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6:3-10): Nigerian Experience



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## **Lack of Contentment as The Root of Corruption (1Tim 6:3-10): Nigerian Experience**

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### **Abstract**

Contentment is a life of happiness and satisfaction with what one has. It is, in Igbo parlance, against "*Ita abacha na aro akpu anya*".<sup>1</sup> This is one of the greatest virtues that the majority of people lack. Nigeria under Gen. Obasanjo and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar according to Deputy National Publicity Secretary of APC, Mr. Yekini Nabena spent \$16 billion on the power sector during their tenor as president and vice yet there is nothing to show for it.<sup>2</sup> One wonders whether the money was shared or what? The question was asked because those managing the affairs of the country at the point were financially well-to-do. The majority feel that the money was embezzled. Lack of contentment and embezzlement of the fund are what make some countries today to be failed states. It is what makes people get trapped into all sorts of foolish and harmful ambitions which plunge people into ruin and destruction (1 Tim 6:9). Hence, Paul says, "Love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim: 10). Nigeria is a country highly blessed with rich natural resources like petroleum, coal, Iron ore, Limestone, Uranium, etc, yet Nigeria has practically nothing to show for them, instead, backwardness has become her lot. The question one has to ask is, how contented are Nigerians and their leaders? This paper aims at showing that if the political leaders, as well as citizens of Nigeria, are contented with what they have, Nigeria would have been the envy of the whole world. The researcher employed Historical-Critical (HC) and Textual Critical (TC) Methods to interpret 1 Tim. 6:3-10. HC Method is used because we are handling an ancient text – 1 Tim. 6:3-10. This will enable us to understand the world behind the text. TC Method was also employed for us to arrive at the original words of Paul in 1 Tim. 6:3-10 so as to avoid misinterpreting his thought. These methods were also used to analyze the generated data. The writer discovered that the greatest problem we have in Nigeria is that the majority of her politicians and citizens are greedy and incontinent hence, lack of development is the other of the day. The writer, as a matter of policy, recommends among other things that before anyone can be elected to be president, that person must convincingly show that he is contented with what he has. Hence,

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<sup>1</sup> Eating cooked cassava and still desiring to eat swallow that is made from cassava flour.

<sup>2</sup> Yekini, N. (2020). "Account for \$16 bn power fund, privatization of assets or keep quiet - APC tells Obasanjo, Atiku" Vanguard News Paper, September 13.

contentment is the answer. Significantly, this paper shall be relevant to both Nigerians and indeed every institution or nation that wants to develop.

**Keywords:** *Contentment, Corruption, Experience, and Longing.*

## Introduction

There are two letters ascribed to Paul as written to Timothy namely the first and second letters of 'Paul' to Timothy. These two letters together with the letter to Titus are what we call Pastoral Epistles because of their contents namely, ecclesiastical matters. This fact is corroborated by Mckenzie John (2002) who is of the view that since 1750, 1 & 2 Tim and Titus have been grouped under the title 'Pastoral Epistles.' Three of them have a common subject matter, and theological direction; their vocabulary and style are best treated together.<sup>3</sup> They have the same Author and Place of their compositions, and the Purpose of any applies to the rest. In many ways, these letters, especially 1 Timothy and Titus, seem to be extended codes of "household duties," which is a common form of exhortation in pagan, Jewish, and Christian literature.<sup>4</sup> It appears in the form of exhortation and encouragement to the elders of the church as regards their relationship towards one another, towards those entrusted to their care and indeed towards the entire church. The Muratorian Canon, as quoted by William Barclay, which was the earliest official list of New Testament books, says that the Pastorals were written "from personal feeling and affection".<sup>5</sup> They are like letters written by a father to his son. In this case, following the tradition of the church, they are letters written by Paul to Timothy, a fact contestable by scholars.

As regards the sequence of appearance in the whole bible, there is no consensus agreement reached as regards which of the Pastoral Epistles was written first. The majority of critics are inclined to accept the order -2Timothy, Titus, and 1Timothy whereas those who seriously accept the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles accept the order -1Timothy, Titus, and then 2Timothy. Even some critics also support the above order.<sup>4</sup> Scholars do know that most of the letters are arranged according to their volumes. The greater volume is taken as the first letters and the smaller is taken as the second letters; and not usually the order of writing.

The final greetings in each of the Pastoral Epistles which are in the plural (looking at the original language of the writing, (i.e. Greek) specify that they were intended for a community, and not just for the church leader to whom they were addressed (1Tim 6:21; 2Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15). That

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<sup>3</sup>Mckenzie, J (2002) Dictionary of the Bible, Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, p644

<sup>4</sup>Neyrey Jerome H. (2001), First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, James, First Peter, Second Peter, Jude, Mumbai, College Ville Bible Commentary, p5

<sup>5</sup>Barclay, W. (1997) The Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, The Daily Study Bible, Bangalore, Theological Publications, p.1.

means they are community letters through the leaders; unlike Letters to the Corinthians which specifically indicate that they are meant for the community as a whole.

One might ask oneself again, who are Timothy and Titus? Neglecting a few dissenting voices, scholars are unanimous in asserting that Timothy and Titus as used in the Pastoral Epistles cannot really be regarded as the men who worked with Paul. Rather they stand for the clergy who in this later generation stands to the writer as Timothy and Titus stood to Paul in the apostolic age.<sup>5</sup> This stand clearly portrays the denial of Pauline authorship of the Epistles called the Pastorals.

There is no work, article, or book that has no purpose or aim. Paul as the assumed author of Pastoral Epistles has some reasons for writing them or for addressing them to the persons they were addressed. These letters came at a time when the church of the day needed guidance which only these types of letters could give. They deal with the care and organization of the flock of God; they tell men how to behave within the household of God; they give instructions on how God's house should be administered, the kind of people the leaders and pastors of the church should be, and how the threats which endanger the purity of Christian faith and life should be dealt with.<sup>6</sup> This means that these letters are out to tackle the problems of the growing church.

First Timothy could be entitled 'The Gospel of Paul in Conflict with False Teaching.'<sup>7</sup> For Raymond Collins, 1Tim and Titus have a similar literary form and both give instructions on church order and address personal exhortation to their respective recipients.<sup>8</sup> So they stress church order and morality and so function as official constitutions for their respective churches. In 1Tim, the purpose of the epistle is stated clearly: "I am writing these instructions to you so that if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God (1Tim 3:14-15). Hence, Paul must have realized that his time was short, and if he wished to offer any guidance to those in positions of responsibility, it could not be delayed- therefore it is a 'household code.'

#### **Literary Analysis of 1 Tim 6:3-10:**

To get the literary analysis of 1Tim 6:3-10 is like getting that of the whole Pastoral Epistles since this passage is like a scion of the entire Epistles. Characteristic epistolary salutations at the beginning and end of each text clearly present each as a letter (Tim 1:1-2; 6:21b; 2Tim 1:1-2; 4:19-22; Titus 1:1-4; 3:15). None of the Pastoral Epistles can be considered as truly a personal letter. The final words of each of the epistles show that they were directed to an audience larger than the named addressee (1Tim 6:21; 2Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15). Another factor that militates against taking any of the PE to be a personal letter is the absence of a wish for good health.

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<sup>6</sup> Barclay, p2

<sup>7</sup>Neyrey, J. H. (2001). First Timothy, Second Timothy, Titus, James, First Peter, Second Peter, Jude. (Mumbai: College Ville Bible Commentary) p.5

<sup>8</sup> Neyrey, J. H. (2001) p5.

Moreover, the epistolary salutations are far more developed than would be the salutation of a personal note from Paul to any of his close associates and co-workers (compare 1Tim1:1-2 with Philm 1-3.)<sup>9</sup> Apart from the epistolary greeting and an apparently misplaced thanksgiving period (1Tim 1:12-17), I Timothy is innocent of typical epistolary conventions. The epistle lacks the sort of greetings typically found at the end of Hellenistic letter greetings such as Paul regularly includes in his letters.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, we can say that the epistle is ostensibly addressed only to Timothy (1Tim 1:2, 18; 6:20), and like we have said above, the final greetings, "*he charis meth humōn*" (Grace be with you) portray that they are not private letters. This is because *humōn* (you) is second-person plural and not first-person singular. Most importantly, among the things that make this epistle not a personal letter of a true father to a true son is Paul's description of himself in 1Tim 1:1. Those descriptions are superfluous. Barclay in other to describe the peculiar nature of the PE says, "The total number of words in the Pastoral Epistles is 902, of which 54 are proper names, and of these 902 words, no fewer than 306 never occurred in any other of Paul's letters. That is to say, more than a third of the words in the Pastoral Epistles (PE) are totally absent from Paul's other letters. In fact, 175 words in the PE occur nowhere else in the NT at all..."<sup>11</sup> By comparison with the undisputed Pauline letters, the collective vocabulary of the Pastorals is less Septuagintal and closer to that of the ethical directions of the popular Greek philosophers and the style is less Hebraic and more colourless and monotonous (Longer sentences, less varied use of particles, etc.)<sup>12</sup>

The style of the Pastorals is more ponderous and pedantic than the free-flowing epistolary style of Paul. Their style is sometimes periodic with good use of subordinate clauses and a wide variety of tenses. At other times, the heavy styles of the Pastorals are exceedingly complex, with the result that the style of several long sentences is a veritable syntactic maze. Several stylistic features (asyndeton, polysyndeton, alliteration, assonance, paronomasia, repetition, and rhyme) were intended to increase the rhetorical impact of an oral text that sounded well.<sup>13</sup> In summary, Gealy says, "If the vocabulary is strikingly un-Pauline, the style of writing is equally so. In the Pastorals, the language is slow, diffuse, incoherent, repetitious, and on the whole, lustreless".<sup>14</sup> Despite the above expositions, we would like to present PE as a letter of Paul to his son and his community.

### **Delimitation of 1 Tim 6:3-10**

Looking at the whole content of 1Timothy, scholars of all persuasions are unanimous in accenting the fact that 1Tim 6:3-10 is a unit. It deals specifically with the warning against false

<sup>9</sup> Raymond, F.C. (2002). 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus (London: Westminster J. Knox Press) p4

<sup>10</sup> Raymond, F.C. (2002). p17

<sup>11</sup> Barclay, W. (1997) p8

<sup>12</sup> Brown, R. E. (2000) An Introduction to the New Testament (India: Theological Pub.) p663

<sup>13</sup> Raymond, F. C. Pp 2-3

<sup>14</sup> Gealy, Fred; Noyes, M. (1955). "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and The Epistle to Titus" in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 11 (New York: Abingdon Press) p363.



teachers and love of money or false teaching, and true riches. Though 1Tim 6:3-10 will be the centre of our attention, suffice it to mention that related passages in the same letter and other texts that deal with the theme of False (and True) Teaching as well as True Riches may be employed as the need arises; such passages may include 1Tim 1:3-20; 3:14-4:10. The theme of belief and relationship in a community can also be found in such passages as 1Tim 2:1-15; 4:11-5:2; 5:22b-6:2.

Let us summarize this section by saying that, “Beyond the household code one may notice a particular distrust of wealth in 6:5-10, 17-19, including the famous, ‘the love of money is the root of all evil (6:10),’<sup>15</sup> which is the source and summit of our write-up. The text under consideration can comfortably be divided into three sections or sub-units namely (1) 6:3-5, (2) 6:6-8, (3) 6: 9-10. It is good to note that 1 Tim 6:3-10 could be summed up in a common theme, 'the true teacher and false teacher' or 'the true leader and false leader' all motivated by lack of contentment.

### **The Remote and Immediate Context of 1 Tim 6:3-10:**

In the early church, there is already a fairly highly developed ecclesiastical organization. There are elders (1Tim 5:17-19); bishops, superintendents, or overseers (1 Tim 3:1-7); and deacons (1Tim 3:8-13). The elders were also salaried workers or officials (1Tim 5:17, 18). Barclay quips, “The elders that rule well are to be counted worthy of a double pay and the church is urged to remember that the labourer is worthy of his hire.”<sup>16</sup> So there is a tendency for the workers or salaried officials to labour solely for the sake of remuneration hence the statement, “The love of money is the root of all evils,” (6:10).

Again in the early period of the church, the Christian service was much more informal than it is today. That means anyone who felt he had a message was free to give it; the door was wide open to men who were out to propagate a false and misleading message hence Timothy was warned to guard against such false teachers (1Tim 4:1; 4:6). He was urged to maintain the tradition – orthodoxy (parathēkē) handed over to him. So, the remote context of the passage is the emergence of salaried officers and subsequent false teachers who will teach in such a way as to receive payment. These salaried workers are majorly selfish men and women who lack contentment. How to maintain the orthodoxy is the remote context of our text.

The author of 1Tim 6:3-10 has seen that there is evidence of false and misleading messages circulating in the young growing church by false teachers, also there growing signs of insatiability in characteristics of Christians as well as non-Christians, and finally, there was also an absolute and inordinate desire/love for wealth/money. Hence, the author was prompted to write the three sub-units of 1Tim 6:3-10 namely, (i) Against false teachers (Vv3-5); (ii) Instructions on the

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<sup>15</sup> Brown, R. (2000) p661

<sup>16</sup> Barclay, p3.

advantages of self-satisfaction with whatever one endow with (Vv 6-8) and finally (iii) warning as regards the love of money which is the root of all evil (Vv 9,10.)

**Textual Analysis of 1Tim 3-10:** In 1Tim 6:3-10, virtually all the verses have textual problems except verse 6.<sup>17</sup> The rest of the verses have textual problems namely, verses 3-5, 7-10, and each of these verses has a minimum of one textual problem and a maximum of three. We shall try to expose the critical problems in four verses for some obvious reasons and they are verses 3, 4, 9, and 10 since others have little or no effect on the text under study.

In verse 3, there is an alternative reading. Nestle-Aland has *proserchetai* (consents), whereas the following manuscripts have alternative readings:  $\aleph^*$  (original edition of Synaiticus), and a few Latin versions of the manuscripts (Pc Lat) and Cyprian text, they all read *prosechetai* meaning literally, “approach” or “come to,” figuratively it means “agree with.” What our text has is widely attested to though it is difficult to read, we stick to it as the original word used by the apostle. There is no doubt  $\aleph^*$ , Pc lat, and cyp merely want to harmonize what we have in verse 3 with what we have in 1:4, 3:8; 4:1, 13, and in those places it means “to hold,” all pointing towards the same direction. Both words are from the same root. *Proserchetai* is 3rd person singular, pres. Mid. indicative, while *prosechomai* means to "pay close attention to something; pay attention to, give heed to, follow, attach oneself to, cling to with dative of the thing in question (Literal and figurative)"<sup>18</sup>

In verse 4, there are three critical problems, both are alternative readings. Firstly, Nestle-Aland reads *ginetai* but manuscripts like  $D^*$  and Latin witnesses read *gennōntai*. The root of *gennōntai* reminds one of genealogy, it seems to be what was really in the mind of the Apostle as he writes. It reminds one of what emanates from wrong beliefs or assumptions. It seems to provide a better reading but we are to retain what we have in our text considering the authorities that back it like  $\aleph$ , B, C, etc. *Ginetai* is 3rd person sing. Pres. Mid. Ind. is *ginomai*. It can mean the following: a) to come into being through the process of birth or natural production, be born, and be produced. b) to come into existence, be made, be created, be manufactured, be performed. c) Come into being as an event or phenomenon from a point of origin, arise, come about, and develop. It then means that both *ginetai* and *gennōntai* can stand for each other without much distortion on the meaning of the sentence, since both talk of the ‘origin of something.’

Secondly, our text reads *phthonos* (envy) other manuscripts like  $D^*$ , Pc lat, bo read *phthonoi* (plural). There is no way the author could be vacillating from singular to plural since all the other views are in the singular. We have the same in Gal 5:21 where it is used as a plural. In 1Tim 6:4

<sup>17</sup>The textual analysis is based on the textual problems of the text as presented in the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of Nestle-Aland’s Novum Testamentum Graece.

<sup>18</sup>F.Danker, F. Ed.(2000). Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, 3rd Edition (London: University of Chicago Press) p880

it is used as nominative singular and that is what it ought to be since other vices in the sentence appear in singular. One does not doubt that *phthonoi* may be the actual word used by the Apostle since it constitutes a difficult reading. That means, even if *phthonos* is a later correction or provides smooth reading, we still want to retain it considering the authorities that are behind it

Thirdly, our text reads *eris* (strife) in other manuscripts like D F G L Ψ 6.81 bo and other minor manuscripts have *ereis*. Our text is supported by the following manuscripts: Ⲙ A 046. 33. 1739. 1881 and other minuscules. *Eris, idos* is nominative singular. Its plural is *erides* as used in 1Cor 1:11. It can also appear as *ereis*. Both mean engagement in rivalry, especially with reference to positions taken in a matter, strife, discord, or contention (Titus 3:9; Rom 1:29)<sup>19</sup>

Verse 9 has two critical problems. Firstly, some texts have insertions that our text does not have. The manuscripts tradition, especially Western manuscripts and some of the Latin fathers offer some evidence for the expanded reading, undoubtedly under the influence of 1Tim 3:7; 2Tim 2:26.<sup>20</sup> The insertion they have is *tou diabolou* (of the devil's -trap-). Adding it will bring out clearly the sense in the passage. Though we have more ancient texts on the side of Nestle-Aland; we shall jettison what he gives us and accept the insertion for the sake of the clarification it provides. Secondly, our text also reads *anoētous* - "foolish" whereas negligible voices like 629, pc lat alternatively read *anonētous* which comes from the word *anoētos* meaning "unintelligent, foolish, dull-witted." It refers to persons, whereas when it goes with a noun it denotes a thing, for example, foolish desires- *anonētous*.<sup>21</sup> This, therefore, is the correction of the prototype, so we stick to the original considering the authorities behind it and part with the variant reading.

Verse 10 has a variant reading. Our text reads *pollais* (by many) which comes from the Gk word *polus, pollē* - being a large number, many, a great number of, much, extensive, etc whereas the following manuscripts Ⲙ\* and H read *poikilais* which comes from the word *poikilos* or *poikilia* - existence in various kinds, or modes, diversified, manifold, variegated, variety, diversity, etc. Any of the two words can stand for the other; hence we stand with the text. That is to say, *pollais* though is more difficult to read and widely attested to, we are still holding to it.

**Lexical Analysis of Three Key Words in 1Tim 6:3-10:** The following words need to be explained for the proper understanding of our passage. *Eusebeia* means "piety, godliness, reverence, loyalty exhibited towards parents or deities, fear of God," its opposite is *ponēros* or *asebeia*. In brief, *eusebeia* could mean devoutness, piety, fear of God, or even religion.<sup>22</sup> *Eusebeia* is a laudable virtue, while its opposite, can be morally condemned and rejected by the godly people.

**Heterodidaskaleō (False-Teaching):** This word presupposes a *heterodidaskalos* (False-Teacher) which is not mentioned in NT, though the persons concerned are often present. There is

<sup>19</sup> Danker, F., Ed. (2000). p393

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Brown (2000). An Introduction to the New Testament, India, Theological Pub. 155

<sup>21</sup> Danker, F., Ed (2000), 84

<sup>22</sup> Mole, S.I. (2005). The Christianity of the Christian, A Pretext or a Reality. (Port Harcourt: Divine Pub., 2005)12.



only one gospel and this is proclaimed by Paul, any other *euaggelion* is no gospel. It is from the above idea that we can understand *hetera* in *heterodidaskalein*. It carries with it the proclamation of a *hetera didaskalia* which is a perversion of what should be emulated and is thus to be rejected. In the NT the word is found only in 1Tim 1:3 and 6:3.<sup>23</sup>

**Autarkeias** (self-sufficiency): This word is very central to this write-up. The word is both a central concept in ethical discussion from the time of Socrates and yet also a well-known term in ordinary usage. As distinct from the rich philosophical usage, the NT term seems first to have only the sense of a capacity for external contentment and privation. Yet this almost banal virtue of *autarkeias* is set in a new light by becoming a constituent part of *eusebeia* (1Tim 6:6). What this means is made plain in Phil 4:11-13. It means therefore contentment or self-sufficiency. This meaning comes out clearly in Judaism's divine name, *EL SHADDAI* in which the philosophical ideal of the *autarkēs* is transferred to God as the one who is independent in His Omnipotence and self-sufficient.<sup>24</sup> It is a godly virtue which everyone has to struggle to have.

**Content Analysis of 1Tim 6:3-10:** Let us move quickly over to the structural analysis of our text. As we have mentioned above, our text could be divided up into three sub-units namely: False Teachers and False Teaching (1Tim 6:3-5); Relationship between Godliness and Wealth (1Tim 6:6-8); The Danger of the Love of Money (1Tim 6:9, 10). Let us now look at them one after the other.

**False Teachers and False Teaching (1 Tim 6:3-5):** This long sentence is a conditional sentence, which appears in three parts. Verse 3 gives us a condition that is introduced by the particle *ei* (if), verse 4a gives us the immediate result if the condition is possible and then Vv4b and 5 give us a consequent result. It is just like an echo which has a sort of resonance effect, once it starts from one end; it must reach the other end before it would stop, i.e. if A is possible then B & C are possibilities. Verse 3 identifies the condition as the presence of *heterodidaskalei* (teaches differently), the emphasis here is on one teaching something different from the "sound Words" which are guaranteed only by Jesus and transmitted by Paul. To reject that which leads to godliness is the only thing that can lead to the conditions mentioned in vv4 and 5. For Raymond Collins Verse 3 identifies the situation: 'someone who teaches otherwise.' He calls him a heterodox teacher and looks at him as one who teaches something different, emphasizing that he does not agree with sound doctrine.<sup>25</sup> The content of heterodox is not really mentioned in v3 instead, it is contrasted with sound teaching. To show the ascent of Christ on sound doctrine, there is in v3 also the presence of the full Christological designation *kuriou hēmōn iēsou Christou* (of our Lord Jesus Christ) though some commentators have used it in union with v14 as a prove that Vv3-16 is a discrete literary unit. Such an argument is sound but our interest mainly is in the "False Teaching

<sup>23</sup>G. Kittel, ed. (1982), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag) p163

<sup>24</sup>G. Kittel, G. ed. Vol II, 466-467

<sup>25</sup>Raymond, F.C. (2002), p155

and True Riches” and not really in “The Good Fight of Faith” found in Vv 11-16. The primary aim of advocating for “sound teaching” is for the Christian community to exhibit a kind of religious devotion that leads to a corresponding way of life- godliness which runs through the whole epistle (1Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8). This goes a long way to convince us that, “The words of Christ are the best to prevent ruptures in the church; for none who profess faith in him will dispute the aptness or authority of his word.”<sup>26</sup>

Verse 4a is the immediate result of not giving sound teaching the due attention it requires. The result is totally unhealthy. Here the heterodox teacher is described as puffy (*tetuphōtai*) and diseased (*nosōn*) (1Tim 6:4; 3:6; 2Tim 3:4). Raymond C. says “The image is that of a person in terrible physical condition, almost repugnant to look at. These puffed-up people understand nothing at all.”<sup>27</sup> This idea of ignorance is explained further by Chrysostom when he says, “It is possible then to be knowing, and yet to know nothing. For he that knows not what he ought to know, knows nothing.”<sup>28</sup> Where the right knowledge is not available, the result is a sham battle: the weapons are empty words, religious speculation, and controversy- the product is only harm.<sup>29</sup>

In verses 4b-5, the apostle tells us that their paths, as a result of empty words are often strewn with personal hurts and needless conflicts which produce the following “envy/jealousy, dissensions/ strife, slander, base suspicions, and wrangling among men who are depraved in mind.” These vices are just those that can fracture a community which Paul says in 1Cor 3:1-15 is something that should not be mentioned among brothers and sisters in Christ. Thomas Oden says,

Paul could see that the vitality of the worshiping community was being adversely affected by these perpetual quarrellers. Their innuendos and insults and abusive language were damaging to the family cohesion he sought to endanger. The scene portrayed is one of ceaseless friction, incessant altercation, with the people constantly rubbing each other the wrong way, full of scurrilous abuse, stinging insult, and heated invective, or else covert insinuation, malicious innuendo, and thinly veiled disdain.<sup>30</sup>

To avoid all the above, the conditions of v3 must be avoided too. To accept Christ and his teaching means freedom from being manifested in a diseased appetite for arguments and verbal conflicts (*logomachias*). But who is then a false teacher? He is the one “who does not adhere to the sound teaching proper to religion; he is rather inclined to speculation, polemics, and controversy”<sup>31</sup> So

<sup>26</sup>Matthew, H. Commentary on the Whole Bible, vol. 6, New York, World Bible Publishers, Sine datum, 828

<sup>27</sup>Raymond, F.C. (2002), p155

<sup>28</sup>Oden, T., First and Second Timothy and Titus, Interpretation, Louisville, John Know Press, 82

<sup>29</sup>Gealy Fred (1955), Noyes Morgan, "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and The Epistle to Titus," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 11 (New York: Abingdon Press) pp449-450.

<sup>30</sup>Oden, T., p82

<sup>31</sup>Neyrey, p.23

as to prevent the consequent actions of verses 4b-5, then the condition of v3 must be avoided, hence, sound teaching is the answer.

**The Crown of Contentment (Vv 6-8):** The central word here is *autarkeias* (self-sufficiency). Barclay quotes Lacordaire as saying, “The rock of our present day is that no one knows how to live upon little. The great men of antiquity were generally poor. It always seems to me that the retrenchment of useless expenditure, the laying aside of what one may call the relatively necessary, is the high road to Christian disentanglement of heart, just as it was to that of ancient vigour,”<sup>32</sup> If the above statement were to be used to weigh the motives of Nigerians in all facets of their lives, there is no doubt that they shall be found wanting. If only people should concentrate more on things that can last, instead of on things that do not last, then happiness would be resounding from pole to pole in the who universe. Vv 6-8 is a little homily in praise of moderation. It is directed at Christian readers in general. It is a block of Hellenistic material either combined or adapted by the author for his own purposes. As over against v5 in which the heretics are accused of making religion into a means of monetary gain, v6 says that religion is indeed a means of a great gain, but in quite other than a financial sense. What religion does at its best is to create within man self-mastery or self-sufficiency which is incongruous with the desire for wealth. To the godly man, wealth is unnecessary; he has no desire for it; he is content with what he has.<sup>33</sup> After the diatribe of Vv3-5, the author gives his attention to the relationship that exists between godliness and wealth. The contrast between “bringing nothing into” (*ouden eisēnegkamen*) and “taking nothing out of” (*oude ezenegkein*) delineates an entire human life. This also recalls the moral of the book of Job (Job 1:21).<sup>34</sup> These ideas encourage self-contentment or self-sufficiency with whatever you have, bearing in mind that life is transitory. Barclay summarily puts it this way: “Content comes when we escape the servitude to things, when we find our wealth in the love and the fellowship of men and when we realize that our most precious possession is our friendship with God, made possible through Jesus Christ.”<sup>35</sup>

In resume´, the things that are temporary can only grant us temporary happiness. For instance, *diatrophas* (food) and *skepasmata* (clothing) can only bring us temporary happiness and satisfaction, whereas, things that are permanent can only bring us permanent happiness, for example, *eusebeia* (godliness) and *autarkeia* (contentment). Whoever has the above last two qualities is already a happy person. Such people with the above two important qualities are the people we ought to be looking for to entrust them with the leadership of Nigeria.

**The Danger Associated with the Love of Money (Vv 9, 10):** Let us note from the onset that vv 9-10 is one of the most misquoted passages of the Bible, especially verse 10. 1 Tim 6:10 does

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<sup>32</sup>Barclay, W. (1997) p129

<sup>33</sup>Gealy Fred; Noyes Morgan, (1955), 450

<sup>34</sup>Raymond, F.C. (2002) p156

<sup>35</sup>Barclay, W. (1997) p129

not say that money is the root of all evil but that the **love** of money is the root of all evil. The virtue of godliness and contentment eschew the accumulation of riches/wealth (v9) as they are ends on themselves. So the attention of the Apostle, hence, is turned on those who want/desire to amass riches (*oi boulomenoi ploutein*). They are what he calls money lovers or those who can go to any length to acquire wealth (*philarguria*). Verse 9 is not talking of riches as such but of those, who ‘desire’ to be rich; they are the ones who will fall into temptation i.e. those who spent all night and day thinking of how to make money. They are what we call in Nigerian parlance, vote buyers and sellers, ritualists, illicit drug peddlers, embezzlement of public funds, etc. Hence Gealy says: “The desire to be rich opens the flood gates through which pour many other senseless and hurtful desires which submerge men in total ruin. It is a snare of the devil to trip men up to their destruction.”<sup>36</sup> We see in Luke 12: 16-31; 16:19-31 where rich men are deprived by death not only of their accumulated wealth but also of eternal blessedness.

Verse 10a, the fact that the love of money is the root of all evil indicates that there is no evil it cannot lead one into, even to the extent of losing Christian faith or killing one's parents, using one's best in life for sacrifice. In Verse 10b the author returns to the diatribe of v5. He warns of the motive behind each of our activities. If we are motivated by the desire to have money, then we are heading to ruin. For Barclay,

Money is neither bad nor good in itself, but the love of it may lead to evil. With it a man may selfishly serve his own desires; with it, he may answer the cry of his neighbour's needs. With it he may facilitate the path of wrong-doing; with it, he may make it easier for someone else to live as God meant him to do. Money is not itself an evil, but it is a great responsibility. It is powerful to good and powerful to evil.<sup>37</sup>

Scholars are of the opinion that the desire for money tends to be a thirst that is insatiable just like the seawater that hardly quenches thirst or the earth that is never satisfied (*Afo eju ala*). This desire is founded on an illusion. Some people think that having it can bring security, health, real love, and preservation from sorrow and death which are not really bad in themselves. The desire for wealth tends to make a man selfish. The gain of others is never his interest but his. Such desires end in nothing but anxiety hence Jesus urged his followers, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself (Matt. 6:25-34). “The more a man has to keep, the more he has to lose and, the tendency is for him to be haunted by the risk of loss”.<sup>38</sup> Finally, let us realize that the love of money may easily lead a man or a woman into wrong ways of getting it, and in the end, into pain and remorse. Barclay captures it this way, the one who desires wealth “may so drive his

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<sup>36</sup>Barclay, W. (1997) 131-132

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Barclay, W. (1997) 132

body in his passion to get, that he ruins his health. He may discover too late what damage his desire has done to others and be saddled with remorse.”<sup>39</sup>

This love of money is a universal problem and not just a Nigerian problem but is like Nigerians are immersed highly in it. Hence, John Chrysostom captures it thus: “It is a plague that so seizes all, some more, some less, but all in a degree. Like a fire catching a wood, that desolates and destroys all around, this passion has laid waste to the world... But since the love of money is a matter that is willed, not fated, its cure lies in a rebirth of willing, (for) did not our own choice cause it, and will not the same choice avail to extinguish it”.<sup>40</sup> Let us make it clear at this concluding session that the idolatrous love for wealth is responsible for the host of all other idolatrous love that keeps us away from the one who gives and receives all things. Hence, “the love of money is the root of all evils” (v10). It was an inordinate love of money that seduced Judas Iscariot into betraying and selling his master –Jesus (Mark 14:44-46); Ananias and Sapphire into deceptively reporting what they gathered from the sales of their property (Acts 5:1-11); and finally, the rich fool into imagining that all was well, hence, vast social implication ensued (Luke 12:13-21). It is what can make an individual or group of people gather to destroy the future of their country and thus destroy the lives of their teaming youths. Chrysostom summarily says, “Take away, therefore, the love of money and you put an end to war.”<sup>41</sup> The researcher regards the above sentence as a classical statement that is liable of standing the test of time.

**Effects of Lack of Contentment:** Lack of it is what is responsible for the falsehood that exists in high places in Nigeria. It is what makes people to long to be rich by all means and hence are prey to all kinds of trials. It is what makes people get trapped in all sorts of foolish and harmful ambitions which plunge people into ruin and destruction (1 Tim 6:9). It is what prevents politicians from using the public funds for the public good. It is what leads to bribery and corruption in all their ramifications. Lack of contentment on the part of the citizens of a country is responsible for the backwardness of such countries as Nigeria. For instance, With the discovery of oil in Nigeria at Oloibiri which is a small village in the Delta region of the country around 1956, other money-yielding ventures were dropped gradually until at the close of the Nigerian civil war in 1970, Nigeria’s economic sector became highly dependent on oil. Today oil has become the mainstay of the Nigerian economy.<sup>42</sup>As a result of the above, Nigeria “is the largest petroleum producer in Africa, the sixth largest producer in the world and largest producer of sweet (almost sulphur free) crude oil among OPEC member countries. Yet the effect of this God-given blessing is not yet really felt anywhere except among the political class, because of poor management or poor leadership, hence, the so-called political structure that prevents Nigerians from having free and

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<sup>39</sup> Barclay, W. (1997) 133

<sup>40</sup> Oden, T., First and Second Timothy and Titus, Interpretation, Louisville, John Know Press, 82

<sup>41</sup> Oden, T., 103

<sup>42</sup> Wangbu, J. (2005). “Environmental and Social Cost of Oil in Nigeria: Niger Delta Agitation For Justice Vis-à-vis Principles of Catholic Social Teachings” Niger Delta, Rich Region Poor People (Enugu: Snaap Press) 1-27.



fair elections.<sup>43</sup> But outside oil, Nigeria has a wide array of underexploited mineral resources which include natural gas, coal, bauxite, tantalite, gold, tin ore, limestone, niobium, lead, and zinc.<sup>44</sup> Despite corruption, if these are tapped then Nigeria would have by now been painted in gold. That Nigeria is a rich country is widely attested by General Yakubu Gowon who once says, Nigerian's problem was not how to get money but what to do with it.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the oil wealth which Nigeria has, it cannot boast actually of any meaningful development as a result of corruption in almost all quarters of her government, and worst of all is election rigging or electoral manipulations or malpractices. Oil which is supposed to be a blessing to the Nigerian nation turns out to be her bane; for it is through it that the multinational companies have manipulated the Nigerian leaders made them corrupt and turned them against their brothers and sisters. No wonder, Chinua Achebe opines, "There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership."<sup>46</sup> Regrettably Odusanya Richard (2022) said this about Nigeria,

We are no longer under colonialism, yet our beloved country Nigeria is heavily indebted to the tune of N35.5 trillion according to the figures from the Nigerian Debt Management office. Meaning that each citizen now owes and still counting. The indebtedness to the Chinese and others is purely on account of poor leadership and lack of proper management of our resources . . . As of today, over 100 million of our compatriots go to bed with an empty stomach. There are high incidents of killings, kidnapping, and banditry. There is 33.5 percent unemployment and many other excruciatingly exposure . . . .<sup>47</sup>

All these, no doubt, are a result of maladministration occasioned by a lack of contentment among the political leaders and the lead. What that means is that Nigeria has all it takes naturally to be not only the giant of Africa but one of the most prominent nations of the world. Yet, today, the average Nigerian struggles hard to make ends meet; sees himself or herself as being poorer than he or she was a decade ago; and finds it hard to be hopeful that things will get better soon. These facts have been intensified most recently as a result of fuel scarcity, and currency scarcity caused by hoarding. Thus, some Nigerians have hopelessly died and some are still being revived at various hospitals in Nigeria. All these are products of the love of money, bad administration, and as well as mismanagement of God-given natural and human resources firmly rooted in avarice.

<sup>43</sup>Toluwanimi Olujimi (2006). "The Chinua Achebe Foundation Interview Series" Vanguard 22/6060 (Monday, May 1) 41-44.

<sup>44</sup>The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge: <http://books.google.com/books>, Retrieved on 2008/12/26.

<sup>45</sup>David Wodu (2006). Nigeria the Backward March (No publication data, July) 6

<sup>46</sup>Chinua Achebe (1985). The Trouble with Nigeria (Taiwan: AI- United Industries & Shipping Inc.) p1

<sup>47</sup> Odusanya, R. (2022). Nigeria: In The Eyes of The World- - Wobbles & Fumbles At 61 (SAHARA TV: saharareporters.com) Retrieved on 15/2/2023

Nigeria is rated the 150th in the corruption index of the world out of the 180 countries investigated with 24 points.<sup>48</sup> It is highly regrettable. For this, there is a seeming serious revolution going on today in Nigeria as the 2023 general election is around the corner. Nigerian youths are seriously tired of the status quo, hence, Peter Obi's sudden popularity in entire Nigeria. The popular saying today in Nigeria especially among the "Obedient groups"<sup>49</sup> that as a nation "We have tried the 'umbrella' (referring to PDP) it failed us; we have also tried the 'broom' (referring to APC) it failed us; now let us try 'human beings' (referring to Labour Party - LP) they will not fail us. Nigerian youths, through their actions, reveal that they are tired of the status quo as well as a corrupt structure that has held Nigeria and her citizens hostage for years. There are also prayers and fasting going on among Christians for a peaceful election in Nigeria. Christians since months ago have been saying "Prayer for Free, Fair and Peaceful Elections in Nigeria." The prayer reads in part for the 2023 general election thus,

God our Father, as we stand at the threshold of fresh general elections in Nigeria, we your children come before you, conscious of how we have misused Your gifts and blessing in our country since we started our new democratic journey. We also humbly acknowledge how we all, leaders and followers, have turned away from You and favoured corruption, impunity, and violence. We admit that we have allowed greed, hatred, and fraud to permeate and mar our elections up till now . . . Rid us of the evils of vote-selling, vote-buying, and election rigging . . . inspire us to vote solely for the common good of our nation, so that we may elect visionary, honest and competent leaders, with hearts that beat for the welfare of one and all in our nation . . . <sup>50</sup>

In resume, contentment is the only road to the overall development and lack of it is the road to continue accepting what Nigerians are passing through today. We must use the money for what it is and not desire it as if it is God.

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<sup>48</sup> Nigeria Corruption Rank - 2022 Data - 2023 Forecast. Trading Economics <https://tradingeconomics.com>. Retrieved on 13th February 2023.

<sup>49</sup> Obedient groups are those who support Mr. Gregory Peter Obi of Labour Party to be the next president of Nigeria.

<sup>50</sup>The Prayer was composed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).