

**AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-12  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE  
PROSPERITY GOSPEL**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED**

FOR

**THE DEGREE OF**

**MASTER of THEOLOGY**

AT THE

**SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. R. D. FALCONER**

**DATE: AUGUST 2018**

*The opinions expressed in this thesis do not necessarily reflect the views of the South African  
Theological Seminary*

## DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

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August 2018

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my gratitude to my wife Fundo Dlamini for her encouragement and support which have been invaluable to me during the completion of this research project.

For clear guidance and wisdom, I also want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Robert D. Falconer. I know it was not always an easy task, but the commitment and character of Dr. Falconer served to inspire me.

## **ABSTRACT**

The prosperity gospel (PG) is a widespread theology among certain denominations of the Christian church. The essence of this theology is the teaching that Christians have a right to wealth and health through positive confession and is based on a selection of texts in the Bible. The prosperity gospel, on closer examination, is the result of a very particular view of the Bible. The Bible is primarily seen as a faith contract between God and believers. Along this way, God is manipulated by the believer to fulfill his or her wants or desires. Most have come to believe that whatever they desire from God, they must simply speak (claim) it by faith. Positive confession means, therefore, that believers are speaking in faith what they believe God has already promised to them. At the heart of the prosperity teaching lies the conviction that no Christian is destined to suffer and live in poverty on this earth.

The prosperity gospel has been examined and analysed in the light of what the Bible teaches about wealth and health. The study is limited to an exegetical study of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The results as well as the practical implications and warnings are discussed. It concludes with a summary of the prosperity gospel, detailing its faithfulness or infidelity to the biblical text. Recommendations are suggested that, taken together, are considered to be an appropriate response to advocates of that gospel.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

1 Timothy is written to a young pastor, Timothy, who was probably responsible with pastoral duties at the church in Ephesus. It is noted by Liftin (2006:726) “1 Timothy is highly personal, practical, and unsystematic in nature and deals with matters of the church order which Paul had not addressed in the church”. Although this book was written for the purpose of pastoral duties it has no limitations to pastors as it was also addressed to the church. The meaning and the application extends to anyone who believes the Bible is inspired-sufficient word of God and authoritative to all humankind. 1 Timothy 6 is instructive; Paul prescribes some duties for Timothy to fulfill as a minister of the gospel.

1 Timothy 6:3-12 illustrates Paul’s complete thought, warning Timothy that there is no relationship between godliness and one’s material blessings or possession. Paul ends the section by appealing to Timothy to pursue spiritual things rather than temporal materialistic possessions. Paul has also given negative implications of pursuing earthly riches rather than godliness. Interesting observations have been made by scholars who have expounded on 1 Timothy 6:3-12. For example, McClung (2004:40) observes that ‘the consequences of loving money according to the passage are eternal’. Harvey (2004:18) says ‘the passage reveals that the love of money sits at the helm of inner man, it is the spring of his thoughts, desires, and action’. Larson (2000:35) mentions that ‘the text is clear that those who are distracted by the pursuit of money will open themselves up to harm’. Simeon (1993:60) sees the text as “addressing the cares of the world and the deceitful of riches be suffered to grow up in the soul, and they will soon choke all the good seed that has been sown in it”. Bentley (1997:171) also shows how ‘Paul is talking about the love of money being the danger in this pericope. Paul does not say that the love of money is the root of all evil. He says that it is “a root of all kinds of evil’. Guthrie (1994:1303) observes

that in this passage “it is important to draw a distinction between money itself and the love of it. There is no suggestion that love of man is the main cause of evil”.

1 Timothy 6:3-12 is still relevant and applicable to challenges of false teaching in our present age. The most popular false teaching today is the widespread teaching of unbiblical prosperity. Jones (2006:14) notes that ‘1 Timothy 6:3-12 teachings are contrary to the prosperity Gospel advocated by many people’.

It is in light of the meaning of the text that I wish to offer an exegetical study of 1 Timothy 6:3-12, heavily focusing on its implications for advocates of the prosperity gospel. I believe the text being expounded shows very clearly the perils of embracing unbiblical view on Prosperity.

## **1.2 Objective and Key Questions**

The objective of this thesis is to identify the implications that a sound exegesis of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 have for the theology of the prosperity gospel. To reach this objective, the study will focus on the following three key questions: What is the historical-cultural and literary contexts of 1 Timothy? What was the author trying to communicate through 1 Timothy 6:3-12? And what are the significant implications of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 for the theology of the prosperity gospel?

## **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this mini-thesis is to conduct an exegetical study on 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The aim is to establish the implications of the prosperity gospel for ministers of the gospel of Christ and believers. As will become evident, the problem is proper biblical interpretation of certain biblical texts. The outcomes of the exegesis will serve as a corrective to the assumptions of the advocates of the theology of the prosperity gospel.

## **1.4 Design and Methodology**

To solve the main problem requires three major steps. First is the exegesis of 1 Timothy 6:2-12; Then an exegetical analysis of the text in order to establish the meaning of the text, and finally, to establish the significance of the text and

showing its relevance to the theology of the prosperity gospel. The study is, therefore, divided into three main steps.

### **Step 1: Examination of Background**

The first, as indicated, chapter 2 presents the interpretation of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 in its various contexts. The historical context of 1 Timothy will help determine the occasion on which the author addressed his letter to Timothy. To assess the literary context of the letter, the writings of the following persons will be used: Bowens (2012), Bond (2004), Carson (1995), Constable (2006), Easton (2000), Guthrie (1988), Harrison (2002), Harnack (1975), Kisau (2006), Liftin (2006), MacArthur (2006), Mappes (1999), McClung (2004), Mayhue (2005), Oosterzee Padge (2000), (1990), Robinson (1988), Salisbury (2012), Stott (2010), and Sumney (2001),

### **Step 2: Exegetical Analysis**

In Chapter 3, the following methods will be employed in the exegetical analysis of the text. The first is translation, and the aim is to compare various translations and commentaries. Verbal analysis will be used to analyse the meaning of key words and phrases in order to establish their significance in 1 Timothy 6:3-12. Literary analysis: I will observe how literary characteristics like, genre, structure influence the meaning of the pericope. Exegetical synthesis. In this section, I shall pull together my exegetical findings. The primary question I want to answer is: How did the original author understand the meaning of the passage and what was he trying to communicate to his audience? Various translations will be compared and various commentaries employed to answer the question.

### **Step 3: Theological and Practical Significance**

The task in chapter 4 is to establish the significance of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 and to identify the implications and applications the text to the problems of the prosperity gospel. The application will mainly focus on the central or main idea presented in the text, by determining how the original meaning of the text can be applied to proponents of the theology of the prosperity gospel who have perverted the truth of the gospel of Christ, including showing the relevance of the prosperity gospel to the love of money.

Chapter 5 presents the summary of the thesis and provides recommendations to believers who have been taken captive by the teachings of proponents of the prosperity gospel.

### **1.5 Structure of the study**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The following is a brief outline of the next four chapters and their content.

#### **Chapter 2: Context of 1 Timothy 6:3-12**

This chapter comprises an exploration of the general, historical and literary context of Paul's first letter to Timothy. The historical background and context of the text is critically important for the exegete to interpret any passage correctly. The historical background will also gather information about the general background, historical data and literary context of 1 Timothy.

#### **Chapter 3: Exegetical examination of 1 Timothy 6:3-12**

The next logical step will be to conduct an exegetical study of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The grammatical and literary aspects of the text will be the focus of attention, and the aim is to establish the author's intended meaning.

#### **Chapter 4: Implications of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 for the Prosperity gospel.**

This chapter establishes the practical significance of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 and makes at least one application of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 to the theology of the prosperity gospel. The application focuses on the central idea in the exposition of the passage. The target group is proponents of that gospel. It will then pay attention to how the original meaning of the text can be explained to them and help them to understand the truths of the text.

**Chapter 5: The concluding chapter provides a summary of the research project.**

## Chapter 2

### The Context of 1 Timothy 6:3–12

#### 2.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to provide a meaningful understanding of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 by examining the historical context of the text. The chief objective is to determine the occasion on which the author addressed in his letter to Timothy. Attention will also be paid to the literary context of the letter and the theological themes of 1 Timothy.

#### 2.2 General Background

##### 2.2.1 Author

Paul is widely acknowledged as the author of 1 Timothy. However, there are arguments raised against Pauline authorship. Perrin (1975:54) argues that “1 Timothy harmonises does not harmonise with Paul’s life in Acts”. It is not a valid argument for critics like Perrin to argue about the historical accounts and chronology of the book Acts against Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy. It is noted by Stott (2010:25-26) that “if we rely on the writings of the fourth century church, the problem of chronology is removed without difficulty. The writings of the fourth century confirms that Paul was released from the house arrest in Acts”. This argument of historical inconsistency is only valid only if Paul was never released from his Roman imprisonment mentioned in Acts. But Paul was released. Paul also anticipated His release from prison in Philippians 1:19, 25 and 26. The historical accounts of 1 Timothy would not be in Acts because they occurred after the book of Acts.

Some scholars like Harnack (1975:56) argues “that the style or manner used in 1 Timothy is unlike that in the other letters of the Apostle Paul”. 1 Timothy was written to an individual, even if its message was intended to positively impact and

challenge the church at Ephesus. Therefore, the manner of approach which Paul uses will tend to differ from the one he uses when writing to local churches. It should also be taken into consideration that even in some of His epistles Paul did not use the same style of writing. McClung (2004:24) argues as follows “Determining authorship of 1 Timothy by vocabulary and style is always highly subjective”. McClung argument is valid because the theme of the book, the circumstances, audience and even the passage of time and advancing age of the author can affect vocabulary and style significantly.

It is also noted by Harrison (2002:36-37) that “there is a group of pronouns, prepositions that occur in the other Pauline Epistles, but which are absent from the Pastoral Epistles”. But Harrison’s claim is not valid in the absence of any indication of the evidence on which it is based. Guthrie notes (1988:212) that “the problem of the 112 omitted prepositions, pronouns, particles is lessened when it is realized that the other recognized Pauline letters contains very few of them, i.e., Colossians and 2 Thessalonians”. Therefore, Paul could have written epistles using very few of what are deemed to be his characteristic words. When the prepositions, pronouns, particles that do occur in the pastorals are included in the list, the comparison with another list is much favourable. Thus, Guthrie’s reasons suggest that Harrison’s claim cannot be taken as accurate. It should also be noted that there are several factors that can cause any author to use any variety of words when writing a letter. This may include the choice of his recipients, purpose of writing, and the circumstances influencing the audience. In other words, any author may use unique words so that the centre of his message will be well received by his intended audience or individual recipient.

Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy is also denied by Easton (2000:104) who claims that ‘Gnosticism described in 1 Timothy makes the epistle post-Pauline’. However, Carson (1995:1292) disputes this theory by saying that “the evidence does not support such a theory, for there is no relationship between the myths and genealogies referred to 1 Timothy and the later Gnostic heresies”. Lifting (2006:728) states that “Gnosticism in the second century was already “incipient” during the years of Paul’s ministry”. It should also be noted that there are similarities and important differences between the heresy in 1 Timothy and

second century Gnosticism. For instance, unlike second century Gnosticism, the false teachers of the Pastoral Epistles were still present within the church, including their teaching of Judaist legalism. Thus, those who use this argument to oppose Pauline authorship lack both internal and external evidence to support their argument.

Scholars like Ehrman (2004:391) suggest that “the church administration in the Pastoral Epistles is non-Pauline or post Pauline. Timothy and Titus are monarchical Bishops like those of late age and the concern for elders or bishop is either different from Paul or more advanced than Paul”. This argument is also doubtful because the offices of elder-bishop and deacon can be traced within Paul’s life, Philippians 1:1”. In the book of Acts we also see Paul bidding a farewell to the “elders’ or pastors at Miletus (Acts 20:28). The Apostle Peter who was a minister during Paul’s time in his writing seems to have a concern about elders and bishops and he also identified himself as one of the elders. A good example is 1 Peter 5:1: “I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder”. Therefore, it cannot be suggested that Paul was unfamiliar with these leadership roles in the church.

The apostle Paul also taught about church administration in his letter to the church at Ephesus. In Ephesians 4:11 he says that Christ “gave some to be pastors and teachers”. MacArthur (2006:1778) observes that “the one who holds this office is also called an elder, bishop or overseer”. Liftin (2006:30) notes that “Paul expressed concern for leadership in every church he wrote to and that is supported by many scriptures, for example, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, Galatians 6:6, Romans 12:7–8, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and 16:15, and Ephesians 4:11-12”.

Liftin (2006:728) says “the church structure of the pastorals can actually be contrasted with that of the second century, when Ignatius type bishops came to be distinguished from and set in hierarchical authority over elders, the pastorals describe no differentiation”. Ignatius leadership style proves to be autocratic which is not supported by what the pastoral epistles are teaching. It is also noted by Carson (1995:1292) “it is difficult to be sure what these titles signified at different stages in church’s early history and the pastorals do not make any real distinction between them. The argument therefore is inconclusive”.

Kisau (2006:32) mentions that “some who oppose Pauline authorship of the epistles declare that it is non-Pauline to prohibit the ordination of new believer in the Lord as it is stated in 1 Timothy 3:6. They view the church as newly organized”. This cannot be surely supported by the fact that Paul was a follower for some years before taking leadership responsibility. This does not mean that maturity in the Lord has to do with number of years a person has become a believer. Spiritual maturity was integral to Paul when he wrote to several churches. His greatest desire was to ground people to the character of Christ. The first sections of Paul’s books are usually grounded in profound theology. In the last sections he challenged people mostly on Christian living or conduct. It is unlike Paul to take the work of leadership he valued much and entrust to leaders who are not matured. There is no biblical evidence that supports that Paul ordained new believers. Paul even instructed Timothy not to lay hands or easily ordain someone into the work of the ministry.

It must be noted that those who oppose Paul’s authorship of 1 Timothy have weak internal and external arguments to support their claims. There is enough internal evidence that proves Paul’s authorship. Paul identified himself as the genuine author of 1 Timothy. In the opening of his epistles this is evident (1 Timothy 1:1, 2 Timothy 1:1, Titus 1:1). This evidence is the clearest above all evidences. Scholars who believe in the literal interpretation of scripture easily accept that there should be no doubt that Paul is the author if we approach the scripture literally. Timothy and Titus were close companions of Paul. In the Pastoral Epistles we see the apostle Paul showing how these two young men were dear to him. (1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4). McClung (2004:27) says ‘Timothy was ordained by Paul (2 Tim.1:16) and elders (1Timothy 4:14) through the laying on of hands. He travelled with Paul and represented Paul on a number of special assignments, out of Paul’s ten letters besides the Pastoral Epistles, Timothy is listed as co-author in six, and he is mentioned in a seventh’.

There is also external evidence supporting Paul’s authorship. McClung (2004:22) says ‘Traces of 1 Timothy appear in the writings of the early church fathers, and the frequency of allusion to them from the era of Polycarp compares favourably with most of Paul’s other epistles. For any information to be

trustworthy, it must be proven internally and externally. There is no internal and external indication that will contend against Paul's authorship.

There is much traceable evidence that Paul is the author of 1 Timothy. Paul is the only one who clearly mentions that His ministry was from the Lord Jesus (1 Tim 1:11; 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11). Paul is the clearest example stated in the New Testament who suffered for the sake of the gospel of Christ (2 Tim 1:12; 3:10–11). Paul's is consistent in his writings to state that he is the author of the book, identifying also the recipients and write greeting to the recipients.

The writer of 1 Timothy indicates a relationship between Him and the recipient of the letter. Paul refers to as a spiritual "father" speaking to spiritual "children" (1 Tim 1:2). Constable (2006:12) states that some themes of 1 Timothy are similar to those which appear in Paul's other ten writings. Paul's appeal to Timothy to fight the good fight (1 Tim 1:18) is similar in tone to the athletic metaphors in 1 Cor 9:26–27 and Phil 3:12–14.

### **2.2.2 Date**

MacArthur (2006:1332) indicates that "Paul's missionary journeys occurred approximately between A.D 48 to 56. From around A.D. 56 to 60 Paul was slowly making his way through the Roman courts, arriving ultimately at Rome. For two years, circa A.D. 61 to 62, Paul was held under house arrest in Rome, at the end of which he was released. (Stott 2010:30) adds that "from A.D. 62 to 67 Paul travelled more or less freely, leaving Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete, and then writing to each of them a letter. Based on that information, it is reasonable to estimate the date for 1 Timothy and Titus around A.D. 63 to 66".

### **2.2.3 Audience**

Although Paul refers to the recipient of 1 Timothy as 'Timothy' (1:2), it is evident that he wrote the letter with the intention that its content be taught to believers in Ephesus. (1:3).

## **2.3. Historical Context**

### **2.3.1 Occasion and purpose**

Timothy, one of Paul's long-time companions, joined the apostle on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:2) and had been with Paul toward the end of his first Roman imprisonment (cf. Phil 2:19-24). Stott (2010:14) says, "When Paul was released, he took Timothy and Titus with him back to Asia Minor after they left Titus in Crete. It was at Ephesus on their way to Macedonia that they encountered false teachers who had virtually taken control of the church—just as Paul had predicted they would (cf. Acts 20:29-30)". Two of them, Hymenaeus and Alexander, were excommunicated by Paul (1 Tim 1:19-20). This explains the purpose of the epistle: "As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer." (1 Tim 1:3).

### **2.3.2 Historical background**

Timothy became a Christian after Paul's ministry journey to Lystra (Acts 14:6-23) and subsequently a fellow missionary of Paul in many geographical areas. Timothy was especially tasked to deal with problems in churches related to godly conduct and doctrinal issues. For example, he had to encourage and exhort the church of Thessalonica who became discouraged as a result of persecution (1 Thess 3:1–10) and he had to remind the church of Corinth the apostolic teachings (1 Cor 4:17; 16:10–11). Not only was he sent to Macedonia (Acts 19:22) and to Philippi (Phil 2:19–24), but also to Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). The religious life at Ephesus was similar to that of many Greeks in that the people were idolaters (Acts 19:24–28).

The leaders at Ephesus were instructed to take care of their spiritual lives and must be on guard about how they conduct themselves before the flock of God (Acts 20:28). They were also instructed to guard themselves and the church against false teachers whom Paul described as 'savage wolves'. Although it is not clear who these savage wolves were, it is not unreasonable to infer that they

were Judaizers and Gnostics who caused much trouble for Paul in Antioch, Jerusalem, Galatia and Corinth.

When Paul instructed the leaders in Ephesus to “guard the flock” (Acts 20:28), he used two words to describe their responsibility; first, he says, they are ‘overseers’. It “conveys the idea of spiritual oversight and pastoral care” (Marshall 2008:352). Overseeing is to look for or to care for. He also used the word ‘shepherd’, meaning that they were to watch over and to take care of the believers.

In Acts 20:33-35, Paul reminded the church of his tent making in order to support himself and provide for the poor. He reminds them in verse 33 that he had not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothes. In his comments on the verse, Kisau (2006:1335) states that “Paul refutes the slander that he had been enriching himself by his preaching or using the money collected for the poor in Jerusalem for himself”. In other words, Paul says that he has not asked the elders for financial support. It implies that Paul’s ministry was not characterised by any personal gain or materialism. Hence his instruction to the leaders to follow his example (Acts 20:35). It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that Paul was pointing toward one of the outstanding characteristics of spiritual leadership. Elsewhere, Paul exhorts leaders to free themselves from the love of money (1 Tim 6:10ff). This, however, does not mean that elders must not be remunerated for their work in the church. On the contrary, Paul declared in 1 Timothy 5:17 that “the one who teaches are to be considered worthy of double honor”. Paul knew that the responsibility of being an overseer and shepherd of God’s people is beyond human ability or achievement. It explains why he commends them to God (Acts 20:36).

There seems to be a connection between Paul’s speech in Acts 20:17-35 and the circumstances referred to in 1 Timothy. As Oosterzee (2015:15) says, “The occasion and purpose of this writing are clear enough from the contents. What the Apostle at his earlier departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:29) had feared, he had only too soon realized. Heretical teachers had arisen (1 Tim. 1:4)”. The purpose of writing the letter is clearly stated in 1 Timothy 3:14-15: “I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long but in case I am delayed, I write so that

you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth”.

1 Timothy 6 reveals several characteristics of these heretical teachers: they taught false doctrine and had not accepted sound doctrine (v. 3); they had a morbid interest in controversies and the meaning of certain words (v. 4); and they were not only greedy, but also believed that godliness is a way to make money (v. 5, 9–10). Paul instructed and admonished Timothy in no uncertain terms to oppose these teachers (1:18-20). Some of the ways to do that is to show them the true meaning of the gospel (1:11; cf. Rom 1:16), which led Paul’s conversion and calling to the ministry (1:11-17).

In chapter 2 Paul instructs Timothy on the importance of prayer and worship and how men and women should conduct themselves in God’s household (vv. 1–15). The chapter serves as the background to chapter 3. In verses 1 to 13, Paul provides the characteristic traits of those who are to lead the church (vv. 14–15). In 3:16 Paul speaks of the mystery of the gospel and in 4:1-5 Paul lists the character traits of true teachers. In chapter 5 Paul discusses the pastor’s responsibilities as they pertain to the sinning brother (5:1-2), widows (5:3-16), elders (5:17-25) and slaves (6:1-2). Immediately thereafter follows a strong rebuke to those who, from impure motives, preach another doctrine than that of the Apostle (6:3–5). In view of their covetousness, the apostle shows the connection between godliness and contentment, including a warning to those who ‘suppose that godliness is a means of gain’ (6:5). The love of money, says Paul, is a ‘root of all sorts of evils’ (6:10). In opposition to this bad state of affairs, Timothy must remain true to his high calling (6:11–16) and fight the good fight of faith, remembering his own good confession, and that of his suffering Saviour.. It is, therefore, not strange that Paul also issued instructions to richer members of the church (6:17–18).

Paul also admonishes Timothy to withdraw from those who taught anything contrary to his teachings. Apparently, these false teachers measured their spirituality by the size of their financial gifts (6:5). In contrast, Timothy should be content with the basic necessities of life (6:6–8). Teachers who desire to be rich will plunge into ruin and destruction and be stricken with emotional regrets (6:9–

10). Although Timothy was young man, Paul called him a “man of God.” As such, he was to flee the greedy ambitions of the false teachers, to pursue the godly life, to fight for the truth, and to keep Paul’s teachings until the return of Jesus Christ. At all times the young associate had to bear in mind that he was performing his ministry both before God and Christ.

### **2.3.3 The false teaching**

According to Mappes (1999:455), “there are four views of the false teaching: Jewish false teachers, pre-Christian Gnosticism, Montanism, and teachings that developed from Gnosticism”. However, there are some key features that can be identified in 1 Timothy. Firstly, these false teachers were leaders in the church (1 Tim 1:3, 6:3), for example, Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim 1:20). Secondly, the false teachers were teaching myths (1:4), genealogies (1:4), the law (1:4), “secret knowledge” (6:20) and they desired to be rich through their teachings. And thirdly, these false teachers turned away from the truth through demonic influence (4:1).

False teaching is not the only issue addressed in 1 Timothy. There was a problem with worship in the Ephesian church. Paul instructs believers to gather for worship in the assembly with a clear conscience and to deal with relationship problems at home (2:8). Another problem was the manner in which women dressed in the church.

There are two possible reasons why Paul wrote these instructions to women in the church. One reason is the influence of inappropriate dressing would have on worship. Thus, Christian women ought to set the standard for other women to imitate (cf. 1 Pet 3:3–4). The other possible reason is stated by Padge (2000:21) as follows: “These women, in turn, were financially supporting the false teachers, whom Paul accuses of greed (1 Tim. 6:3-10). What is more, these women were going from house to house spreading the name and doctrine of the false teachers throughout Ephesus”. It is, therefore, likely that in this situation Paul had to instruct some women in the church to “learn quietly with all submissiveness” (2:11).

## **2.4. Analysis of 1 Timothy**

### **2.4.1 Structure and argument**

After a brief salutation (1:1-2), Paul immediately gets into the body of his epistle (1:3–6:21) which comprises of three major sections: negative instructions in relation to the false teachers who had infiltrated the church at Ephesus (1:3-20), positive instructions to the church at Ephesus (2:1–6:10), and personal instructions to Timothy (6:11-20). Although the last two sections have church life and leadership in the foreground, the problem of false teachers remain always in the background explicitly in 4:1-5, 5:20-25, 6:3-10 and 20-21, and implicitly permeating the rest of the epistle.

In the first major section, Timothy was reminded why he was left behind in Ephesus, namely, to correct the teachings of the false teachers (1:3-20). These men were preoccupied with OT Law, yet they had no idea of what they were saying or the things they insisted on so confidently (1:7; NET). Paul explains the proper use of the Law is; it is for sinners to lead them to repentance (1:8-11). He then follows this up with a personal illustration: the Law of Moses taught him that he was a sinner, but Christ showed him grace (1:12-17).

Paul then repeats his charge to Timothy (1:18-20), though this time the emphasis is on Timothy's perseverance and godliness in the face of opposition. The charge concludes with a note about Paul excommunicating two church leaders, Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:20). With that in mind, Paul now addresses the problems of the church directly.

The second major section (2:1–6:10) cannot be divorced from the purpose of Timothy's stay in Ephesus. These false teachers had wreaked havoc on the church in many areas. They had destroyed the atmosphere of public worship (2:1-7) and have stolen from the coffers of the church (6:3-10). They had especially influenced some of the women in the church—in particular the unmarried and young widows (5:11-15; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1-7). The church also needed to understand the nature of true church leadership (cf. 3:1ff.).

Three broad areas of concern had to be addressed if the church at Ephesus was to be spiritually restored. First, the conduct of the church needed to change and

fit God's requirements (2:1–3:16). This involved both worship and leadership. Regarding public worship (2:1-15), the way it is performed need to change. The doctrinal controversies promoted by the false teachers (cf. 1:3; 6:20-21) created a judgmental and critical spirit within the congregation, which means that the purpose of the Christian walk was lost in the shuffle. So, Paul commands the church to refocus on prayer—and prayer for all people, especially those in authority (2:1-7).

With this note on “authority” ringing in their ears, Paul addressed hierarchical roles within the body (2:8-15). One reason is probably because the false teachers had persuaded women to be their followers (cf. 5:11-15; 2 Tim 3:1-7). What is noteworthy is that “Satan” is mentioned in this epistle only in connection with the false teachers (1:20) and young widows (5:15). These false teachers who were involved in “godless chatter” (6:20) who did “not know what they [were] talking about” (1:7) had caused some women to “be lazy ... talking about things they should not” (5:13; NET). Thus, in 2:8-15 the apostle was reminding the women of the proper hierarchical order in worship. It is possible that just as Eve's deception in the garden of Eden (2:14) led her to teach Adam about the desirability and pleasantness of the forbidden fruit, that women at Ephesus were first deceived by the false teachers and then becoming false teachers themselves. Thus, although Satan is not explicitly mentioned in this context, he is very much in the back of Paul's mind. However, the point is that Paul prohibits women from teaching men (2:12) because this is a reversal of the God-ordained hierarchical order (2:13).

Regarding church leadership (3:1-13), Paul places an emphasis on the ethical qualifications of overseers (bishops elders; 3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13). Against this background qualifications such as “able to teach” (3:2; cf. 1:7), “not quarrelsome” (3:3; cf. 1:4; 6:20-21), “not a lover of money” (3:3; cf. 6:3-10); “good reputation with outsiders” (3:7; cf. 5:20-25) and the references to the snare and judgment of the devil (3:6, 7; cf. 1:20; 5:15) make perfectly good sense. Paul then summarises this segment on the conduct of the church (3:14-15), followed by a hymn to Christ (3:16), reminding Timothy that proper conduct cannot be separated from the worship of Christ.

The second broad area of concern for Paul is the guarding of “the truths of the faith” against apostasy (4:1-16). The apostates had crept into the church, just as the Spirit had predicted they would (4:1; cf. Acts 20:29-30). Such apostates embraced Jewish legalism and Greek asceticism, forbidding both marriage and restricting diets (4:2-5). Because of such men, Timothy is charged to warn the church to stay away from them (4:6-7). Further, to prove that legalism is not the route to godliness, Paul urges Timothy to “train yourself to be godly” (4:7) and to set forth the true gospel of Jesus Christ (4:13) before the congregation. He summarises the twin theme of 4:6-16 and, indeed, of the whole book, by concluding: “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them” (4:16).

Finally, the young Timothy needed to learn pastoral skills to effectively address various age and gender groups (5:1–6:10). The instructions given are especially related to both Timothy’s youthfulness and his inexperience in pastoral duties and priorities. Because of the greed of the false teachers (cf. 6:3-10), the financial resources of the church were probably quite low. Paul admonishes Timothy to give priority to the widows (5:3-16), especially regarding the church’s provisions for them (5:5, 9), though not without certain criteria that had to be met. Young, able-bodied women and those whose children could take care of them should not be financially assisted by the church (5:4, 7, 11-16).

Next in line is the elders (5:17-25). Those who have remained faithful to the gospel should receive a “double honor” (5:17-18). That part of the honour should include financial remuneration is seen in two biblical illustrations (5:18). Prospective elders needed to be screened quite carefully (5:21-25) because of greed among the believers (6:3-10). Slaves are mentioned last (6:1-2). But rather than the church supplying for their needs, they are to serve their masters well. Paul then turns to the root of the problem of the financial distress in the church (6:3-10), namely, the elders who “think that godliness is a means to financial gain” (6:5). Greed was what motivated the false teachers and had caused not only them but others to wander from the faith (6:10).

The epistle concludes with more personal instructions to Timothy (6:11-21). He is to “pursue godliness ... [and] fight the good fight of the faith” (6:11-12), a theme that is repeated throughout the epistle. But before Paul completed the letter, he

turns he focuses his attention on those who are wealthy and godly in the church (6:17-19). His warnings about the greed of the false teachers (6:3-10) might be taken incorrectly by some of the rich who had been quite faithful to the gospel (cf. 6:10). Paul corrects this impression by pointing out that wealth in itself is not evil; rather, it is the love of money that is evil; 6:10). Although those who are wealthy ought to be rich in good deeds too (6:18), by sharing their goods with others they can store up spiritual treasures for themselves in heaven (6:19). The epistle closed with a reminder to Timothy to guard the teachings of the gospel among the Ephesians, for this is what has been entrusted to him (6:20-21).

## **2.5 Theological Themes of 1 Timothy**

Because Paul taught the importance of several theological themes 1 Timothy, The aim in this section is to explore the significance of the following themes: sound doctrine, God our Saviour, the Law of Moses and spiritual watchfulness.

Regarding sound doctrine, Timothy was to demonstrate it the teachings of Paul through preaching and teaching. The second theme, the conception of God as Saviour, is inseparable from godliness or the manner of life defined by the instructions given to Timothy. Three of the seven times in the New Testament where God is referred to as Saviour appear in 1 Timothy (1:1, 2:3, 3:15). Through this theme Paul is saying that salvation in Christ ought to result in our obedience to Him. Regarding the third theological theme, false teachers were misusing the law of God to demonstrate their self-righteousness. The fourth theological theme is that of spiritual watchfulness. It is a theme that can clearly be inferred from Paul's warnings of the dangers that were still to occur in the church (Acts 20:29-31). In this regard, it can be said that it was to be the responsibility of the pastor to be a spiritual watchman for the church.

Some of the ways in which a pastor could become a spiritual watchman, are the following. A pastor must not invite people to share God's word if their doctrinal position is uncertain. The congregants in the local church can be confused if we have people teaching or preaching different doctrines. Therefore, as a spiritual watchman the Pastor must only allow Biblical teachers who do not seek self-glory, but God's glory (2 Cor 4:5).

As a spiritual watchman, the pastor has to be competent to refute strange doctrines. Mayhue (2005:275) states that,

Pastoral insight includes a strong emphasis on watching carefully for lurking spiritual danger according to the following sampling of the New Testament: “beware of the dogs, beware of evil workers, and beware of false circumcision” (Phil 3:2). And he [i.e., Jesus] was giving orders to them saying, Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod” (Mark 8:15).

Mayhue (2005:278) declares that ‘if today’s shepherds want to finish their ministry, like Paul, then they must not only be approved workmen (2 Tim 2:15) but also unashamed watchmen’.

## **2.6. Summary**

The goal of this chapter was to provide a meaningful understanding of the historical background and context of 1 Timothy. This has been done by examining the intended audience, date and authorship of the letter. The historical context covered the occasion and purpose, literary structure and theological themes of the letter.

## Chapter 3

### An Exegetical Examination of 1 Timothy 6:3-12

#### 3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter the historical context of 1 Timothy 6 was explored. The objective of this chapter is to present an exegetical examination of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The grammatical and literary aspects of the text will be the main focus in order to establish Paul's intended meaning. The study will represent a comparison of various translations and uses commentaries to exegete the passage. The study will also represent the immediate historical and literary context of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 with the aim of identifying core themes or ideas related to the passage. Verbal analysis will be used to analyse the meaning of key words and phrases in order to discover establish their significance. It will also highlight how literary characteristics like, genre and structure influence the meaning of the pericope. Finally, the exegetical results is synthesized in order to show what Paul meant by writing 1 Timothy 6:3-12 and how the original audience would have understood it.

#### 3.2 Translation and Preliminary Analysis

The purpose of this section is to discover and analyse any textual variants in the translation of 1 Timothy 6:3–12 in order to determine their effect on the overall meaning. To discover these variants, different Bible translations are considered. A translation will then be chosen for the purpose of an in-depth exegetical and theological analysis.

##### 3.2.1 Preferred English translation

The New American Standard Bible (NASB)<sup>1</sup> is the translation of choice due to its formal equivalence of meaning. The translation reads as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> All reference to scripture will be taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) unless otherwise indicated.

3 If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. 6 But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7

For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

### **3.2.2 Translation comparison**

Eight different translations of the Bible are compared and examined to discover and analyse the textual variants to determine their contribution to the interpretation and understanding of the passage. These are the New International Version (NIV), New King James Version (NKJV), English Standard Version (ESV), American Standard Version (ASV), King James Version (KJV), Young's Literal Translation (YLT), Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) and the Good News Translation (GNT). They all seem to communicate the same general message, namely, warning about false teachers who think that spiritual leadership is a means to make money. Apart from this common factor, there also do not appear to be any contradictions between the different translations. However, there are a number of textual variants worth mentioning.

The first difference is in verse 3. Seven of the eight translations (YLT, KJV, NKJV, HCSB, ESV, ASV, NIV) begin the verse with a conditional clause 'if' or 'for', while the remaining translations begin with 'whoever'. Spence (2015) explain that "the 'if' in verse 3 is correct, the two ideas are joined together to form one unified idea. It thus seems more proper for the text to begin with 'if' because it is a key to understanding and interpreting the verse in its context".

The second variant is also in verse 3. Six of the eight translations (ESV, KJV, NKJV, NASB, ASB, NIV) state that true teaching must be according to 'godliness'. The GNB states that it must be according to our 'religion', and the YLT says it must be according to 'piety'. Lea (2002:130) says "the term 'godliness' is an explanatory addition to sound doctrine. It is this godly teaching that is opposed to false teaching. The use of the word 'religion' does not seem to be a reasonable interpretation". The word 'piety' seems to be more reasonable to use as it is close to the meaning of godliness.

The third variant is in verse 5, and it was noted that seven of the eight translations (ESV, KJV, NKJV, NIV, YLT, GNB, ASB) describe the false teachers as people of 'corrupt' minds and 'destitute' of truth. One translation uses 'depraved minds'. (HCSB) Wuest (1990:30) states that "it is the proper translation 'of men of corrupt minds' because it has a participial construction in the Greek text". The phrase 'depraved minds' thus explains the moral condition of being spiritually dead toward God, the total inability of humans to do that which would commend them to God. In short, it explains the spiritual condition of the false teacher.

The fourth variant is also found in verse 10. It was noted that five of the eight translations (ASB, KJV, NIV, ESV, GNT) refer to those who love money have 'wandered' away from the faith, while two translations (YLT, NASB) refer to those who love money have 'strayed' from the faith'. Only one translation (HCSB) states that 'they have erred in faith'.

### **3.2.3 The choice of translation**

And examination of the textual variants was done to decide which translation would be best for an in-depth exegetical analysis of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. It was noted that the first variant included the conjunction 'if' in the passage and that it contributes to the interpretation and understanding of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The first variant narrowed the choice of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 to seven translations (NKJV, ASB, NIV, YLT, ESV, NASB, KJV). The second variant is also crucial to determine the translation of the text, and 'godliness' was identified as a key word in 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The second variant narrowed the choice of translation to four (NKJV, ESV, NASB, ASB). The third variant did not have much effect on the translation of the text because it seems that there is no problem whether 'he' and 'they' are used in the translation. The fourth variant narrowed the choice of translation to three translations (NKJV, NASB, ESV). The fourth and the fifth variants narrowed the translation into one (NASB) to be used to expound 1 Timothy 6:1-3. The NASB is the only translation that has used 'depraved minds' in the fourth variation and that is crucial in the translation because it vividly explains the character people who are false teachers as outlined in 1 Timothy 6:3-12.

### **3.3 Contextual Analysis**

The context indicates that 1 Timothy 6:3-12 can be said to be Paul's response to the problem of false teachers in the Ephesian church. Paul instructs Timothy to not associate with those who taught things contrary to the words of Christ (1 Tim 4:7). Stott (2010:16) says that "The false teachers in Ephesus were promoting a syncretistic blend of Jewish and Gnostic elements. (1 Tim. 1:7)". These teachings are false precisely because they oppose marriage (1 Tim 4:3), dictate abstinence from certain foods (1 Tim 4:3), denied of the resurrection (2 Tim 2:18) and boasting of a higher knowledge (*gnosis*) the 'unenlightened' did not possess (1 Tim 6:20). Oosterzee (2015:13) states that "Full-blown Gnosticism was the greatest competitor with biblical Christianity in the early church. It was a dualistic system that declared the existence of two gods, one good (the god of spirit) and the other evil (the god of matter)".

The religious circumstances in Ephesus were the same as in other Greek cities, meaning they worshipped the deities of the Greeks. The influence of the cult of Artemis extended beyond the religious sphere to encompass the civic, economic, and cultural life of the city. Salisbury (2012:13) states that “The temple of Artemis was intricately connected with the economic structures of Ephesus and the province of Asia. Large deposits of money were stored in the Temple”. Apparently, these false teachers measured their spirituality by the size of gifts received as a result of their teaching (1 Tim 6:5)). In contrast, Paul informed Timothy that he should be content with the basic necessities of life (vv. 6–8). The reason is because teachers who desire to be rich are marked by a love for money. They erred from the faith and will be stricken with regrets (vv. 9–10). Although Timothy was young, Paul called him a “man of God.” As such, he was to flee the greedy ambitions of the false teachers, to follow the godly life, to fight for the truth, and to keep the charge of Paul until the return of Jesus Christ. At all times the young associate was to be aware of the fact that he was performing his ministry both before God and Christ.

### **3.4. Interpreting 1 Timothy 6:3-12**

#### **3.4.1 Verse 3**

Paul encourages Timothy in verse 3 to refute any doctrine that was contrary to the apostolic teaching about true godliness. There are three characteristics concerning the nature of false teaching. Firstly, false doctrine is a different doctrine. Robinson (1997:8) notes, “Here Paul uses the first-class conditional, injecting the assumption that someone is indeed teaching heterodoxically, i.e., teaching something that is different of another kind (1 Tim 1:3)”. In addition, Liftin (2006:300) explains that “κατ’ εὐσέβειαν διδασκαλία literally means ‘teaching which corresponds with godliness’. The false teachers were not in agreement (προσέρχεται) with the doctrine that leads to godliness”. The second characteristic of false teaching is that it lacks sound doctrine or words. It is only sound words of pure teachings of God’s eternal word which helps true Christians to grow up to salvation. False doctrine is hindrance to the spiritual development of a believer; instead of bringing spiritual maturity it produces spiritual stagnation. MacArthur (2006:1830) notes that “‘sound’ refers to that which is healthy and

wholesome; it is the kind of teaching that produces spiritual life and growth, which contrast with false doctrine that produces spiritual disease and debilitation”.

V.3 also emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the source of healthy or sound teaching. Some have argued that the meaning of the phrase “those of our Lord Jesus Christ” refers to the actual words of Christ as found in the Gospel of Luke or oral tradition. Mounce (2000:335) denies that “the Gospel of Luke is not the only book in Scripture that documents the actual words of Christ. Therefore, it is not clear why these scholars limit the actual words of Christ to the Gospel of Luke”.

Stott (2010:146) mentions that “some think that this genitive used in v.3 is objective, meaning that the teaching is about Christ. Others take the genitive as subjective and suppose that Paul is referring to words spoken by Christ”. The phrase seems to be referring to contents of Christ words, meaning the message of the gospel of Christ. This is supported by the context of the book; the false teachers have moved away from the true teaching of Christ and substituted it with endless myths and genealogies (1 Tim 1:6).

The third characteristic of the false teaching is that it lacks an emphasis on godliness and contrasts with the teachings of Paul (1 Tim 3:16; 4:7-8; 6:5-6). MacArthur (2006:1831) says that ‘Godliness refers to having the proper attitude and conduct before God in everything’. In other words, the false doctrine of the false teachers in the church of Ephesus has negatively affected the most important element of the gospel, which is Christian living. By contrast, the Holy Spirit uses the pure teaching of the inspired Word to teach, reprove, correct and train in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). Because it is only God’s Word that possesses the power to transform people like that, Paul commands Timothy to preach the Word of God (2 Tim 4:2). It is consistent with other parts of the Bible where it teaches that man’s wisdom is inadequate to transform them into godliness (Prov. 14:12; Jer. 17:9; 1 Cor. 1:18-25).

### **3.4.2 Verses 4 and 5**

In verses 4 and 5 Paul describes the character of the false teacher. Firstly, Paul states that the false teacher is conceited. Oosterzee (2008:56) says that “the Greek word ‘conceited’ means the thinking of the false teacher is clouded; he or

she is wholly blinded from his proud conceit”. Guthrie (1994:61) comments that ‘The true state of these puffed-up teachers is nothing short of abysmal ignorance, as the apostle points out’. Because of the failure to understand the truth of the gospel they understand nothing. Packer (1998:100) says that ‘they have nothing substantial to say and are full of empty wind’. This is a clear warning to God’s people not to be carried away by these false teachers and their vain utterances, but to remain faithful to the teachings of God’s eternal Word. Stott (2010:147) says that “the false teacher is guilty of a serious offence, for to disagree with Paul is to disagree with Christ. Indeed, in the end there are only two responses to God’s Word; one is to humble ourselves and tremble at it, the other is rejecting it”. Instead of submitting to God’s eternal truth, the prideful attitude of these false teachers led them to reject God’s Word, thus failed to understand that the authority of Scripture does not come from humans; it comes from God alone.

Secondly, the false teachers had interest in controversial questions (V.4). Hughes (2000:146) says that ‘When you crave controversy and word battles, you are spiritually sick’. Explaining what the ‘spiritual sickness’ means, Guthrie (1990:123) says: “The controversies and arguments have impaired the mental health of these false teachers to such a degree that they have become diseased”. It is very clear that because the false teachers do not accept the sound doctrine that is according to Christ, they will oppose biblical truth with false teaching that is only a resemblance of spiritual authority.

In verse 5 Paul mentions the third characteristic of these false teachers: they are people of depraved mind (διεφθαρμένων). Wuest (1999:167) says ‘this Greek word means to steal or rob, and its form here means someone who has pulled away from contact with truth’. The condition described in v.5 shows the spiritual deadness of these false teachers. Cook (2009:103) says that ‘such behavior is the characteristic of those who are in a seriously flawed mental, and spiritual condition’.

Constable (2006:87) says “Paul regarded these men as guilty and blameworthy. Their error was not an innocent one. It sprang from improper attitudes: the ("conceited") desires to exalt self and to hoard money selfishly ("gain")”. To show the seriousness of this offense, Paul had to instruct “anyone in ministry not to

associate with such people (1 Tim 4:7). McGrath (1998:101) concludes that “if people see Christians mixing with such false teachers, then there is the danger that they will use their friendships to worm their way into the lives of Christians”. The answer is to take great pains to make sure that believers realize that they are quite different from those who have come to accept that money is a means to godliness.

### **3.4.3 Verse 6**

MacArthur (2006:13) notes the “Greek word translated “but” in verse 6 can also be translated as “indeed”. By using ‘indeed’, the text can be read as follows: “Indeed godliness with contentment is great gain”. What is clear is that Paul begins this verse by drawing a contrast between biblical godliness and the self-centered godliness of the false teachers. Put differently, Paul makes it clear that godliness is not the means to monetary gain; godliness is the gain. Biblical godliness leads to contentment. As used by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles, godliness is an important virtue for every person engaged in God’s work. It is noted by Robinson (2007:12) that ‘the subject in v.6 is the noun preceded by an article so that it should not read: “great gain is godliness,” but rather “godliness is great gain”’.

Paul also highlights the concept of ‘godliness’ very clearly in 1 Tim. 4:7: “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” (NASB). “Discipline” literally means to make oneself obey, or idiomatically to command one’s heart. Wuest (2000:67) notes “that ‘Godliness’ – the Greek word is a compound word which literally means to worship rightly; to have appropriate beliefs and devout practice as it relates to God; to live as God has told us we should live”.

Wuest (2000:68) notes that in “1 Tim 6:6 the word “contentment” is *autarkeia* (αὐτάρκεια), which speaks of an inward self-sufficiency as opposed to the lack or the desire of outward things. It is a favourite Stoic word, expressing the philosophy that a person should be self-sufficient for all things, and able, by the power of his own will, to resist the force of circumstances. Christians are to be

satisfied with what God has given to them and not to seek things beyond what God has provided to them.

#### **3.4.4 Verses 7 and 8**

The main idea of verse 7 is that the importance of the things we have are equally irrelevant to our coming into this world and to our leaving this world. The second part of the verse shows the foolishness of desiring and collecting material things that will be left behind when one dies. McGrath (1998:101) says that “covetousness is a bottomless pit, unless it is restrained, and the best way to keep it in check is to desire nothing other than the necessities of life. That is why in this verse the Apostle Paul reminds us what is useful for humankind”. Dunn (2000:236) says that “the real good for a man lies in what he is as a rational and moral being, not in the outward means and possessions he may gather into his lot”.

The “and” of verse 7 is not in the Greek text. The translators in the NASB supplied it in an attempt to connect the two statements. The Greek word *hoti* (ὅτι) is the connection. Spence (1997:45) says that “the sentence would be perfectly clear without either δῆλον or ὅτι”. Verses 7 to 8 is also presented in a poetic form and it is a quotation of some passages in the Old Testament, such as Job 1:21 and Ecclesiastes 5:15”. Paul gives two reasons for contentment in v.7: life is short and God supplies all our basic needs.

#### **3.4.5 Verses 9 and 10**

Those who desire to get rich will experience ὄλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν. Spence (1997:46) notes significance of these words: “The two words taken together imply utter ruin and destruction of body and soul. Ὀλεθρος, very common in classical Greek, , τῆς σαρκός. Ἀπωλεία, less common in classical Greek, is of frequent use in the New Testament”. When applied to persons, seems to be always used in the sense of “perdition”. Paul implies that there are eternal consequences to greedy leaders.

Money itself is not wrong, but loving money is wrong, because of the love of money some have “Pierced themselves through (περιπειραν). Spence

(1997:48) notes it is 'only here in the New Testament the word pierced is used'. Wuest notes (2000:130) that verb "πείρω, to "pierce through," "transfix," applied especially to "spitting" meat, is very common in Homer, who also applies it metaphorically exactly as St. Paul does here, to grief or pain. Ὀδύνησι πεπάρμενος, "pierced with pain".

#### **3.4.6 Verses 11 and 12.**

Wuest (2000:46) notes that "The phrase, "O man of God" is not an official designation of Timothy's position in the Church, but a strong form of address. It is in the vocative case in Greek, the case of address". MacArthur (2006:1230) notes that 'the word "God" is in the genitive case, the descriptive genitive here, describing the kind of man Timothy was, a godly man'. Therefore, as a godly man, Paul exhorts Timothy to flee from the love of money. The verb "flee" is *pheugō* (φευγω), in the present imperative, which commands a continuous action. Timothy is, therefore, to make it the habit to be everlastingly fleeing away from a fondness for money.

Wuest (2000:1841) observes that the Greek word ἀγωνίζου "gives us the English word agonize and was used in both military and athletic endeavors to describe the concentration, discipline and extreme effort needed to win". Timothy was young, probably under forty, and was therefore subject to a certain amount of questioning from older believers. Paul's advice is to earn respect amongst older believers, to be an example in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity (1 Tim 4:12).

#### **3.5. Verbal Analysis**

The purpose of this section is to focus on the vocabulary and structure of 1 Timothy 6:3–12. A lexical analysis is used and the main focus will be on key words in 1 Timothy 6:3-12 showing how the words influence the interpretation of the passage. Some of the key words have already been discussed in chapter 2. The key words in this section are those that relate to riches in the life of a believer. Their relevance to the theology of the prosperity gospel will also be indicated.

### **3.5.1 Godliness**

The foregoing discussion led to the conclusion that godliness is a very important virtue in a Christian's life and believers should pursue godliness rather than riches. Strong (2001:80) says 'that godliness is respect for God and also affects the way a person lives'. It is noted by Easton (2000:67) that "godliness is the whole of practical piety. It supposes knowledge, veneration, affection, dependence, submission, gratitude, and obedience". Easton's interpretation has added much clarity to the meaning of godliness. Godliness is a result of the knowledge of Christ and His word. A personal knowledge of God will change the believer's allegiance and affections, and this will result in total submission to God's Word and obedience.

### **3.5.2 Rich**

The word 'rich' in verse 9 can refer to abundance of goods and money. Money and goods can compete with God drawing away one's affections. Pawson (2003:67) defined the word 'rich' as "Physical possessions having significant value, such as land, livestock, money, and precious metals". The practice of valuing such possessions more highly than they ought to be valued, especially when this results in the misalignment of ones' priorities, undermines one's devotion to God.

### **3.5.3 Contentment**

In chapter 3 it was indicated that 'contentment' means inward sufficiency. It is the result of the believer knowing that God supplies all needs and that life is short. Denney (1979:20) agrees with the interpretation but also says that "contentment refers to internal satisfaction that does not depend on changes in anyone's external circumstances (Phil 4:11–13)". Believers are content to know the Father (John 14:8–9) and depend on His grace (2 Cor 9:8–11; 2 Cor. 12:9–10. Wiersbe (1997:34) says the word contentment denotes freedom from reliance upon others, whether other persons or other things; hence the satisfaction of one's needs (2 Cor. 9:8) or the control of one's desires (1 Tim 6:6, 8). It is not a passive acceptance of the status quo, but the positive assurance that God has supplied one's needs, and the consequent release from unnecessary desire.

### **3.5.4 Desire**

Dunn (1988:20) defines “desire as a sense of longing for or wanting something. It may be a positive or negative force in the human character, but sinful desire is characteristic of human nature”. In 1 Timothy 6:1-3 it is clear that sinful desire is stimulated by the will to get rich (1 Tim 6:9), so much so that it is equated with ‘the love of money’. This kind of desire, according to James, leads to temptation, lead to sin and result in death (Jam 1:14–15). Prosperity preachers have misappropriated the desires to the love of money than loving God and His righteousness. When one interprets the passage should categorize every human desire as evil.

### **3.6 Literary analysis**

While written to instruct the individual pastor Timothy, 1 Timothy 6:3-12 is also intended to be instructive to those in the Ephesian church. The sixth chapter focuses on pastoral motives for ministry and conduct. After Paul completes his instruction about slaves (6:1-2), he refers to false teachers for a third time (1:3ff; 4:1-5). Paul then shows the consequences the love money has on these teachers (6:9-10). Paul exhorts Timothy to avoid the love of money and pursue righteousness and godliness (6:11-16).

Robinson (1997:8) says, “I have noticed what may be a Hebrew form in the text of 1 Timothy 6. In each formula, the poem contains the kernel of importance to the writer. I suspect a similar rabbinical writing form at work in First Timothy 6”. Spence (1997:38) says that “1 Timothy 6:3-14 is narrative; verses 3-14 represents Paul’s main exhortations and concerns; verses 3-6 are narrative, verse 7 is poetry And verse 8 is the epilogue. Thus, the poetic focus is the central tenet of the passage”.

Robinson (1997:10) believes that the form is a chiasm helix. It has a 3-2-1 structure which moves both right and left as it flows downward. The right pivot involve godliness and the surety of life everlasting. The left pivot involves worldly

values and the danger of wandering from the faith. The chiasm helix can be further developed as follows:

6:3: Do not teach strange doctrine which does not lead to godliness.

6:4: False teachers are prideful and spiritual unstable.

6:5: Deprave minds that reject truth.

6:6: Godliness is great gain together with contentment.

6:7: We came with nothing, we will go with nothing.

6:8: Contentment with food and clothes.

6:9: Desire to be rich results in self-harm.

6:10: Desire for money can cause to shipwreck one's faith.

6:11: Flee from such things and pursue righteousness.

6:12: Fight the good fight of faith.

6:13-14: Fear God alone.

### **3.7 Exegetical Synthesis**

There are three major concerns that are addressed in 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The concerns are, first, the importance of godliness in ministry. Without godliness, ministry can be self-centered and that can lead to eternal destruction. Godliness is what differentiates between false teachers and true teachers of the gospel. Therefore, the false teachers that were in Ephesus were acting ungodly by teaching false doctrine and doing things that do not conform to godliness. 1 Timothy 6:3-12, being a didactic passage, suggests to the reader that these are instructions rather than suggestions. Therefore, this has an impact to the meaning of passage because these things are prescribed by Paul without compromise. The second concern is the refutation of false teaching. In Acts 20:30, Paul state that one of the characteristics of the false teachers that will come will be to teach "perverse things". In 1 Timothy 1:3-4, Paul warns Timothy "To remain at Ephesus

so that he may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines” (NASB). This is the role of the pastor as a spiritual watchman, as already seen earlier. Mayhue (2005:275) writes that “pastoral insight includes a watching carefully for spiritual danger, as the words “beware of the dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of false circumcision” (Phil.3:2) clearly indicate (cf. Mark 8:15)”. Finally, the third concern, namely, that the authority of Scripture does not come from humans, but from God alone. It is an authority of Scripture that does not change with culture, nation or ethnic background; it is the unchanging eternal authority of God ( Isa 40:8; Ps. 119:89). It is always relevant to every culture because God’s authority transcends culture and times. By implication, the pastor must be careful not to undermine or weaken the authority of God’s Word by changing its message to fit the moorings of culture (Mark 7:5-13).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on an exegetical study of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The aim was to establish the author’s intended meaning which is nothing other than the God-intended meaning. The passage shows that false teachers have done much harm to themselves than good. Timothy is encouraged to do the opposite. He must pursue godly character which has eternal value. The literary analysis and exegetical synthesis helped to identify the main problems in the passage.

## Chapter 4

### Implications of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 for the Prosperity Gospel

#### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to, first, provide a brief background of the prosperity gospel and how it ended up arriving on the African continent. It will then highlight the warnings of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 for the leaders of the prosperity gospel and discuss the consequences for Christians who believes that godliness is a means to make money. The aim is to argue that the theology of the prosperity gospel is unbiblical, deceptive and is nothing less than harmful to the body of Christ. Therefore, that preachers and teachers of the prosperity gospel are not preaching a biblical gospel at all.

#### 4.2 A Brief Overview of the Prosperity Gospel

The prosperity gospel (PG) is the widespread teaching that believers have the right to experience health and wealth and that this can be obtained through confession, prayer, disciplined conduct and giving. PG preachers and teachers believe that it is God's will for a believer to experience physical well-being and financial blessing. Coleman (2000:20) notes that "in the theology of PG the atonement is interpreted to include the alleviation of sickness and poverty, which are viewed as curses to be broken by faith. This is believed to be achieved through donations of money and positive confession". According to Bowler (2013:35), "the prosperity gospel was formed from the intersection of three different ideologies: Pentecostalism, New Thought, and 'an American gospel of pragmatism, individualism, and upward mobility". However, his observation is based on his American perspective of the PG. Even if the beginning of the PG can be traced to the USA, elements of the PG are found in every culture found in the world because it is something that has its root in the human heart.

Coleman (2000:44) also notes that, although it was "during the Healing Revivals of the 1950s that prosperity theology first came to prominence in the United

States commentators have linked the origins of its theology to the New Thought movement which began earlier". Bowler (2013: 32) writes that

The New Thought movement, which emerged in the 1880s, was responsible for popularizing belief in the power of the mind to achieve prosperity. While initially focused on achieving mental and physical health, New Thought teachers such as Charles Fillmore made material success a major emphasis of the movement by the 20th century.

William Kenyon is seen by many historians as the pioneer of the prosperity gospel movement. In the words of Chilenje (2014:34), "The founder of the prosperity gospel was Mr. Essek William Kenyon (1867– 1948), a pastor and founder of Bethel Bible Institute". Kenyon believed that the spread of his teaching about the power of the human mind to overcome sin and sickness would result in human beings who would not be affected by evil spirits or by illness or poverty (Saracco 2007:323). Walker (2007:12) states that

Kenyon taught that Christ's substitutionary atonement secured for believers a right to divine healing. This was attained through positive, faith-filled speech; the spoken word of God allowed believers to appropriate the same spiritual power that God used to create the world and attain the provisions promised in Christ's death and resurrection.

The problem is that Kenyon's theology cannot be substantiated by Scripture. Phiri (2003:5) writes "that Kenyon's teachings influenced the Pentecostal beliefs of Kenneth Hagin (1917– 2003) which led to what would become the 'Word of Faith movement". Preachers and teachers in that movement believe that Christians can become rich if they claim it by faith. Hagin is also credited with a key role in the expansion of the prosperity theology. He founded the RHEMA Bible Training Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1974, and over the next 20 years, the school trained more than 10000 students in his theology. As is true of other prosperity movements, there is no theological governing body for the Word of Faith movement, and well-known ministries differ substantially on some foundational truths of Scripture. Nevertheless, the teachings of Hagin have been described as the most "orthodox" form of the Word of Faith prosperity teaching known (Kroesberg 2014).

However, it was Kenneth Copeland who succeeded to restructure and organise the PG movement. A young one-time associate of Oral Roberts, Copeland began to teach in the 1960s that faith is a “force” which brings material results when confessed out loud. It was also during the 1960s that PG teachers embraced ‘televangelism’ and came to dominate religious programming in the United States. Roberts led the way, developing a syndicated weekly program that became the most watched religious show in the United States (Bowens 2012).

In the 1990s and 2000s the theology of the PG was adopted by influential leaders in the Pentecostal- and Charismatic movements in the United States and has spread throughout the world. Prominent leaders in the development of the prosperity theology include E. W. Kenyon, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, ‘Reverend’ Ike, Jerry Savelle, Frederick Price, Kenneth Hagin and TD Jakes

#### **4.3 The Prosperity Gospel in Africa.**

The origin of the PG in Africa can be traced in two ways. Firstly, this theology has been imported by several preachers who were idolised by African believers. Secondly, proponents of the African traditional religion beliefs perpetuate the theology of the PG. This religion is centered on blessing and curses from ancestors. For example, when someone experiences suffering, which is seen as a curse from the ancestors. Also, a blessing, and a wealthy and prosperous life, are always credited to an ancestor or departed elder. Therefore, it seems that believers with such a background will be prone to adopt these beliefs as part of Christianity, and God consequently seen as someone who is always blessing, giving success and health to believers.

Pentecostalism opened the door to the theology of the PG in the early 1900s. As a result of the 1906 Azusa street revival in Los Angeles, many ordinary but theologically untrained Christians went to every corner of the globe as missionaries. Their only ‘qualification’ was the baptism in the Spirit and a ‘divine call’ to preach. It is through them That Pentecostalism became a phenomenon throughout Africa and an integral part of African initiated churches (Krosbergen

2014). In Africa, one of the earliest inspirers and promoters of the PG was the late Nigerian Archbishop Benson Idahosa (Togaresei 2011).

The influence of American evangelists occurred in Nigeria in three ways: systematic exposition of scripture, training and sponsorship of selected African church leaders to be trained in the theology of the PG. It is arguably the case that African Pentecostals did not know how to deal with poverty that is endemic in their churches. Evangelists first propounded that there is a solution to the problem of material poverty in the gospel of Christ, and then disseminated this doctrine to Africans through crusades, audio-cassettes, free books, seminars and conferences. Still others sponsored selected ministers in Africa to popularise the gospel of wealth and prosperity through use of media technology. African church leaders like late Idahosa from Nigeria and Guti from Zimbabwe were sent to America and became thoroughly indoctrinated by the PG. They returned to their countries as 'apostles' of the gospel of wealth and healing, and Idahosa became a most flamboyant preacher.

As Pentecostal-charismatic programming has flooded Africa, the PG numbers have risen from 17 million in 1970 to 147 million in 2005. The continent's largest religious broadcaster is based in Santa Ana, California, namely, the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). In the second place is Europe's GOD TV. As TV sets became common in African cities, these broadcasters gained huge audiences (Phiri 2007). In the early 1990s, Hagin, his son Kenneth Hagin Jr, together with Copeland visited African Indigenous Churches (AICs) across Nigeria preaching the PG. The impact was immense. As a result, churches grew into millions of members, and the gospel of health, wealth and prosperity found its way into the heart of Africans. For example, in a 2006 Pew survey, 85 percent of Kenyan Pentecostals, 90 percent of South African Pentecostals and 95 percent of Nigerian Pentecostals indicated that God grants prosperity to all believers who have 'enough faith'. In addition, about nine out of ten Kenyan, Nigerian, and South African Pentecostals said religious faith is very important to economic success (Krosbergen 2014). The above information shows how the prosperity gospel has spread its wings throughout the world and to African continent.

The PG has had a significant impact on almost every country in Africa and it seems to be more appealing to people on the African continent. There are several reasons why this is so. First, it is aligned with the beliefs characteristic of African traditional religions and the belief that wealth and success are signs of a blessed life by the almighty God. Therefore, every African who becomes a believer struggles to remove the concept that knowing God is not all about blessings but rather about conforming to the image of His Son and live for His glory alone. Second, as described by Young (2006:16), "A factor that must not be disregarded in these considerations is the highly emotional nature of the presentation of the prosperity message. Meetings and rallies are very lively and emotionally engaging". However, it is noteworthy that there is nothing wrong with engaging people emotionally in the message of the gospel; it is improper to do it for wrong reasons and represent a message which is unbiblical.

A third reason the PG appeals to Africans is because it promises a solution to a problem affecting the whole continent: poverty. As Young (2006:17) notes, "The African holistic world-view demands that the problems of poverty and pain be squarely faced". It is, therefore, not unreasonable to conclude that African's would not mind who is solving the problem of poverty as long as someone is doing something about it. It is also possible that many preachers and teachers of the PG have used this problem as a platform from which to spread their false theology to desperate people.

The New Testament issues warnings to false teachers who have changed the gospel of Christ into means to their own ends. Timothy was sent to these teachers and was instructed to silence them. Paul's warnings will be the topic we shall now briefly turned to.

#### **4.4 The Warning of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 Applied to Leaders of the Prosperity Gospel**

The first warning concerns deceitful and unbiblical teaching. In 1 Timothy 6:3 it is very clearly stated that the teachings of false teachers is not according to the sound words of our Lord Jesus. Jesus warned His followers concerning wealth and possession: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's

life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15). In sharp contrast to the PG emphasizes the importance of money and possessions in this life (Matt 6:19); believers should not put their hope on earthly things. Matthew 6:24 clearly states that a follower of Christ cannot be devoted to money and be devoted to God. This, by implication, means that the wealth and health gospel is not from God. In 1 Timothy 4:16 Paul warns Timothy to be careful on what he teaches to believers. This means that teachers of the PG must be warned that what teach their congregants is contrary to the teachings of our Lord Jesus.

Mbugua (2015:15) writes that “The falsehood of the prosperity gospel is rooted in a misinterpretation of the Bible. The word of God has been twisted, both unintentionally and intentionally, and the result is a deceptive man-made message”. Any man-made message, according to 1 Timothy 6:3, contradicts the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ. It should, therefore, be rejected. Prosperity preachers cannot discount the message of the Bible as human wisdom to be accepted or rejected based on the flaws of the one who offers the wisdom. Scripture must personally be accepted as the revelation of the God of the universe who made us and is involved with us in every way.

In addition, Chilenje (2014:24) writes that people who are attracted to the PG ‘do not recognize that the message is not biblical”. According to 1 Timothy 6:3, the PG is unbiblical because it is not in accord with Paul’s understanding of godliness. The PG often appeals to sinful human nature. According to 1 John 4:1, we are to test teachers to see if they are from God. One may ask the following questions concerning the teachers of the PG: What is their approach to Scripture? Do their teachings go beyond Scripture? Can their theology be supported with Scripture?

Bowens (2012:60) writes that, “Upon examining and investigating various scriptures which are promoted by the prosperity theologians, it is plain to see that there are some missteps, misinterpretation and misstatements”. The fact of the matter is that teachers of the PG emphasise things that should not be emphasised, such as 1 Timothy 6:3 states that the PG cannot lead to godliness. Such teachers do not have any spiritual goal in mind; their goal is money (6:9-10). The teachers of the health and wealth gospel are characterised by self-love, covetousness a philosophy of personal gain In contrast, the objective of teachers

of sound doctrine is holiness, a pure heart, a good conscience and faith without hypocrisy. As Schwertley (2004:3) writes, “correct doctrine is foundational to Biblical Christianity. The system of doctrine taught by Scripture defines God, Christ, sin, salvation, ethics and everything a person need for faith and life”.

PG teachers base their teachings on visions and these often have more authority in their services than the teachings of Scripture. Paul says that the church must be cautioned against the dangers of extra-biblical visions or instructions that are not from God (1 Tim 6:20-21). Believers must guard themselves against those who begin their messages with “God told me”. Those who use these words create the believe in their followers that Scripture is not sufficient for our daily decision making, which is contrary to Paul’s teachings (2 Tim 3:16-17). They lure sheep into the trap of believing that the Bible requires mediation through their subjective and private visions and insights.

A second warning derives from 1 Timothy 6:4-5, namely, the teaching of God’s Word from impure motives. Referring to false teachers, McCray (2013:5) note that “Greed motivates their ministry—not grace. They do not seek to give sacrificially to others; they seek to gain from others. They do not seek to edify others but to exploit them”.

It is clear from 1 Timothy that Timothy has been warned several times by Paul on his motives about ministry and conduct. Although Paul’s instructions are often specific, two general areas are especially relevant to this study. First, Paul teaches Timothy about the importance of godly spiritual discipline (1 Tim. 4:7). In contrast to the heterodoxy of demonic doctrine, Paul urges Timothy to be nourished on the words (doctrines) of the Christian faith. The servant of God must be disciplined by the Word. As Wiersbe (1997:31) puts it: “Ministry is not just a question of operational functionality; it is about character. The source of ministry flows out of a true relationship with the Lord of the church’. This transformation happens in the human heart and manifests outwardly in godly behavior, which is Paul’s second instruction. Timothy is encouraged to be an exemplar (1 Tim. 4:12, 15): “Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to

all". Both Jesus and Paul taught this principle. Both lived exemplary lives, giving us examples to pattern our lives after (John 13:13-15; 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; Phil 3:17, 4:8-9). Paul is very precise; Timothy was to demonstrate Christlikeness before every believer. He was also expected to show spiritual maturity in his ministry. This is such an important aspect of biblical ministry that the writer of Hebrews urged believers to imitate the faith of those who gained God's approval of their righteousness (Heb. 13:7).

The third warning is found in 1 Timothy 6:5. Teachers of PG stand opposed to using godliness as a means to prosperity. Seemingly, it was the same with false teachers at Ephesus. In this regard, Ryken (2007:253) notes that "In those days many popular teachers charged their disciples a small fee. They were not interested in religion for its own sake. Instead, they taught that good morals were a pathway to financial security". In verse 8 (1 Tim), Paul is expanding on what he has said concerning teachers who have their eyes on money as a sign of prosperity. In verse five he exposed them by pointing to their motives and moral lifestyle. Because they are "depraved in mind and deprived of the truth" they think that "godliness is a means of gain". In short, their primary goal is to enrich themselves. By contrast, the apostle teaches that godliness with contentment is actually great gain. In other words, if Christians are focused only on the present, then they will never appreciate true godliness.

Teachers of PG often go to extremes, saying that someone's faith in Christ must always be accompanied by signs of material prosperity. Seemingly, these PG teachers use miracles for the same motive, as a means of personal gain. In contrast, Bolt notes (2006:437) that "the miracle of grace is the core of Christian proclamation. God became flesh and dwelt amongst us poor sinners. The miracles of the OT anticipate, and the miracles of the NT endorse, this event".

#### **4.5 Consequences for Those Who Love Money**

Several verses from the Bible talk about money. For example, "For the love of money is the root of all evil" and "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (1 Tim 6:10; Matt 6:21). It is unsurprising, for money influence people positively or negatively in almost every area of their lives. In 1 Timothy 6:3-12,

the word “but” indicates the contrast with the common understanding of money in daily life. Godliness leads to contentment, which is “great gain”. Kroesbergen (2014:30) writes that “Godliness does not give financial gain; it is itself gain when combined with contentment. When we seek our satisfaction in the Savior, we’ll become content Christians”. The implication is that true satisfaction cannot be based on material things.

According to biblical teachings, a total giving of oneself to money result in money becoming the central basis for controlling one's life, which is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10) and “plunging men into ruin and destruction” (1 Tim. 6:9-11). According to Cole (2004:5), ‘the love of money ‘lies beneath the surface and nourishes any number of other sins’.

The consequences for Christians who have a love money can be stated as follows. The first consequence is deception and idolatry. 1 Timothy 6:9 says that wealth or money can lead “into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires”. MacArthur (2006:78) states that “a snare was like a noose or a sudden and unexpected trap. The word “senseless” refers to being irrational or foolish and “harmful” means to be injured or hurt”. In Deuteronomy 7:25, believers are warned against the sin of coveting which is abomination to the Lord (cf. Exod 20:17). In addition, Jeremiah 9:23-24 gives a clear warning to rich people not to take confidence or pride in their possessions and only to boast that he or she knows the Lord. The context of these verses makes it clear that money can lead to deception and idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:9 warns believers that the love of money has led many into foolish desires which can be harmful. The next verse says that many people have turned away from the faith. Guthrie (2010:40) notes that “the word ‘wandered’ means to get lost and “craving” refers “to stretching oneself out, to reach after”. Paul writes about one such man who wandered from the faith in 2 Timothy 4:10; Demas has turned away from the faith because he was overtaken by worldliness. In Joshua 7:21 there is the example of Achan’s wandering who confessed what he had done and why he had done it. Banda (2014:47) says that “Money, by its very nature, is deceptive. In describing the four soul types represented by four different soils,

Jesus describes how the deceitfulness of riches and desires for other things enter in and choke the word”.

Christ’s teaching is that Christians must always bear in mind that they cannot serve God and money (Matt 6:24): “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money”. Jones (2012:20) says that “The love of money is one of those masters that creeps into every area of our lives and demands to be #1 as the priority. When money is the priority, we act and work a certain way. When God is the priority, we act and work a different way”. The desires in view may include illicit sexual desires, but it goes far beyond that to include greed and twisted religious desires.

A second consequence of the love of money is in 1 Timothy 6: 8, many Christians end up with less contentment than what they are supposed to be. Ecclesiastes 5:10 states that people with riches never come to a point where they are satisfied with their money and possessions. Mbewe (2005:15) notes that “There is something about the love of money which centers on the word “more” which results in less contentment in our lives. We always want more because the love of money offers the false promise that the next level is better”. Paul charged Christians to march on the beat of a different drummer: “But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (v. 8). Christ has not denied the biological needs of His followers; He teaches that they must be looked at from God’s perspective (Matt 6:25-34).

Paul contrasts those who are contented in v.8 with those who are focused on obtaining wealth in verse 9. Robinson (1997:30) says of Paul’s language “that he is speaking of people with a deep, settled drive to gain wealth. Those in view are determined to get rich; they have set their will to achieve that goal. Tragically, focused as they are on obtaining what they desire, they are insensible of the danger to which they are exposing themselves”. The Psalm 62:10 cautions believers to remember that “If riches increase, set not your heart on them”.

The fact of the matter is that contentment is a spiritual issue. Arichea (2006:45) states that “God is always there and never changes and informs us how we can be content with our finances. Financial contentment has less to do with money

and more to do with our attitudes, belief systems, and decisions”. Peace of mind and contentment comes from committing ourselves to righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. When Christians find peace of mind in these things non-believers will desire to know the reason for their contentment.

The third consequence of the love of money is destruction. 1 Timothy 6:9 states that these desires will “plunge people into ruin and destruction”. Bowens (2012:13) writes that “This word ‘plunge’ was used of something sinking to the bottom of a lake. While verse 10 shows that they have ‘pierced themselves.’ The word ‘pierce’ was used for putting meat on a spit and then cooking it over an open flame”. People who love money do this to themselves because “pangs” is used by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:9 to describe their self-inflicted wounds.

Judas Iscariot is an example of someone who pierced himself. The desire for and love of money will ultimately deceive and destroy a person, causing the believer to lose what matters most in life. Riches are “uncertain,” which means that they are not a safe anchor for someone’s life. Staton (2015:34) says that “Millions of people have been destroyed by the love of money. They lie, steal, cheat, and even kill for money. However, the wrong use of money can bring destruction of body, mind, and soul”.

The fourth consequence of the love of money is that it multiplies grief. The love of money does not only brings its own kind of grief, but also does not completely help any other sort people are going through. The apostle lists two serious results. The first has already been noted earlier; it is the reason that “some have wandered away from the faith”. The second, he says, is that they have ceased to embrace the faith. In Luke 16:14 it was the Pharisees’ love of money that kept them from believing what Jesus told them. According to 2 Timothy 3:2, one of the features of the last days will be people who are characterized as ‘lovers of money’. One grief is clearly stated in 2 Timothy 4:3: “The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions”. Rejecting the true revelation of God is the result of loving money, which is something to grieve about.

Mbewe (2005:24) says that the love of “Money affects how we see ourselves, and how others see us. If we have money we feel good about ourselves because of what we’ve achieved. We can look at others and feel sorry for them for not being as clever”. Money also gives people a sense of being in control of their lives.

The fifth consequence of loving money is one form of greed. In the words of Proverbs 1:19: “so are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; it takes away the life of its owners”. Greed is a serious sin with serious consequences and there is serious grief in loving money. Bowens (2012:40) says that ‘One man's greed can harm himself, his family, and even thousands of others. We hear about the devastating consequences of greed almost every day. It has destroyed personal relationships. The Bible teaches that greed and idolatry is the same thing (Col 3:5). Greed, by implication, is self-worship instead of loving and worshipping God alone.

#### **4.6 Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has challenged one of the central doctrines of the theology of the prosperity gospel in the light of 1 Timothy 6:3-12. The poverty that is endemic in Africa, and the wish of many for a better life, make the people vulnerable to the gospel of wealth.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Introduction

The objective of this study has been an exegetical analysis of 1 Timothy 6:1-3 with reference to the theology of the prosperity gospel. An understanding of the historical context of 1 Timothy has helped to determine the occasion on which the Apostle Paul addressed the letter to Timothy. An exegetical examination of the grammatical and literary elements of the passage focused on Paul's intended meaning and how the original audience would have understood his epistle.

Chapter four provided a brief overview of the background the prosperity gospel and how it arrived on the African continent. It then highlighted the warnings of 1 Timothy 6:3-12 for those who teach the prosperity gospel and discussed the consequences for Christians who think or believe that godliness is a way to make money. The purpose was to argue that the prosperity gospel is unbiblical, deceptive and a cause of harm to the body of Christ, and that teachers of the prosperity gospel are not teaching a biblical gospel at all.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the answer to the following question: When compared with the content of divine revelation and 1 Timothy 6:1-3, is the prosperity gospel consistent with Scripture? The conclusions and recommendations that will be suggested, if taken seriously, will show the falsehood of the prosperity gospel.

#### 5.2. Conclusions

##### 5.2.1 The prosperity gospel is unbiblical

Scripture has final authority for all Christian doctrine and conduct. Apart from biblical truth there is no solid foundation upon which the believer can base his or her faith and be comforted by the knowledge that he or she is "protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5). Carson (2004:193) points out that "If the emerging church movement, or conversation, wishes to remain faithful to Scripture, it must speak of truth and

our ability to know it as sweepingly and confidently as Scripture does". In other words, the basis of knowing what is true is through Scripture.

Who we are and where people will spend eternity is expressed in God's word (John 3:16, 36; 5:29). Colson (2003:8) points to one of the implications of losing an objective, foundational, overarching story about life, and that is that if "there's no such thing as truth, all principles are merely personal preferences." Consequently, an epistemic basis of theology which is dissociated from scriptural foundations cannot be considered to be biblically orthodox.

### **5.2.2 The prosperity gospel is destructive**

To say that the prosperity gospel is destructive and wordly, is not a subjective conclusion. Chilenje (2014:24), for example, writes "that people are attracted to its message of wealth and health, and do not recognize that the message is not biblical". Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle James (4:4) speaks with characteristic relevance when he asks, "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

The work of God in the life of the believer is the opposite of conformity to worldly thinking (Rom 12:1-2); it is a transformation into and conformation with the image of Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18). The partners in this work of Spirit transformation are disciplined believers (Phil 2:12; 1 Tim 4:7) and God who works in us (Phil 2:13) by means of His word (John 17:17; 1 Thes 2:13). The consequential impact of the living word (Heb 4:12) is ordained by God. Therefore, it is the Bible alone that is the highest authority for believers on all matters which it speaks.

Teachers of the prosperity gospel are propagating a 'different gospel' than the one taught in the Scriptures (2 Cor 11:4); it has become a stronghold 'against the knowledge of God' (2 Cor 10:3-5). Hence, they are distracting believers from biblical truth and are drawing away disciples unto themselves (Acts 20:27-30).

The prosperity gospel is also destructive because it promotes doubt. A believer is viewed in a different light if he or she does not show signs of wealth. But there is nothing praiseworthy about leading others or oneself being led away from the

word of life (John 6:63; 17:17); there is no value in embracing a distorted gospel, which Paul says is really no gospel at all (Gal 1:7). The problem is that Satan disguise himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:13-15) and his goal is not one of submission to God's will for the church.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

### **5.3.1 Standing firm on God's word**

The study recommends that believers who are seeking to respond correctly to prosperity gospel first take a firm stand on God's Word. It is through God's Word that they gain knowledge of Him (John 5:39; 2 Pet 3:18). Proverbs 9:10 makes the following point: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Understanding of God and wisdom will, therefore, not come through an acceptance of the prosperity gospel.

### **5.3.2 Examine every teaching of the prosperity gospel carefully**

Not all teachings or beliefs of the teachers of the prosperity gospel should be considered as erroneous. Their call for Christians to be passionate about God in the world and their reach out to those who do not know Jesus is admirable, biblical and necessary. The problem is, however, that to people untrained in the Christian faith, true gold is more than often confused with fool's gold. The directives given by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 are, therefore, appropriate and relevant: "Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil". Guthrie et al. (1994:709) explain that the "Thessalonians were squelching all prophecies rather than practicing discernment to determine what was true or false. Hence, Paul instructed them to examine everything, discern what is good (cf. 1 Cor 14:29) and hold to it, but avoid all specious utterances". But Paul's teaching also presupposes that examination of everything requires a standard, which is none other than Scripture. Knowledge of the standard is the only way a believer can make an accurate assessment of whatever is taught in the name of Jesus.

### **5.3.3 The Bible is the only standard for evaluation of truth and falsehood**

The word of God is truth (Psa 119:142, 151, 160; John 17:17). It comprises the “faith” (Acts 16:5; 1 Cor 16:13; Eph 4:13; 1 Tim 6:10; Jude 3) that has been delivered once and for all to the saints; its content must be embraced, taught and defended (Titus 1:9). As Paul urged Titus: “But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (Tit 2:1). To wander away and teach something different from what is in Scripture is bring a curse upon oneself (Gal 1:6-9). For Paul to write such things is indicative of his confidence that the standard of sound doctrine was and is available to every believer and those they are attempting to influence.

### **5.3.4 Knowledge of the Bible is a precondition for discernment**

Knowledge of the Bible is an indispensable precondition for discerning the truth or error of the prosperity gospel. Understanding of biblical truth is the result of diligent study (2 Tim 2:15) in cooperation with the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The consistency of the Holy Spirit’s illumination is also available to every believer in whom He has taken up residence (Eph 1:13-14).

The implications of God’s inspired, inerrant, sufficient and authoritative Word are twofold: God’s Word is the truth and God’s Word is transcendent and relevant to every generation and culture at all times. Given these implications, one must “be diligent” to seek the biblical authors’ intent or meaning. Having discovered the intended meaning, the reader must then discern its application to contemporary culture. This cooperative accomplishment equips the believer to “examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thes 5:21-22).

## **5.4 A Final and Personal Word**

The prosperity gospel is spreading throughout Africa and it has a debilitating effect on many churches. At the end of this study, the researcher realised that he is more than ever committed to clearly proclaim the content of the Bible without

shame or compromise; he will continue to examine carefully everything that is taught in the name of Jesus to the church; he embraces truth and will refute false teaching; and his aim is to glorify God by communicating His Word truthfully.

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