

Infusing Values Triangularly: An Exegetical Analysis of I Timothy 6:5b-11

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This article asserts Biblical values and ethical principles in applied leadership for today's leaders are clearly communicated in the Apostle Paul's epistles to Timothy. Specifically, this article examines by way of socio-rhetorical criticism the inner texture of I Timothy 6:5b-11. Through detailed exegetical analysis of this pericope, Paul infuses values and ethical principles to Timothy by using an Aristotelian literary strategy. By appealing to Timothy's mind, emotions, and character value-infusion occurs. Leaders leading followers by way of intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and moral intelligence creates a holistic infusion of values either through face-to-face mentoring and/or coaching or through other forms of communication, i.e. letter writing. Finally, this article reveals grave dangers for contemporary global leaders eager for material gain, money, and meaning apart from the pure message, mission, and ministry of Christ Jesus.

Introduction

As a religious leader, what strategies do you employ to infuse values and ethical principles into your followers? How do you appeal to the minds, hearts, and souls of your followers' ethical core? Questions like these produce more questions about mentoring and/or coaching methodologies. Religious leaders both in the secular marketplace and also in sacred enterprises (i.e. the church and/or para-church ministries) wrestle with questions of values and ethical integrity when money tends to be the driving force behind decision-making. Leadership not only sets the course of values and ethical decision making, but also leadership infuses values and ethical principles into followers. So what is the best way for today's religious leaders to infuse values and ethics into their followers? What epistemological justification¹ sets the criterion for warranted ethical leadership values? On a macro level, by examining Biblical values and ethical principles for applied leadership, the Scriptures

¹ Epistemological justification is the process of holding justifiable true beliefs.

provide epistemological justification for authorizing sound warranted leadership values from a spiritual perspective. Nevertheless, on a micro-level of analysis, I Timothy 6:5b-11 serves as the unit for socio-rhetorical exegesis.² Here different textural tools provide the necessary clarity for understanding the Apostle Paul's strategies for infusing values and ethical principles into Timothy. This analysis manifests current leadership problems relating to greed, the pursuit of money, and the desire for wealth. Furthermore, the exegetical work asserts a three-dimensional process whereby value-infusion occurs. Therefore, by examining the literary structure and content of I Timothy 6:5b-11, the Christian leader sees more clearly about value infusion and the dangers of misaligning values in a material world.

Socio-Rhetorical Analysis

Socio-rhetorical analysis "focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live."³ Here the pericope's literary structure constitutes the primary source for insight. Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul's other writings to the entire Bible also carry an intertextual analysis for a larger contextual framework. In addition, by examining everything from repetitive texture (where key words and phrases appear more than once within a text) to chiasmic structures and other parallels literary devices, socio-rhetorical exegesis grants the leader with more depth as he applies the Scripture to values-infusion. In addition, the pericope illustrates both secular and sacred foundational values and ethical principles. Finally, the literary techniques applied to the text not only entail both social and cultural events of that day, but also how the same concerns of then are present in today's culture of leadership.

Historical Background to the Pericope

The Apostle Paul writes two letters to Timothy and one to Titus. The title of "Pastoral Epistles" applies to this set of three letters.⁴ Although this title implies letters for pastors, the principles and insights gained suffice for any type of leader. Furthermore, many common themes appear in all three letters like the problem of false teachers.⁵ Nevertheless, this paper examines specifically leaders and their desire for wealth. The desire for wealth not only was a problem in the time of Jesus' leadership (see Matthew 5:19-32), but also in Paul's time as well, to our time today in the twenty-first century. Thus, through the history of humanity, the desire for wealth poisons leadership character.

² A type of hermeneutics outlined by Vernon Robbins.

³ Vernon Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, Penn: Trinity, 1996), 1.

⁴ D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 359.

⁵ Ibid.

Scholars believe Paul writes Timothy in the mid 60s from Macedonia.⁶ During this time frame, wealth in the Greco-Roman culture permeates the philosophies and society in the day of Paul and Timothy. During this wealthy time period, Epicurean and Hedonistic philosophies emerge.⁷ As a result, the Hellenistic culture and society promotes self-indulgent pleasures, whereby people become “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, etc...”⁸ In other words, the time in which Paul and Timothy lived appears to resemble our age. Questions pertaining specifically to riches and greed appear in Paul’s writings to Timothy. With so much wealth, “T.S. Eliot asked, fifty-five years ago, whether our modern Western society was founded in fact on anything other than the principle of compounded interest.”⁹ Henceforth, the Apostle Paul could have asked the same question in his day.

Nevertheless, Paul is a Hebrew living in a Gentile world.¹⁰ On the other hand, Timothy is half Jewish and half Greek; for his mother is a Jewish believer in Christ, and Timothy’s father is from Greece.¹¹ Thus, if Paul’s mission is to win the Gentiles for Christ, then Paul’s protégé and partner, Timothy, is a perfect strategic alliance into both worlds. Thus, Timothy is cultured in both the Jewish and Greek traditions. Therefore, Paul sets out with Timothy to plant churches in multiple geographical regions.¹² Traveling globally in their Greco-Roman world indicates several things that are inferred by the context of the times. First, they had the financial means to travel. Second, the times indicate peace and abundance, for it was safe to travel globally. Third, Paul and Timothy’s global leadership allowed them to share strategic principles applicable to both their time and day, and also to our Western contemporary culture.

Within the Greco-Roman culture, “Ethics was the principle concern of the leading Hellenistic philosophies. Their aim was to teach people how to live.”¹³ This is exactly a portion of Paul’s mission. In addition, “Moral instruction was quite specific about what is right and wrong and what one’s duties in various social relationships were.”¹⁴ Paul uses a Hellenistic literary concept known as paraenesis to infuse values into Timothy. Paraenesis entails “moral exhortation to follow a given course of action or to abstain from a contrary behavior.”¹⁵ Hence, the pericope in focus reveals how Paul encourages Timothy in a moral way of thinking, feeling, and behaving, while building an argument, which functions as a warning. For “paraenesis presupposed some positive relationship between the parties or that the one giving instruction was a moral superior, and it involved habits of behavior already accepted within

⁶ Ibid, 373.

⁷ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987).

⁸ II Timothy 3:2.

⁹ N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 155.

¹⁰ See Philippians 3:5 and II Timothy 2:1.

¹¹ See Acts 16:1 and II Timothy 1:5.

¹² Frank Thielman, *A Contextual Approach: Paul and the Law* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1994), 230.

¹³ Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 301.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 302.

the society or community of which the partiers were members.”¹⁶ Thus, Paul and Timothy were apart of the sub-culture of Christianity, which ascribes to certain sets of moral behaviors. Therefore, Paul follows Hellenistic moralists, as they infuse “their teaching by use of the literary and rhetorical conventions of personal examples, lists of virtues and vices...tables of duties...and lists of hardships.”¹⁷

Finally, “the Pastorals place greater stress than the other letters on the believer’s conformity to the most noble virtues of the wider society.”¹⁸ Paul living in this period realizes, “the Greco-Roman world was characterized by moral corruption.”¹⁹ Paul depicts this in his ethical warnings to Timothy. Within the unit of analysis, the idolatry of money propels problems during the Greco-Roman culture, which many Jewish apologists believe “low morality sprang from idolatry.”²⁰ Furthermore, Paul’s letters reveal “an ethics of Christian culture.”²¹ In other words, Paul’s “letters use Hellenistic vocabulary to construct a model of the Christian life.”²² Therefore, this historical background information gives a framework as one opens Paul’s text.

The Unit of I Timothy 6:5b-11

The unit opens and closes with a call to action. In the beginning of the pericope, Paul calls Timothy to “withdraw,” and in the closing Paul calls Timothy to “pursue”. Thus, the narrative contains a distinct dichotomy of withdrawing from one ideology to pursuing another. Furthermore, the unit entails words symbolizing action, movement, and/or logical progression of behavior. In addition, two chiastic structures along with a parallel structure and progressive texture create a powerful and beautiful piece of literature. The unit reads as follows:

Who suppose that godliness is a means of gain from such withdraw yourself.
Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into
this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and
clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall
into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which
drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all
kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness,
and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God,

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 303.

¹⁸ Thielman, *A Contextual Approach*, 235.

¹⁹ Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 63.

²⁰ Ibid., 63.

²¹ Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper, 1951), 164.

²² Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 57.

flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness (I Timothy 6:5b-11).

The Infusion Strategy and Process

Paul infuses values through both personal face-to-face exchanges and also through letter writing. The face-to-face exchanges entail everything from discipling, mentoring, coaching, and modeling the character, attributes, values, and ethics of what it means to be a Christian leader. With this face-to-face strategy, Paul reminds his disciples to follow his example.²³ In addition, in I Timothy 4:12, Paul encourages Timothy to also implement this strategy by being a model to his followers. However, in this narrative, Paul engages in an Aristotelian methodology to infuse values and ethics. Aristotle established three different styles of argumentation: “an appeal to *ethos* or character, to *pathos* or the emotions, and to *logos* or the reason.”²⁴ Whether or not Paul cogitatively realized he was using an Aristotelian methodology, it is certain that Paul writes as a Jew to the Gentile community. This community primarily consisted of the Greco-Roman world in which both Paul and Timothy traveled. Therefore, this paper argues that within Paul’s writings other literary devices, such as “chreia (moral anecdote), gnome (maxim), anaskeue and kataskeue (refutation and confirmation),”²⁵ are clearly depicted. Hence, the narrative reveals an appeal to Timothy’s mind, emotions, and character.

An Appeal to Logos

In Paul’s writings to the church at Rome, he appeals to the transforming of the people’s thinking from the pagan philosophies to that of Christ. When he says, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind,”²⁶ Paul is saying, “don’t let the pagan world shape your worldview, your praxis, your symbolic universe, your thinking, your narrational world.”²⁷ And this is exactly what is taking place among some of the leadership that Timothy oversees. Thus, in verse 7 of the pericope, Paul clearly infuses an ethical concept and worldview by appealing to logic. Due to Paul’s incredible intellect of the law,²⁸ one can infer that he drew from other sources of Scripture. Verses from Job 1:21, Psalms 49:17, and Ecclesiastes 5:15 to name a few, all represent the logical outcome to one possessing material objects. Likewise, Paul builds a logical case of the materialistic lifestyle. The verse (I Timothy 6:7) reads, “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” This logical appeal to the mind clearly reveals a form of epistemic certainty based on both a through

²³ See II Thessalonians 3:9.

²⁴ Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 110.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Romans 12:2.

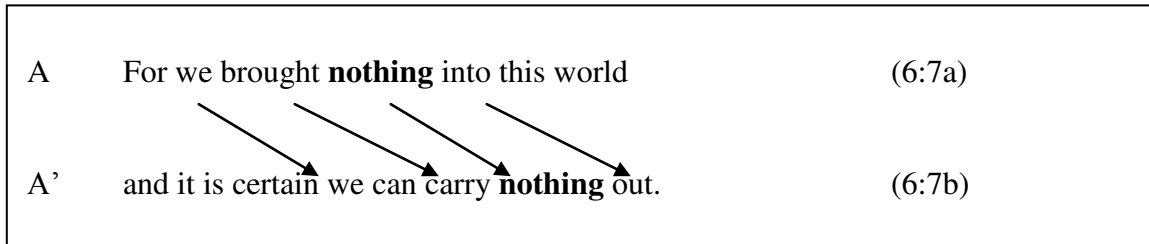
²⁷ Wright, *Saint Paul*, 143.

²⁸ See Philippians 3:5.

understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures, and also common sense. For anyone living with a properly functioning rationale, understands that we leave everything behind upon our deaths. Thus, Paul gives us the first maxim within this text: namely, you leave it all behind.

This verse also provides the first parallel literary structure. The structure illustrates action from *bringing in* to *carrying out* (emphasize mine). The diagram below illustrates this point.

The First and Only True Parallel Structure



In this parallel structure, Paul uses four key words to give his content power. With two of the words being repeated (“we” and “nothing”), Paul flips the other words from “brought” to “carry” and from “into” to “out.” This type of rhetorical structure reveals Paul’s brilliance as a writer and thinker.

Paul continues in the next verse, with another appeal to the mind. I Timothy 6:8 states, “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” Here, Paul is paraphrasing the words of Jesus, which reads: “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”²⁹ Hence Paul appeals to Timothy’s mind about what is truly important in life. It is clear from both Paul and Jesus that clothes and food do not give meaning to one’s life. Next, Paul appeals to Timothy’s emotions.

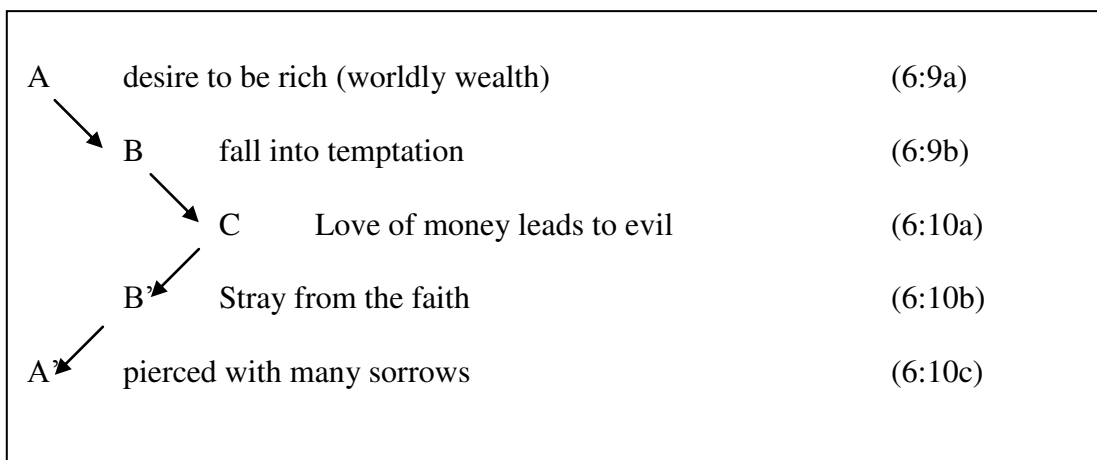
An Appeal to Pathos

The following verses in the pericope provide an appeal to pathos. The Greek for pathos means suffering³⁰. Interestingly, I Timothy 9-10 ends with suffering. Here, Paul arouses the emotional perspective to infuse valuable truths. Paul creates a chiastic structure to infuse valuable truths into Timothy, by appealing to the logical progression of emotions. By combining these two verses together, the centrality of them establishes another maxim; namely, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”

²⁹ Matthew 6:25, 26.

³⁰ From Webster’s Dictionary.

A Chiastic Structure



Paul progresses through this chiastic structure with action. Desiring to be rich leads to a moral, spiritual, and emotional fall with physical consequences. Thus, the desire for worldly wealth eventually leads to pain and suffering. Therefore, Paul's selection of emotive words, strategically allow him to infuse valuable truths into Timothy's heart. In addition, Paul shows the progressive consequences to the value system of his day. Ironically, the desire for worldly wealth continues to bring leaders today down.

An Appeal to Ethos

Now that Paul has appealed to Timothy's intellect and heart, he now infuses values by appealing to Timothy's character. In the closing section of this pericope, Paul calls Timothy to an active pursuit of character. Just as the pericope begins with Paul's warning to withdraw from the leaders who desire to use godliness for self-interest, Paul now inspires Timothy to both flee from desiring riches and to pursue the values and character of what it truly means to be a godly leader.

This last unit begins with the phrase, "but you." This phrase is a polemical-rhetorical device "designed to emphasize a break with, and to create distance from" worldly leaders.³¹ Here Paul appeals to the ethos of Timothy's soul. Timothy's character defines the core of who he is in Christ. And Paul understands that Timothy is "a man of God" in his very essence. Thus, Timothy is not like the other religious leaders desiring material gain, but rather Timothy is a leader who desires God. In

³¹ Towner, *The Letters*, 407.

leadership development, Paul is in the process of developing Timothy as a leader through character and ethical development. Ethos building continues to unfold as the protégés become more like Christ.

In this pursuit to become more like Christ, Paul commands Timothy to flee from the worldly values, and to pursue the values and virtues of God. Therefore, the “flee/pursue” formula means “become what you are in Christ.”³² Furthermore, “the two verbs (“flee, pursue”) were common terms in Greek ethical teaching, and were sometimes juxtaposed as here.”³³ Henceforth, Paul “shifts from a set of values and aspirations that he has evaluated and rejected to an approved measurement of holiness.”³⁴

Next, in verse 11 of the pericope, Paul provides a powerful list of religious leadership attributes, which is “a typical feature of Hellenistic ethical teaching.”³⁵ By simply listing these attributes, values, and virtues, Paul infuses the characteristics needed not only for Timothy, but also for any one who desires to lead by righteousness. The six values Paul spells out for Timothy are common among Paul’s own character and thought. Since Paul and Timothy travel together, when Timothy receives this letter from Paul, Paul simply reminds Timothy of the many ethical attributes Timothy has witnessed in him to lead and live from. Henceforth, the ethos of Paul’s appeal to “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience [and] gentleness,” are not only distinctively Christian in nature, but also they are in opposition to the self-centered values of the world’s society.

But why does Paul begin the list of values with “righteousness”? Righteousness is a common term, “describing the whole of ethical and observable life. It means moral ‘uprightness’ in the sense of a life lived in accordance with God’s law.”³⁶ Then “godliness” appears second in Paul’s list of values. The term “godliness” is the linchpin between “righteousness” and “faith.” What this means is, that righteous living apart from God simply is not sufficient. For many leaders may lead and live by some sense of what it means to lead and live righteously, but if their definition of righteousness is not grounded in godliness, then their righteousness resembles dirty rags.³⁷ In addition, “godliness” also gives meaning to the type of faith, love, endurance, and gentleness, which follows. In other words, Paul is not espousing any kind of faith in anything or anyone. No, this faith is directly apart of godliness. Likewise, the love Paul encourages Timothy with is a love rooted in God’s character. Furthermore, godly endurance signifies a covenantal commitment to not give up when the going gets rough. Also, endurance “expresses the determination and perseverance that are needed to support faith and love in the face of adversity.”³⁸ Finally, the last term Paul mentions is “gentleness.” Therefore, as Paul brings the ethos to fruition, he “seeks to integrate belief and behavior into a holistic pattern of existence. It is not accidental that he began this restatement of Timothy’s commission from

³² Ibid., 406.

³³ Ibid., 408.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 409.

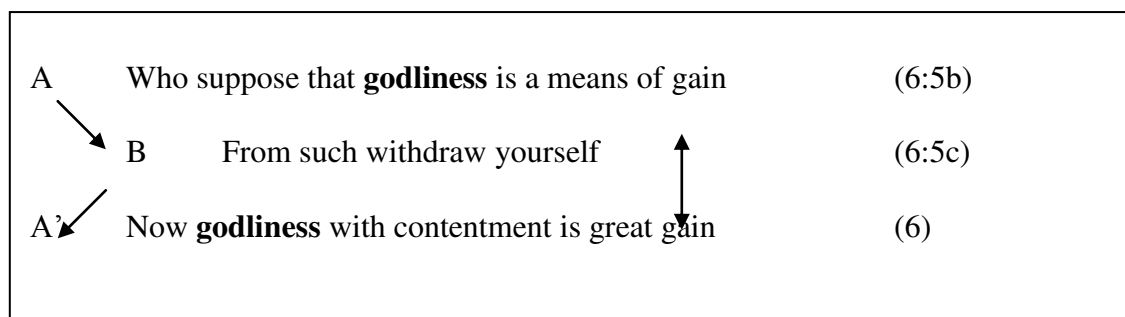
³⁷ See Isaiah 64:6

³⁸ Towner, *The Letters*, 409.

an ethical perspective: the starting point for ministry is a manner of life that is visibly different from that patterned after the values of the world.”³⁹

Back to the Beginning

Since I took the tri-angular perspective of intellectual intelligence, emotional intelligence, and moral intelligence, I will now go back to the beginning where the worldly values begin in the pericope. As stated earlier, Paul opens the unit with a call to withdraw. Well, what exactly is Timothy to withdraw from? Is it money? No, Paul calls Timothy to withdraw from professing religious leaders who believe godliness is a way to generate worldly wealth. The diagram below illustrates this in the first chiastic structure for the pericope.



In this diagram, the apostle Paul emphasizes both “godliness” and “gain.” In (A), many religious leaders believed that being godly or at least masking a form of godliness would ensure financial gain for their personal life. However, from such religious leaders, Paul warns Timothy to withdraw his association from them and this type of thinking. For the aim of godliness is God, not money. As Jesus proclaimed, “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”⁴⁰ Financial gain should not be the driving intentionality for one’s leadership.

Repetitive Texture

As the above chiastic structure illustrates, repetitive texture exists in the opening of the text. Paul adds meaning to his message through the use of repetitive key words, phrases, and concepts. The repetitive texture reveals three different collections of people. First, the pericope classifies people “who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.” These individuals also include “those who desire to

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Luke 16:13 TNIV

be rich.” Then the term “we” classifies the next group of people. Here, the first appearance of “we” may imply both all of humanity, for all of humanity “brought nothing into this world,” and they all take nothing out upon death. Nevertheless, “we” may also imply the relationship among Christians living contently. Or the term “we” entails, in the strictest sense, the relationship between Paul and Timothy. Finally, the last person the pericope identifies is Timothy, the “man of God.” Since Paul’s letter addresses Timothy (“To Timothy, a true son in the faith:” 1:2a), then clearly Paul’s warning, “withdraw yourself” refers to Timothy. Although, other key words and concepts, such as Paul’s list of leadership value-traits are important, because Paul does not repeat them within the unit, they are not discussed here.

So, what is Paul saying about these terms: “godliness,” “gain,” “nothingness,” and “contentment”? The first appearance of the term “godliness” does not signify the same content, which Paul espouses to the word in the other two uses of it. At this point, “godliness” is nothing more than a fakery. The faithful rather are truly godly. In other words, false teachers believe that godliness is a tool to get what one truly desires. Remembering the words of the LORD found in I Samuel 16:7, “But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’” I do not know if Paul had this teaching in mind when he wrote this letter to Timothy, but the resemblance in content is amazing. Nevertheless, “although financial ‘gain’ (or, to be precise, ‘means of gain’) is meant in this first use of the noun, Paul will shift to spiritual ‘gain’” in the repetitive reframe⁴¹. The second use of the phrase “godliness with contentment” shifts from temporal gain to eternal gain. Thus, Paul then takes the second term for “godliness” and eventually lists it as the strategic linchpin for all leadership values and ethical development. Therefore, leaders need to lead into the future with an eternal perspective, rather than say only a 10-year vision plan for material progress.

Finally, the term “love” in verse 10 and verse 11 are not the same. The Greek word for “love” in verse 10 is “philarguros.”⁴² This word comes from combining “philos” (“fondness”) with “arguros” (“silver”) to get the meaning of “avaricious.”⁴³ In verse 11, the word for “love” is “agape,” from the term “agapao.”⁴⁴ This term refers “to a moral love, doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason.”⁴⁵ In other words, Paul engages Timothy holistically through this relational love. For example, “Employees want to be considered for their brains and their hearts as well as their hands.”⁴⁶ Thus, this love as revealed in verse 11, speaks to the logos, pathos, and ethos of Timothy. On the other hand, the word “love” in the prior verse is a pervert form of loving material power like that of money.

⁴¹ Towner, *The Letters*, 398.

⁴² <http://strongnumbers.com/greek>.

⁴³ Ibid.

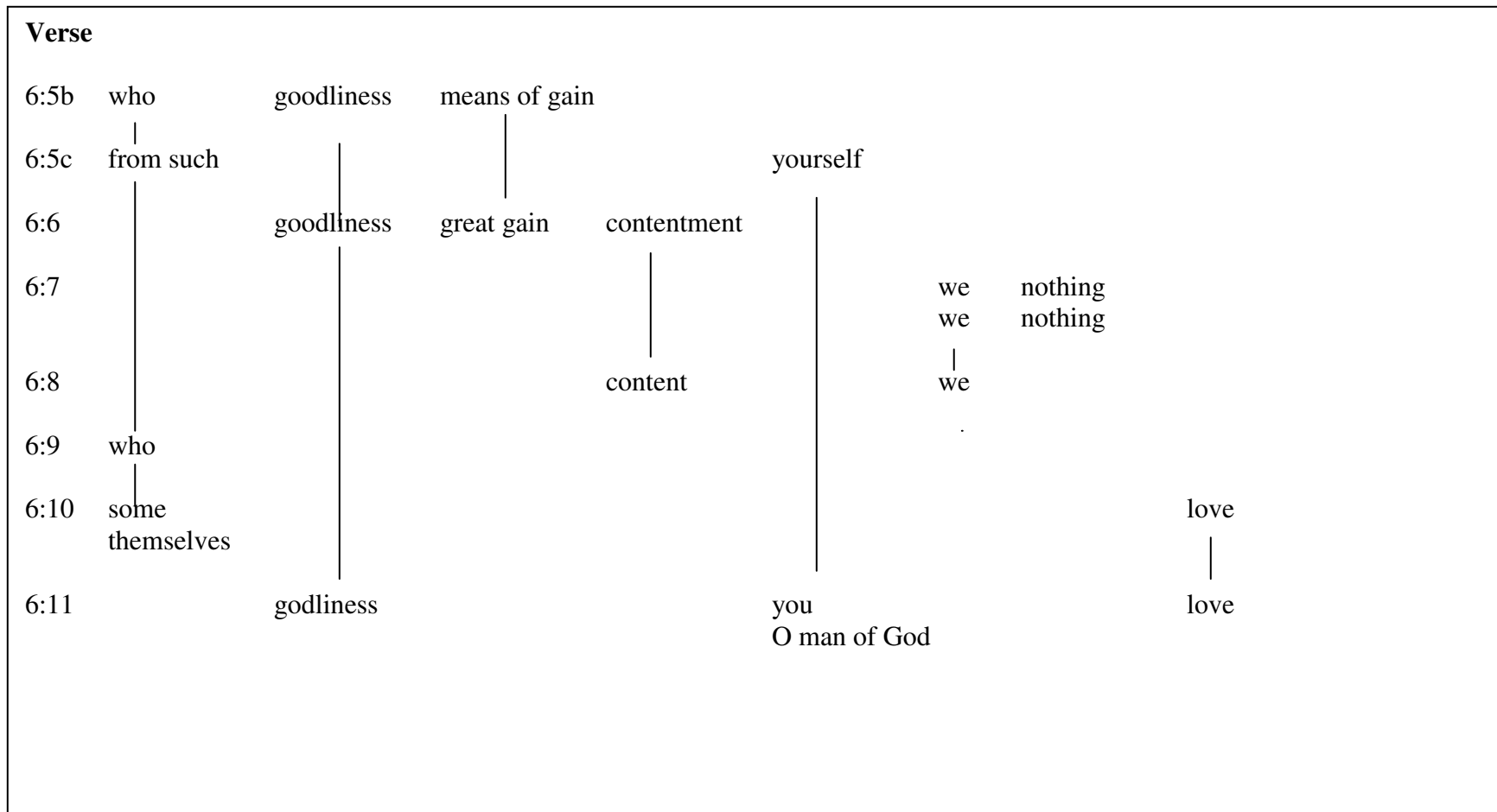
⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Bruce Winston, *Be A Leader for God’s Sake* (Virginia Beach: School of Leadership, Regent University, 2002), 5.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

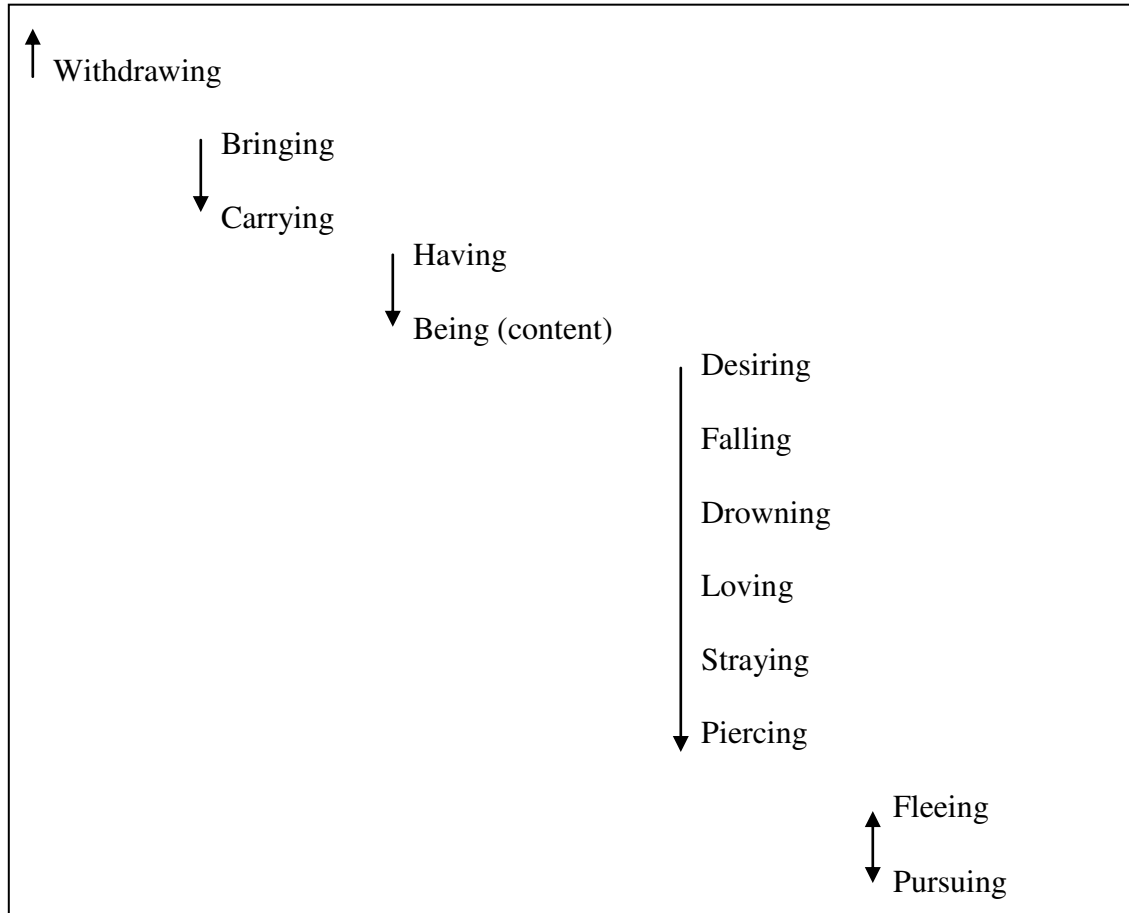
Nevertheless, I elaborate a little more on the term “love” as we see it through progressive texture. However, the chart below illustrates, (how words like “love” repeat), repetitive texture more fully.

Repetitive Texture



Progressive Texture

Lastly, in the realm of this literary analysis, progressive texture emerges. To reiterate, the entire pericope progresses with action. It begins with a call to action and it ends with a call to an active gentleness. The chart below illustrates this progressive action.



Specifically, the call to action in verses 9 and 10 are of vital importance. For these verses not only represent an emotional progression, but also a logical and behavioral one as well. For those who desire riches, whether the desire is cognitive or emotional, fall into deadly traps as the passage proclaims. Once these leaders and/or followers are given to their own foolish and harmful lusts, then it is as if they drown. Falling is bad enough, but to drown from your fall is even worse. “For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed,”⁴⁷ follows the same logical progression of Paul. This type of behavior

⁴⁷ James 1:13b, 14.

and action, leads to a false sense of love. For the love is directed toward a material, temporal, deceptive evil, called money. This is a complete difference from the “love” tied directly between “faith” and “patience” rooted in godliness from Paul’s list. It should be of no surprise that Paul believes in love. For both Paul and Timothy labored together in the city of Corinth. It is in Paul’s letter to this particular church, where he proclaims “love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own...”⁴⁸ Therefore, the term “love” progresses from generating evil to producing righteousness.

Finally, the texture verses 9 and 10 convey a change from the present tense to the past tense of action. For the chart illustrates the following:

| | Active | Passive |
|---------|--------|---------|
| Outcome | Fall | Strayed |
| Outcome | Drown | Pierced |

Paul uses the present tense before the climatic maxim: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” Then Paul changes from active action to the past tense. Hence, once a leader takes the fall for worldly riches and the love of money, then the leader will most likely drown into moral destruction losing both his ability to lead and his faith. This desire and action for the love of money and material wealth causes greediness, which produces many sorrows. For example, leaders like Ken Lay and Bernard Ebbers clearly represent this type of leadership failure in today’s world.

Today’s Christian leaders

The love of money continues to drive leaders to their destruction both in the marketplace and also in the church. Bernard Ebbers of WorldCom “defended himself from the pulpit of a Baptist church in Brookhaven, Mississippi” claiming “no one will find me to have knowingly committed fraud.”⁴⁹ Ken Lay of Enron “was a trustee of one of the biggest Methodist churches in Houston” creating “a culture of criminality, arrogance, and greed” within his company.⁵⁰ Mark Belnick, the general counsel for Tyco, “earned an astonishing \$200 million in 2000, misappropriated another \$10 million to buy and renovate a vacation home in Park City, Utah,” while giving “generous donations to charities associated with Opus Dei, a conservative Catholic organization.”⁵¹ These three examples reveal modern day problems with greed in the marketplace.

Nevertheless, questionable ethos traits pertaining to wealthy pastoral leaders raise suspicion among followers and observers. From Jerry Falwell to Rick Warren, these mega star pastors also

⁴⁸ See I Corinthians 13 for the entire discourse on love.

⁴⁹ Marc Gunther, *Faith and Fortune*, 257.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

oversee multimillion-dollar enterprises where money often influences ministry. Just recently, *Forbes* financial magazine reported the following: “Reverend Falwell, who used his television ministry to raise \$2 billion for conservative causes in the 1980s, isn’t the money machine he once was. He and his son have spent the last few years battling to work off \$100 million-plus in debt...” while “they’re looking to raise \$1 billion to solidify Liberty’s legacy...”⁵² The *Forbes* article continues to reveal how Falwell raises funds to build everything from a basketball arena and football stadium to an indoor ice rink all totaling over \$19 million.⁵³

As Dr. Corne Bekker, professor of leadership and hermeneutics at Regent University proclaimed “American evangelical leaders are creating consumers rather than making disciples for Christ.”⁵⁴ This statement is clearly portrayed in the mass marketing and sales of mega-hit books and accessories like *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rick Warren who has sold more than 26 million copies. With Warren’s church annual budget of \$30 million and his non-profit network, Purpose-Driven Ministries annual budget of \$39 million, *Fortune* magazine’s writer, Marc Gunther asks, “Will Success Spoil Rick Warren?”⁵⁵ To this question, only God knows the answer, but as a man of the cloth, Warren prefers to see himself as a “spiritual entrepreneur” rather than taking on the biblical motif of a shepherd. Due to the enormous success of Warren, “Warren told his flock that he could no longer take care of them and that, from then on, they’d have to care for one another.”⁵⁶ As Gunther continues about Warren, “He talks about the sin of pride, but basks in the spotlight.”⁵⁷

Just this week, Christian leadership guru, John Maxwell sent me a personal invitation to play golf with him in Pebble Beach, California for a mere \$20,000. What does this type of marketing and appeal say to the next generation of Christian leaders? Is this type of thinking the result of pursuing financial gain even if it is not for the individual leader, but rather for the organization? Is this type of success really good for leaders in the marketplace, and also those in the ministry? The reason I raise these questions, is that Christian leaders, be it in the marketplace like Ken Lay and Bernie Ebbers or those in the ministry like Jerry Falwell and Rick Warren, all have a call to be the light,⁵⁸ rather than bask in the light. In the first instance, the leader’s light illumines others to the Person and work of Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul does with Timothy. And in the later case, the leader all too often gets caught up in the worldly spotlights of the glam and glittery lifestyle of Hollywood pursuing the “harmful lusts” Paul warns Timothy about, rather than the life of “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, [and] gentleness.”⁵⁹ To reiterate the words of our Lord: “No one can serve two masters. Either he will

⁵² Dirk Smillie, “Jerry Falwell Inc,” (*Fortune*, September 18, 2006).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ From a lecture in September 2006 at Virginia Beach, Virginia.

⁵⁵ Marc Gunther, “Will Success Spoil Rick Warren?” (*Fortune*, 2006).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ See Matthew 5:14-16.

⁵⁹ See I Timothy 6:11.

hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”⁶⁰

So what does this mean in light of value-infusion? What type of values are Christian leaders communicating to their followers? Paul clearly communicates that greed is a form of idolatry. In Colossians 3:5 Paul writes, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry” (TNIV). This verse is important because if greed is idolatry, and if leaders “have strayed from the faith in their greediness” (I Timothy 6:10), then there is a direct link between leaders falling due to idol worship. In other words, when Jesus was tempted by the devil, as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, Satan has the power to give worldly blessings to those who worship him either directly or indirectly through greed.⁶¹ For Matthew states the following: “Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”⁶² Even though God clearly can bless His people in material ways while on earth, Christian leaders should also realize that some material blessings may only be disguised as a blessing while truly being “a snare” leading “into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition” (from I Timothy 6:9).

Leadership Theory in Light of the Text

Paul and Timothy fight against secular leadership theories and practices during the social and cultural period of their day. Narcissistic leadership from Paul and Timothy’s time continues into the twenty-first century. Gary Yukl defines narcissism as “a personality syndrome that involves an extreme need for esteem (e.g. prestige, status, attention, admiration, adulation), a strong need for power, weak self-control, and indifference about the needs and welfare of others.”⁶³ In leadership, narcissism craves power, position, prestige, and privilege. In doing so, narcissistic leaders desire more money, material wealth, and meaning apart from the true mission, message, and ministry of Jesus Christ. Narcissistic leadership focuses completely on the leader and their tenacity “to undertake ambitious, grandiose projects to glorify themselves,”⁶⁴ rather than on glorifying God. I argue that Paul’s warning to Timothy about the leaders who were driven to ministry due to financial reasons, were practicing narcissistic leadership. Furthermore, these narcissistic leaders infuse worldly values into their followers by their example and lifestyle.

What leadership theory is best in keeping oneself content while infusing values in followers? Often many Christian leaders can be heard saying “I want to do something big for God,” or “let’s

⁶⁰ See Matthew 6:24 NIV.

⁶¹ See Matthew 4:8-11.

⁶² See Matthew 5:8, 9.

⁶³ Gary Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations* (5th ed., Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 187.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

dream big things for the kingdom,” or “We need more funding to be able to reach more people for Christ.” All of these futuring statements lack a basic foundation for contentment. Rarely do followers hear leaders say, “lets not grow bigger, but lets make the most of what we already have. Let’s be content with our material blessings, and pursue deeper the heart and character of God.” Why do followers not hear this from leaders? Often the answer lies in the leadership theory, which impacts leaders’ thoughts and actions. Most, if not all, leadership theories, inspires a great future, which entails a need for more cash flow. Why else would Jerry Falwell need an extra billion dollars, be \$100 million in debt, while once generating \$2 billion in donations? Why do the Rick Warren’s of the world need to leave their flock to become “spiritual entrepreneurs”? Has the Lord called His leaders to become fundraisers, money managers, and spiritual entrepreneurs? Like Warren, many Christian leaders sit at the feet of Peter Drucker rather than at the feet of Jesus, and in doing so have missed Paul’s call to a higher order of ethics and character.

Biblical ethical leadership theory may be the best leadership theory and practice for keeping oneself content while infusing values in followers. Although Immanuel Kant believed people have a duty to do what is right regardless of the outcome, ethical leadership argues that both the means and the ends are vital. It not just a utilitarian ethical approach, which examines the end results either. Furthermore, biblical ethical leadership theory is not simply a list of virtues. Even Aristotle’s list of virtuous living is simply not sufficient, although it may be very necessary. In addition to contemporary philosophy of Jeremy Bentham or John Stuart Mill’s attempt of doing “the greatest good for the greatest number of people,”⁶⁵ even as good as this may sound, it is not necessarily the call for the Christian leader.

So what exactly is biblical ethical leadership theory? It is an understanding “that moral and intellectual virtues direct our thinking and actions in situation-specific ways that call for behaviors relevant to our roles and responsibilities”⁶⁶ as leaders leading from the authority of God’s Word. Since “virtues are more ‘caught than taught’ in that many times they are infused through modeling, mentoring, and coaching,⁶⁷ it is clear from Paul’s writings that he understood “the notion of a virtue allows us to see how closely our emotional, intellectual and behavioral lives are intertwined.”⁶⁸ Thus an ethical leadership theory sees followers through a tri-fold lens of emotions, mind, and behavior. And since Jesus calls His people to love Him with all of the heart, soul, mind, and strength,⁶⁹ a biblical theory for ethical leadership takes this into account. Furthermore, leaders who practice appealing to followers’ logos, pathos, and ethos in the name of Jesus infuse values and ethical principles warranted on the authority of Scripture.

⁶⁵ Michael Z. Hackman, and Craig E. Johnson, *Leadership: A Communication Perspective* (4th ed., Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004), 325.

⁶⁶ Jay Wood, *Epistemology*, (Downer Groves: IL, InterVarsity Press, 1998), 43.

⁶⁷ Hackman and Johnson, *Leadership*, Ibid., 328.

⁶⁸ Wood, *Epistemology*, Ibid., 183.

⁶⁹ See Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, the text provides a tri-perspective for leaders to infuse values and ethical principles. By appealing to followers' logos, pathos, and ethos, a holistic approach to leadership theory and value-infusion emerges. Since people possess a mental intelligence, emotional intelligence, and moral intelligence, leaders who communicate to all three forms of intelligence are better to equip their followers with values and ethical insights than the leaders who simply communicate to one form of their followers' intelligibility. Furthermore, the text reveals problems not only prevalent in the culture of Paul and Timothy, but ours as well. N.T. Wright proclaims, "the biggest of them is the self-interest of those in positions of power, I fail to see why the churches as a whole could not, as a matter of preaching the gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus, join together in naming the idol Mammon for what he is, and celebrating the love of God in Christ in his place."⁷⁰ For the desire to use Christianity as a means of gain continues to be relevant in our society among professing evangelicals. If God's mission for His people were to pursue a life of materialism, then He would have simply commanded it. However, in I Timothy 6:5b-11, Paul further reveals the vast differences between secular leadership thought and sacred leadership thought. For the narcissistic leader, who ultimately is only concerned for his own gain, Paul challenges Timothy to pursue a higher order of values and life through the character and attributes of God. Hopefully, more research pertaining to a biblical foundation for values infusion will bring Christian leaders back to the basics of what it means to lead by following Christ.

⁷⁰ N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 155.

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