "right" or a "divine privilege" for the believer.
- **"Positive Confession" (Speaking Things into Existence):** WOF teaching posits that believers can "create" or "release" the reality of God's blessings in their lives through their words. Based on an interpretation of Mark 11:22–24, they teach that "whatsoever they say" (in line with God's word) will come to pass, often referring to this as "positive confession".
- **Rejection of "Negative" Confession:** WOF teaches that speaking about sickness, lack, or failure (a "negative confession") gives Satan power, whereas positive confession activates God's power.
- **Covenant Relationship:** Salvation is often framed as a covenantal agreement with God, where the believer is entitled to the promises of health and wealth.

### **Differences from Other Traditions:**

While WOF shares the core Christian belief that salvation is a gift of grace through faith in Christ's death and resurrection, it differs from many traditional evangelical views by elevating physical health and financial prosperity to a "divine right" that is part of the salvation package. It is heavily influenced by the belief that faith acts as a "force" that can compel results, a perspective that has garnered significant theological criticism.

### **Biblical Critique of WOF Salvation Doctrines:**

**Word of Faith (WOF) teaching regarding salvation is critiqued as heretical by orthodox Christianity for elevating human faith to a divine force, reducing Jesus's atonement to spiritual death and torment in hell, and promoting a "little god" theology. Biblically, salvation is solely by grace through faith in Christ's**

## **finished work, not by human confession or by regaining spiritual dominion.**

- **The Nature of Salvation:** WOF teaches that salvation is the restoration of man's "godhood" and dominion, whereas the Bible defines salvation as deliverance from sin and reconciliation with a Holy God (Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
- **Atonement in Hell:** WOF theology often claims Jesus stopped being God on the cross, took on Satan's nature, and was tortured by demons in hell to complete the atonement. FaithLafayette.org states this blasphemously implies Jesus's blood was insufficient. The Bible declares atonement was finished on the cross (John 19:30).
- **"Little Gods" Theology:** WOF teaches that men are divine beings, or "little gods". GotQuestions.org states this is the same lie as in Genesis 3:5, as only God has a divine nature.
- **Faith as a Force:** WOF views faith as a "power" or "force" spoken into existence to control reality, rather than trust in God's sovereignty.
- **Human Declarations vs. Scripture:** WOF salvation often hinges on positive confession and naming-and-claiming, whereas the Bible teaches that assurance is based on the objective work of Christ and Scripture, not subjective feelings or confessions.

### **Key Biblical Principles Challenging WOF:**

- **God is Sovereign:** God does not need faith; He is the object of faith.
- **Sufficiency of the Cross:** Jesus's physical death, not a spiritual rebirth in hell, paid for sins (1 Peter 2:24).
- **The Gospel:** Salvation is through Christ's work, not by human words or spiritual authority.

**2 Power of Words:** Proponents believe that spoken words are containers of power that can bring things into existence, similar to how God spoke the world into being.

- **More on the Power of Words within Word of Faith:** In Word of Faith theology, words are believed to have inherent creative power, acting as spiritual forces that shape reality based on what is spoken. Proponents emphasize "positive confession"—aligning spoken words with scripture—to activate blessings, health, and prosperity, rooted in the belief that practitioners can, like God, "call things that are not as though they were".

### **Key aspects regarding the power of words in this movement include:**

- **Creative Force:** Words are not just communicative but act as carriers that release power to create what is spoken, drawing from the concept in Proverbs 18:21 that "death and life are in the power of the tongue".
- **Positive Confession:** This practice involves consistently speaking the Word of God over life situations (health, finances, relationships) rather than speaking negative circumstances or fear.
- **Spiritual Laws:** Words are believed to set spiritual laws in motion, acting as a "start button" that can either grant permission for blessing or allow negative outcomes.
- **Faith-Filled Words:** The effectiveness of spoken words is tied to faith; when the Word of God is spoken with firm belief and without doubt, it is believed to have the power to overcome obstacles.
- **Authority of the Practitioner:** Proponents teach that because practitioners are children of God, their words, when aligned with God's will, have the authority to alter reality.

### **Core Beliefs and Usage**

- **Guard Your Mouth:** It is emphasized that one should avoid negative or unwholesome language, as words reveal and create one's spiritual state.

- **"Name it and Claim it"**: Often criticized, this phrase is used to describe the practice of proclaiming specific promises from the Bible until they manifest in reality.
- **Consistency**: The power of words is maintained by continuous, deliberate affirmation of divine promises. A type of brain-washing.

## **Biblical Critique of the WOF Power of Words:**

Word of Faith (WOF) theology teaches that spoken words, when filled with faith, possess creative power to alter reality and manifest health or wealth. Biblical critics contend this elevates human speech to a divine, creative function, often misinterpreting scripture, such as Proverbs 18:21 and Mark 11:23, to teach a "law of confession". Critics argue this reduces God's sovereignty, shifts focus from faith in God to faith in one's own words, and often leads to disillusionment.

- **Misinterpretation of "Creative Power"**: Critics argue that while God creates by speaking (Genesis 1), humans are creatures who do not possess inherent creative power to speak things into existence.
- **Misuse of Proverbs 18:21:**

*21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.*
- While the Bible acknowledges the power of the tongue to influence (Proverbs 18:21), critics argue WOF misinterprets this to mean that human words dictate physical reality rather than simply reflecting heart conditions.
- **Misapplication of Faith and Confession**: The Bible teaches that faith is trust in God's will (Hebrews 11:1), whereas WOF often treats faith as a force activated by positive confession to command God or control circumstances.
- **The Problem of Suffering**: WOF, by focusing on "positive confession," often implies that sickness or poverty is the result of a

lack of faith or negative confession, causing guilt and spiritual trauma, which critics argue is contrary to the biblical reality of suffering.

- **Authority Shift:** Critics warn that the "name it and claim it" doctrine replaces reliance on God's sovereign plan with a self-centered pursuit of personal desires, elevating man's words over God's word.

While proponents argue that words are "spiritual containers" for faith, critics argue that true biblical, spiritual authority comes through prayerful submission to God's will, not by manipulating reality with spoken formulas.

**3 Positive Confession:** Generally, practitioners are encouraged to speak what they desire, specifically in alignment with biblical promises, rather than confessing their current, negative circumstances.

- **More on Positive Confession in Word of Faith:** Positive confession in the Word of Faith movement is the practice of verbally affirming biblical promises—specifically regarding health, prosperity, and victory—as already fulfilled, regardless of current physical circumstances. Rooted in interpretations of Mark 11:23, it is believed that speaking God's word acts as a creative, spiritual force, transforming reality to align with faith.

### **Key Aspects of Positive Confession in WOF**

- **"Saying" the Promise:** Practitioners are encouraged to speak what they desire, or what they believe God's word promises, rather than speaking about their current problems.
- **Creative Power of Words:** Proponents argue that since humans are made in God's image, they can use their words to shape their reality, just as God spoke the universe into existence.
- **"Force" of Faith:** Faith is viewed as a force produced by meditating on and speaking scripture, which activates spiritual laws.

- **"Decree and Declare"**: A common variation where practitioners "decree" God's will to manifest, demanding that circumstances change.
- **Confession vs. Confession of Sins**: While conventional Christianity defines confession as admitting sin, Word of Faith emphasizes "confessing" (or affirming) who they are in Christ and what they possess.

### **Examples of Confessions**

- "I am free from sickness, sorrow, grief, and fear".
- "I do not have a care".
- "I live by every word that comes out of God's mouth".
- "My body is a temple of God; His Spirit lives in me".

### **Common Phrases and Teachings**

- "You can have what you say".
- "Write your own ticket with God".
- "Faith's confession creates reality".

*Note: This doctrine is often associated with the prosperity gospel and is generally interpreted as a, "Believe it, Confess it, Receive it" formula.*

### **Biblical critique of the WOF positive confession:**

The Word of Faith's positive confession overemphasizes human words as creative forces, creating a "health and wealth" gospel that conflicts with biblical teaching on suffering. Critics argue it promotes a self-centered, man-centered theology, misinterpreting faith as a tool to compel God rather than a reliance on His sovereign will.

- **Misinterpretation of Faith**: Positive confession often redefines faith from trusting God's character to treating it as a "law" or formula to

manifest desires, essentially placing human words on par with God's creative words.

- **Neglect of Suffering and Sovereignty:** Contrary to the claim that practitioners should always be healthy and wealthy, the Bible teaches that suffering is often part of the Christian life and that God's ways are higher than human desires.
- **Misuse of Scripture:** Verses (e.g., 3 John 2) are sometimes taken out of context to guarantee material prosperity, rather than understood as pastoral greetings or spiritual well-being.
- **Confession as Formula:** The practice often encourages "denying reality" (negative situations) in favor of declaring desired outcomes, which can verge on deception or denying the reality of trials.

#### **Biblical Definition of Confession**

- **Biblical confession** involves agreeing with God regarding sin (1 John 1:9) and publicly acknowledging one's faith in Christ, rather than commanding circumstances.
- **Authentic faith** involves trusting God even in difficult circumstances (Hebrews 11), not solely declaring positive outcomes to avoid discomfort.

**4 Health and Wealth Covenant:** The doctrine teaches that financial prosperity and physical health are guaranteed covenant rights for practitioners, and therefore sickness or poverty indicates a lack of faith.

- In more detail, the **health and wealth covenant** in the Word of Faith movement teaches that physical health and financial prosperity are guaranteed divine rights for practitioners, stemming from Christ's atonement. Practitioners activate these promises through positive, spoken faith confessions and tithing (seed-faith), viewing sickness and poverty as lack of faith or demonic oppression.
- **Core Principles:** Prosperity is viewed as a divine covenant designed to empower practitioners to fund missions, help the needy, and live in abundance.

- **The "Force" of Faith:** Words are believed to be a creative, spiritual force that can materialize desired outcomes (healing, wealth) when aligned with scripture.
- **Key Scriptures:** Often centers on 3 John 1:2 ("I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health") and Isaiah 53:5 ("by his wounds we are healed").
- **Seed-Faith Giving:** Financial contributions are considered "seeds" that God will multiply, often leading to a transactional view of blessings.
- **Divine Health vs. Healing:** Word of Faith adherents frequently emphasize "divine health"—never being sick—over simply being healed.

This theology argues that just as Jesus redeemed practitioners from the curse of sin, He also redeemed them from the curse of poverty and sickness.

## **Biblical critique of the "health and wealth" covenant**

A biblical critique of the "health and wealth" covenant within the Word of Faith movement generally concludes that it is a distortion of Scripture that shifts focus from God's sovereignty and grace to human manipulation of spiritual forces. Critics argue that this theology—often called the prosperity gospel—constructs a "false gospel" by prioritizing temporal, material rewards over spiritual growth, suffering, and the cross.

### **1. Distortion of Faith and God's Sovereignty**

- **Faith as a Force:** Word of Faith teaches that faith is a tangible, spiritual force that can be manipulated through "positive confession" to guarantee material health and wealth. The Bible defines faith as trust in God's character and submission to His will, not as a tool to control circumstances (Hebrews 11:1).

- **"Little Gods" Theology:** Some Word of Faith teachers argue that humans were created as "little gods" and, before the Fall, could call things into existence. This is considered a heresy, as it obscures the divine nature of God (Isaiah 43:10).
- **God as a "Cosmic Bellhop":** The movement reduces God to a servant who is obliged to fulfill the demands of practitioners who use the correct formula, directly contradicting the Bible's portrayal of God as Lord of all.

## 2. Misinterpretation of the Atonement and Suffering

- **Suffering as a Failure:** Word of Faith teaches that sickness and poverty are consequences of a lack of faith, demon possession, or sin. This theology fails to account for the biblical reality that suffering is part of the Christian experience, often used for sanctification (Romans 5:3-5, 1 Peter 4:12-13).
- **Misreading of the Cross:** Proponents often claim that Christ's atonement guarantees perfect physical health and wealth in this life. The historic Christian view is that the atonement primarily addresses sin and reconciliation, with ultimate healing in the new creation (Revelation 21:4).
- **The Example of Jesus:** Word of Faith portrays Jesus as living a life of wealth, yet the Bible indicates He lived in humility and poverty (Philippians 2:6-8, Matthew 8:20).

## 3. Misuse of Scripture (Proof-Texting)

- **Old Testament vs. New Testament:** The prosperity gospel frequently applies Old Testament covenant promises of material prosperity (e.g., Deuteronomy 28) directly to New Testament practitioners, disregarding that Christians are under a new, better covenant focused on spiritual blessings (Galatians 3:14).
- **Misapplied Verses:** Key verses like 3 John 1:2 ("I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health") are interpreted to mean

material gain, whereas they are often seen by scholars as standard, polite greetings of the time.

- **Seed-Faith Giving:** The teaching that financial giving is a "seed" that guarantees a multiplied return (linked to Malachi 3:10) is criticized as transactional and self-centered, rather than a voluntary act of worship.

#### **4. Excessive Focus on Self and Materialism**

- **Idolatry of Money:** The emphasis on acquiring wealth contradicts Jesus' warnings against greed and the love of money (Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 6:6-10).
- **Neglect of the Gospel:** The prosperity message often replaces the Gospel of salvation from sin with a "gospel" of comfort, leading to a superficial, self-centered, and, in some cases, exploitative Christianity.

#### **Summary of Key Counter-Scriptures**

- **1 Timothy 6:6-10:** Encourages contentment rather than the desire to be rich.
- **Philippians 1:29:** States that suffering for Christ is a gift.
- **Matthew 6:19-21:** Commands storing up treasures in heaven, not on earth.
- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10:** Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was not removed, showing God's power is made perfect in weakness.

The overall critique is that the Word of Faith movement offers a "gospel without a cross," which cannot sustain practitioners in times of suffering or poverty.

**5 "Little Gods" Theology:** Some Word of Faith teachers argue that humans were created in God's literal image as "little gods," allowing them to exercise divine power, a view frequently criticized by mainstream theologians as heretical.

- Further to the "Little Gods" theology in Word of Faith, it is a highly controversial doctrine found within the **Word of Faith (WoF) movement** and some prosperity gospel circles, which teaches that born-again believers are, in essence, "little gods" or divine beings on earth. Proponents argue that because humans were created in God's image and are born again, they possess the same nature and authority as God.

## **Key Tenets of the "Little Gods" Theology:**

- **Reproduction After Kind:** Proponents, including E.W. Kenyon and Kenneth Hagin, argue that just as dogs produce dogs, God produces "gods". They believe practitioners are in the same class of being as God Himself.
- **Divine Authority and Creativity:** Based on a literal interpretation of being made in God's image, adherents believe they have the authority to speak things into existence, similar to God in Genesis.
- **Incarnation Belief:** Some teachers, such as Kenneth Hagin, have stated that "the practitioner is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth".
- **Adam as a "Little God":** Before the fall, Adam is seen as having possessed full dominion as a "little god," a status that is reinstated in Christians, according to this view.

## **Biblical Critique of the "Little God" theology in WOF:**

- The "little god" theology, often taught within the Word of Faith (WOF) movement, suggests that because human beings were created in God's image and are "born again," they are essentially "little gods" or "little g gods" with divine nature, creative power in their words, and authority over their own lives.

Biblical, historical, and evangelical critics generally reject this teaching, characterizing it as heresy, a form of pantheistic deification, or a reiteration of the serpent's lie in the Garden of Eden—"you shall be as God" (Genesis 3:5).

- **Creator vs. Creature Distinction:** The Bible makes a fundamental distinction between the Creator (God) and His creation (humans). Humans are created beings and never evolve into, or share the essence of, the Divine. God is eternal, omnipotent, and self-existent, while humanity is finite and mortal.
- **Misinterpretation of Scripture (Psalm 82 and John 10):** WOF teachers often quote Psalm 82:6 ("I have said, 'You are gods'...") and Jesus' reference in John 10:34 to support this doctrine.
- **Biblical Context:** Psalm 82 is not a divine promotion of humanity but a judgment against unjust earthly judges who were acting as "gods" by abusing their authority. Jesus used this verse in John 10 to highlight the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, not to affirm that all humans are divine.
- **The Nature of Being "In God's Image":** Being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) does not mean sharing God's divine nature or substance. It refers to reflecting God's character and possessing intellect, will, and emotion, as well as acting as God's representatives on Earth (dominion), not becoming divine beings.
- **The Exclusivity of Divinity in Christ:** The New Testament teaches that only Jesus Christ is the Incarnation of God, having the full "fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). E.W. Kenyon, a forerunner of the movement, taught that practitioners are, like Jesus, incarnations, which is rejected by orthodox Christianity as blasphemous and a denial of Christ's unique divinity.
- **The Incompatibility with Total Depravity:** The "little god" theology overlooks the severity of sin and the need for salvation. It implies that people are inherently divine, rather than sinners in need of grace. The gospel calls sinners to repent, not to realize they are gods.
- **The "Satanic" Connection:** Critics argue this doctrine echoes the lie in Genesis 3:5, where Satan tells Eve, "You will be like God". Some critics even characterize it as a "deification heresy" that is more proud than Lucifer himself.

- **Limiting the Power of God:** By elevating man to the status of a "little god" who controls reality with their words ("positive confession"), this theology lowers God, making Him dependent on human,, faith-filled words, effectively treating God as a "genie in a bottle".

### Conclusion of the Critique:

The "little god" doctrine is deemed unbiblical by mainstream Christian theology because it shifts the focus from the worship of the one true God to self-exaltation and deification of humanity.

**Biblical and Critical Response:** Mainstream Evangelical critics and theologians overwhelmingly reject this teaching, considering it to be heretical and cultic.

- **Misinterpretation of Scripture:** Critics argue that Psalm 82:6 ("You are gods") and John 10:34 are taken out of context to mean divinity, whereas they actually refer to human judges (magistrates) acting with delegated authority, not divine nature.
- **Equality vs. Image-Bearing:** The Bible teaches that humans are made in the *image* of God (image-bearers), not that they *are* God (divine).
- **The Serpent's Lie:** Critics point out that this theology echoes the serpent's temptation in Eden: "You will be like God" (Genesis 3:5).
- **Distinction Between Creator and Creature:** Scripture, such as Isaiah 43:10 and 44:6, emphasizes that God alone is God, and there are no other gods, "little" or otherwise.
- **Narcissism:** Critics argue the doctrine feeds into narcissism and self-worship rather than worshipping the Creator.

**Consequences of the Teaching:** The doctrine is closely tied to "positive confession" (naming and claiming) and the prosperity gospel, where practitioners believe they can control their reality through their words, as gods. It is seen as a way to guarantee health and wealth.

## 6 "Force of Faith": Faith is viewed as a tangible,, usable force.

- "Force of Faith" theology in the Word of Faith movement frames faith as a tangible, spiritual power or force, rather than just trust, that can be manipulated to create reality. Rooted in teachings from figures like Kenneth Copeland, this doctrine emphasizes that positive confessions and words release this force to manifest health, wealth, and prosperity.

### Key aspects of the "Force of Faith" theology include:

- **Faith as a Force:** Faith is viewed as a creative power, similar to a substance that can be used to control material and spiritual realities.
- **Positive Confession:** Practitioners believe that speaking aloud promises from God (confession) activates this force to bring about desired outcomes, such as healing or prosperity.
- **Formulaic Application:** The doctrine often follows a formulaic approach, sometimes described as "Say it, Do it, Receive it, and Tell it," to ensure results.
- **Authority of the Practitioner:** Practitioners are taught to have authority over circumstances, utilizing their faith to command reality to align with divine promises.
- **Scriptural Interpretation:** The teaching often draws on specific passages, such as Mark 11:23-24, interpreting them to mean that spoken faith can move mountains.

Critics often argue that this interpretation extends beyond traditional Christian hermeneutics, sometimes placing more emphasis on the mechanics of faith than on the object of faith (God).

### **Biblical Critique on the Force of Faith in Word of Faith:**

The "force of faith" doctrine, a cornerstone of the Word of Faith (WoF) movement, is heavily criticized by mainstream Christian theologians and pastors for distorting the biblical definition of faith

into a quasi-magical, impersonal force. The central claim that faith is a substance or "creative force" that can be manipulated through positive confession to compel God to act is deemed contrary to the biblical teaching of faith as trusting submission to God's sovereign will.

Here is a detailed biblical critique of the "force of faith" doctrine:

## 1. Faith as a Substance vs. Relational Trust

- **WoF Teaching:** Faith is a tangible spiritual force, a "substance" (citing a misinterpretation of Hebrews 11:1) that can be activated by words to create reality.
- **Biblical Critique:** Biblical faith is not an impersonal, manipulatable force, but a relational trust in the character and promises of God. It is a humble reliance on God's grace, not a tool for self-actualization. Hebrews 11:1 refers to "assurance" or "conviction" regarding the future, not a "building block" used to manipulate the universe.

## 2. "Little Gods" and the Sovereignty of God

- **WoF Teaching:** Humans are created in the image of God, meaning they share His divine nature and are "little gods" capable of creating their own reality with their mouths.
- **Biblical Critique:** This teaching echoes the temptation in the Garden of Eden: "You shall be as God" (Genesis 3:5). It undermines the absolute sovereignty of God, making Him subject to human, "faith-filled" words, effectively reducing God to a "cosmic genie". Scripture affirms that God alone determines the course of creation (Isaiah 46:9–10).

## 3. Positive Confession vs. Submission to God's Will

- **WoF Teaching:** If you believe it in your heart and say it with your mouth, you can have what you say ("name it and claim it").

- **Biblical Critique:** This turns prayer into a formula, ignoring the necessary, "If it be your will" (James 4:15). Jesus provided the ultimate model of prayer in Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). The Word of Faith movement ignores the biblical call to align our desires with God's will, replacing it with the demand that God align with our desires.

#### 4. Distortion of the Atonement

- **WoF Teaching:** Physical healing and material prosperity are guaranteed in the atonement (Isa 53:5).
- **Biblical Critique:** The atonement of Christ primarily addresses the spiritual problem of sin and reconciliation between humanity and God, not a guarantee of immediate material prosperity. The Bible teaches that while healing may occur, it is not guaranteed for every believer in this life (2 Cor 12:7–10).

#### 5. Misuse of Scripture and Context

- **WoF Teaching:** Uses verses like Proverbs 18:21 ("Death and life are in the power of the tongue") to prove that words have creative, metaphysical power.
- **Biblical Critique:** Such teachings take verses out of context. Proverbs 18:21 speaks to the practical, relational impact of words (encouragement vs. discouragement), not a supernatural mechanism for creating matter.

#### 6. Ignoring the Role of Suffering

- **WoF Teaching:** Sickness and poverty are signs of a lack of faith or sin, and should be spoken against.
- **Biblical Critique:** The Bible portrays suffering as a normal part of the Christian life that develops perseverance, character, and hope (Rom 5:3–5; 1 Pet 4:12–13). The "force of faith" teaching places a heavy, unbiblical burden of guilt on those who are sick or suffering, accusing them of "not having enough faith".

## Conclusion of Critique:

The "force of faith" is considered dangerous because it shifts the focus from God's glory to man's personal desires, often leading to a materialistic, self-centered, and, in some cases, psychologically damaging form of Christianity that departs from the historic gospel.

### • **Prominent Teachers and Quotes:**

Several influential Word of Faith teachers have promoted this idea:

- **E.W. Kenyon:** Considered an early influence, bridging New Thought ideas with 19th-century evangelicalism.
- **Kenneth Copeland:** "When I read in the Bible where He says, 'I AM,' I just smile and say, 'Yes, I Am too'".
- **Benny Hinn:** "God came from heaven, became a man, made man into little gods, went back to heaven as a man".
- **Creflo Dollar:** "You are gods because you came from God and you are gods".
- **Kenneth Hagin:** Stated that the church has not realized that they are "Christ".
- **Charles Capps:** Known for teaching on the power of the tongue and positive confession.
- **Joel Osteen:** Popularized prosperity and positive confession themes to a mainstream audience.
- **Creflo Dollar:** Known for teaching on prosperity and financial empowerment.
- **David Oyedepo:** A major proponent in Nigeria and international charismatic circles.
- **Oral Roberts:** A key figure who bridged traditional Pentecostalism with faith healing and prosperity.

- **Joyce Meyer:** Widely known speaker focusing on faith and overcoming in life.
- **Others:** Frederick Price, Jesse Duplantis, Robert Tilton, Todd White, and Paula White.
- **Origin:** The movement grew out of Pentecostalism, with strong influences from the 19th-century New Thought movement.

**Critiques:** Critics argue the doctrine is unbiblical, often pointing to its focus on materialistic, "temporal" things. They argue it distorts the nature of God, reduces prayer to a method for manipulating divine action, and can lead to abuse, such as blaming sick individuals for lacking enough faith to be healed.

## **The Infiltration of Word of Faith into Evangelical Churches**

The Word of Faith (WoF) movement has combined with the broader Evangelical church primarily through its infusion into Pentecostal and Charismatic branches, shifting focus toward "positive confession," material prosperity, and "name-it-and-claim-it" theology. While rooted in 19th-century "New Thought" (mind science) and popularized by 20th-century televangelists like Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, its doctrines have been assimilated into mainstream Evangelicalism, often filtering out the most extreme teachings at the local church level.

### **Here is how Word of Faith has combined with the Evangelical church:**

#### **1. Integration into Charismatic Evangelicalism**

The WoF movement is not a distinct denomination but a movement heavily influencing Charismatic Evangelicals, particularly in the US, Africa, and Latin America.

- **Common Ground:** Both often share a commitment to the authority of Scripture, the importance of spiritual gifts, and a desire to see God's power in daily life.

- **Influence on Worship:** Many Evangelical churches have adopted a more high-energy, experiential, and, at times, "supernatural" atmosphere, influenced by the Charismatic movement's emphasis on the "anointing".
- **Filtering at Local Level:** While top-tier TV ministries might be more extreme, local Word of Faith churches often filter out the most controversial teachings, making them more acceptable to broader Evangelical congregations.

## 2. Adoption of "Prosperity Gospel" Doctrines

The most significant impact of WoF on Evangelicalism is the widespread acceptance of prosperity theology.

- **Seed-Faith Giving:** The idea that financial contributions (sowing a seed) will result in a financial return from God has become deeply embedded in many Evangelical and Pentecostal fundraising efforts.
- **Divine Health and Wealth:** The belief that God guarantees financial prosperity and physical health as a right for all practitioners has moved from the fringe into mainstream Evangelical discourse.

## 3. Shift to "Positive Confession" and "Decree and Declare"

The WoF doctrine that spoken words create reality ("name it and claim it") has been widely adopted.

- **The Power of Words:** Many evangelicals now focus on "positive confession," declaring promises of health or financial breakthrough, while avoiding "negative confession".
- **Decree and Declare:** The vocabulary of "decree and declare" has become common in evangelical worship, encouraging believers to speak things into existence rather than just asking God for them.

## 4. Over-Correction of Neglected Themes

Some perspectives suggest that Word of Faith has combined with Evangelicalism by over-emphasizing themes previously neglected by mainstream Evangelicals, such as healing, miraculous provision, and the active, daily role of faith.

- **Re-enchantment:** This has contributed to a "re-enchantment" of the world for evangelicals, moving away from a strictly intellectual or disenchanted view toward an expectation of supernatural intervention.

## 5. Shift in Pastoral Authority

Word of Faith has introduced a different model of authority where pastors often claim "new revelation" to deliver to the people, which sometimes overrides traditional expository preaching. While many traditional Evangelicals strongly reject this, it has become common in many large "non-denominational" or "charismatic" churches.

## Key Differences and Criticisms

Despite this combination, many Evangelicals—particularly from Reformed and Classical Pentecostal backgrounds—view the WoF movement as a threat to orthodoxy due to its:

- **Humanization of God:** Treating God as a "cosmic genie" subject to human commands.
- **Marginalization of Suffering:** Ignores the biblical teaching that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life.
- **Distortion of the Atonement:** Focusing on material gain rather than spiritual salvation.

## Word of Faith and Daniel's Seventieth Week

The Word of Faith movement generally adheres to a **Pre-Tribulation Rapture** interpretation of eschatology, heavily influenced by Dispensationalism. This teaching posits that the Church will be removed from the earth before the seven-year period of "Jacob's Trouble" (the 70th week of Daniel) begins.

## Daniel's 70th Week

- **Definition:** Word of Faith teachers generally interpret the "seventy weeks" in Daniel 9:24-27 as 70 sets of seven years (490 years), with a long, unrevealed gap between the 69th and 70th week.
- **The Gap (Church Age):** The 69 weeks ended with the ministry and death of Jesus. The final 70th week is seen as a future 7-year period of tribulation that has been postponed, during which God resumes his focus on Israel.
- **Purpose:** The 70th week is viewed as a time for God to bring Israel to repentance, judge the unrighteous nations, and deal with the Antichrist.
- **Structure:** The 7-year period is often divided into two 3.5-year segments: the first half involves a false peace covenant with Israel by the Antichrist, followed by the "Great Tribulation" in the second half, triggered by the abomination of desolation.

## The Rapture of the Church

- **Pre-Tribulation Timing:** The Church is expected to be "caught up" (raptured) to meet Jesus in the air *before* the 70th week begins.
- **Exemption from Wrath:** A central tenet is that the Church is not appointed to wrath (1 Thess 5:9) and will be spared from the Tribulation (God's wrath).
- **"Secret" Coming:** The Rapture is often viewed as a sudden, imminent event where Jesus removes the Bride of Christ, distinct from the Second Coming at the end of the 7 years.

- **Position on Troubles:** While Word of Faith teaching emphasizes escaping the *Tribulation*, it often distinguishes this from personal, earthly trials, which believers may still face.

## Key Themes in this Interpretation

- **Israel and Church Separation:** A strict distinction is made between God's plan for the Church and His plan for Israel.
- **Literal Interpretation:** This view applies a literal interpretation to the timeline of the 70th week, expecting a future, rebuilt Temple and an individual Antichrist.
- **"Blessed Hope":** The Rapture is taught as the immediate, encouraging hope for believers (Titus 2:13), rather than having to wait through the Antichrist's reign.

## Biblical Critique of Word of Faith End Times Events

The pre-tribulation rapture, which holds that Jesus will remove the church from the earth before a seven-year tribulation period, has several identified negative aspects, weaknesses, and potential dangers according to critics and theological debates.

### Key negative aspects and criticisms include:

- **Lack of Direct Biblical Evidence:** A significant criticism is the absence of explicit, unambiguous, or direct scripture stating the church will be removed before the tribulation. It is often described as an inference from, rather than a direct statement in, the Bible.
- **False Sense of Security and Lack of Preparation:** A major criticism is that this view may leave believers psychologically and spiritually unprepared for the suffering, persecution, and tribulation that many Christians around the world already face, or that might come in the future. This can lead to disillusionment or a loss of faith if the tribulation occurs while they are still on earth.

- **Misinterpretation of "Deliverance":** Critics argue that 1 Thessalonians 5:9 ("not appointed to wrath") does not mean being removed from the earth, but rather protection from God's ultimate wrath, not the trials and tribulations of the world. They point out that God often protects His people *through* trials rather than *from* them (e.g., the Israelites in Egypt).
- **Timing Confusion:** The terms "Pre-Tribulation", "Mid-Tribulation" and "Post Tribulation" are points of serious confusion and debate in the church today. Scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 that the church is not "appointed unto wrath". Nothing is said about the church avoiding "tribulation". Quite the opposite. God's Word says very clearly that suffered greatly for us, we will also suffer. Besides, the "tribulation" of Daniel's Seventieth Week is the summation of over 2600 years of tribulation Israel has endured because of their national disobedience and rebellion against God, starting way back in 605 BC with the Babylonian Captivity.
- **Confuses the Second Coming:** Many argue that the "first resurrection" and the gathering of believers happen at the end of the tribulation (post-tribulation), not seven years before it, meaning the rapture and the second coming are the same event.
- **The "Left Behind" Danger:** The belief can cause fear, anxiety, or confusion among believers, especially children, about being left behind.
- **Historical Novelty:** Critics note that this view was not held by the early church fathers and only gained widespread popularity in the 19th century.
- **Misreading of Key Passages:** Critics argue that 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 actually teaches that the day of the Lord (and the gathering of the saints) will not occur until *after* the falling away and the revelation of the Antichrist (the man of sin), directly contradicting a pre-tribulation view.
- **Neglect of Faithfulness under Suffering:** Critics suggest that this doctrine may fail to prepare the church for the necessity of enduring

in faith through severe trials, a common theme in the New Testament.

Please note, not once during our years of being caught up in the Word of Faith movement, did my wife and I ever hear a single statement or message on the End-Times or the rapture of the church.

## Word of Faith At A Glance

The Word of Faith (WOF) movement is a subset of charismatic Christianity, often referred to as "name it and claim it" or "prosperity theology." It is considered by orthodox Christian scholars to differ significantly from traditional biblical theology.

The core difference is that the Bible presents faith as trust in God's sovereign will, whereas Word of Faith teaches that faith is a formula or spiritual force that can be manipulated to achieve personal health and wealth.

### Comparison Chart: Word of Faith vs The Bible

• Feature	• Word of Faith Teaching	• Biblical Christianity
• Definition of Faith	• A force/law (like gravity) that creates reality through words.	• Trust in God's person, promises, and character (Hebrews 11:1).
• Role of Words	• "Positive confession" creates reality; you get what you say.	• Words should align with God's will; praying for His will to be done.
• Purpose of Life	• To have abundance, health, and prosperity on earth.	• To glorify God, follow Christ, and store treasures in heaven.
• View of Suffering	• A sign of weak faith, sin, or disobedience.	• A normal part of life used by God for growth (Romans 5:3-5).

• <b>Atonement</b>	• Jesus died spiritually, went to hell, and was "born again" to pay for sin.	• Jesus' death on the cross fully paid for sin (1 Peter 2:24).
• <b>View of God</b>	• Subject to spiritual laws; a "cosmic genie" that must answer commands.	• Sovereign, omnipotent ruler who acts according to His will.
• <b>View of Man</b>	• Christians are "little gods" or "little messiahs" (based on Gen 3:5).	• Creatures made in God's image, dependent on His grace.
• <b>Jesus' Earthly Life</b>	• Lived in poverty-free luxury; handled "big money".	• Lived a humble life, often with nowhere to lay His head.

## Detailed Key Differences

- **Positive Confession vs. Submission:** WOF teaches that by speaking positive, faith-filled words, a believer can force God to bring about prosperity and health. The Bible teaches that believers must submit to God's will, as Jesus did in Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours be done".
- **The "Little Gods" Doctrine:** Some WOF teachers argue that because man was created in God's image, humans are "little gods" with the ability to create their own reality. The Bible maintains a strict distinction between the Creator and the creature.
- **Atonement in Hell:** WOF theology often teaches that Jesus' physical death was not enough; He had to endure torture in hell to fully pay for sin. Orthodox Christianity teaches that the atonement was completed on the cross when Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30).
- **Health and Wealth as Rights:** WOF teaches that sickness and poverty are sinful conditions that can be removed through sufficient faith. The Bible highlights that many righteous people suffered from sickness (e.g., Paul's "thorn in the flesh") and poverty, and that God uses these to develop character.

*Disclaimer: The information above represents a critical analysis of Word of Faith doctrine from a traditional, orthodox biblical perspective.*