

The Impacts of Prosperity Gospel and Exploitation on Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria

Taiwo Bamiji Olunlade, Ph.D.

Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts

University of Benin,

Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria

tayebamiji@yahoo.com

Abstract

In recent decades, prosperity preaching and teachings have become dominant features in many Christian churches, especially within Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Africa and other parts of the world. The abuse of the teaching of prosperity is often driven by a theology that equates faithfulness with material wealth and physical health, leading to a wrong interpretation of "seed sowing" and the pursuit of personal success. The study investigates the extent to which the abuse of prosperity preaching and teachings impacts believers' spiritual growth, financial well-being, and doctrinal understanding. The problem this paper addresses is the growing manipulation of believers through misinterpreted scriptures and the commercialization of faith by some **church** leaders, which often results in psychological abuse, economic hardship, and spiritual disillusionment among followers. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, relying on a critical review of existing scholarly literature, theological texts, and documented case studies. The findings reveal that while prosperity messages provide hope and motivation in contexts of poverty and marginalization, their abuse often leads to religious manipulation, financial exploitation, doctrinal imbalance, and weakened critical thinking among believers. The theology tends to promote a transactional relationship with God, undermining core biblical teachings on suffering, discipleship, and social justice. The study recommends a return to sound biblical teaching, enhanced theological education for both clergy and laity, institutional accountability for religious organizations, and the promotion of spiritual discernment among believers. It concludes that a balanced gospel message that integrates both spiritual and material dimensions of life without exploitation is essential for the health of the Church in contemporary society.

Keywords: Impact, abuse, prosperity, preaching, believers.

Introduction

Prosperity preaching, also known as the prosperity gospel or Word of Faith theology, emerged in Nigeria in the late 1970s and early 1980s, heavily influenced by American Pentecostalism. The teachings of American preachers like Kenneth Hagin, Oral Roberts, Kenneth Copeland, and T.L. Osborn laid the foundation for this movement. These preachers emphasized faith, positive confession, and financial giving as keys to divine health and wealth (Gifford, 1998).

Nigerian pastors who encountered these teachings through Bible schools, books, crusades, or satellite television began adopting and contextualizing them. One of the earliest Nigerian proponents was Archbishop Benson Idahosa, who introduced prosperity teachings through his Church of God Mission and television ministry in the 1980s. Idahosa's spiritual sons, such as Bishop David Oyedepo, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, and Dr. Mike Okonkwo, later expanded the message with greater emphasis on wealth as evidence of divine favor (Ukah, 2008).

The 1990s and early 2000s saw a massive proliferation of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, many of which embraced prosperity theology as central to their message. The promise of financial breakthrough, healing, and success appealed to the masses amid Nigeria's economic decline, high unemployment, and political instability (Marshall, 2009). The theology gained more traction through

crusades, televangelism, and books such as *Understanding Financial Prosperity* by Bishop Oyedepo (Oyedepo, 1997).

Critics argue that the prosperity gospel in Nigeria has distorted biblical teachings, promoted materialism, and led to exploitation of poor congregants (Obadare, 2020). Despite these criticisms, prosperity preaching remains dominant in Nigerian Christianity, shaping how many believers perceive faith, suffering, success, and God's blessing. Prosperity preaching—also called the 'prosperity gospel' or 'word of faith' movement—teaches that God desires believers to be wealthy, healthy, and successful. It appeals to the masses since it promises divine blessings in return for faith, positive confession, and financial contributions to religious ministries. Truly, prosperity preaching opens doors for enormous blessings to many believers, however, the abuse of its teachings in some churches today distorts the gospel impacts negatively on a good number of believers.

The commercialization of faith raises ethical concerns about exploitation and theological integrity. Prosperity preaching has become a dominant trend in many modern churches, particularly within Pentecostal and charismatic movements. While it promises divine wealth, health, and success, critics argue that it often fosters exploitation, distorts biblical theology, and damages the faith and finances of believers. The teachings or preaching of some selfish and materialistic preachers foster manipulation, false hope, and spiritual abuse, especially among the poor. This paper analyses theological, sociocultural, and ethical dimensions of prosperity preaching in Africa. The article also examines the concept of religious exploitation through prosperity preaching, analyzing its psychological, economic, and spiritual effects on believers. It also explores theological critiques, scriptural misinterpretations, and the need for doctrinal balance in the present-day church.

Theology of Prosperity Preaching

Prosperity theology is grounded in the belief that God desires all believers to be wealthy, healthy, and successful. The crux of prosperity preaching is the belief that God rewards faithfulness with material wealth, good health, and success. Nevertheless, some materialistic prosperity preachers quote scriptures such as 3 John 2, Deuteronomy 8:18, and Malachi 3:10 to validate their claims. According to Gifford (1998), this theology appeals to Africans who seek hope in the midst of poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment. The message offers a shortcut to prosperity, often bypassing structural or systemic realities.

However, these verses are frequently taken out of context, ignoring other parts of the Bible that speak of suffering, stewardship, and spiritual endurance (Bowler, 2013). They may emphasize Malachi 3:10 to promote tithing, yet overlook Jesus' warnings about riches in Matthew 6:19–21. Prosperity theology, often linked with the Word of Faith movement, emphasizes health, wealth, and personal success as signs of divine favor. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), this theology appeals to the existential struggles of impoverished believers, promising divine breakthrough as a response to their seeds sowing—usually financial. However, some critics argue that such interpretations are frequently decontextualized and manipulated for gain (Bowler, 2013).

Scholarly Critique of Prosperity Theology

Some scholars have expressed strong reservations about the theological and ethical implications of prosperity preaching and many theologians criticize prosperity preaching as a distortion of Christian doctrine: Kate Bowler calls it 'a theology of the American dream' that commodifies God (Bowler, 2013). Paul Gifford argues that it promotes a transactional view of religion, where blessings are exchanged for offerings (Gifford, 2004). Moo (2000) states that New Testament teaching promotes contentment and suffering as part of the Christian journey, not guaranteed wealth. Craig (2009) critiques prosperity preachers who abuse the Gospel for misinterpreting scriptural promises, especially when applying Old Covenant blessings to New Covenant believers.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) describe it as part of a new "millennial capitalism" that commodifies faith and creates a sacrificial economy in which believers are expected to give generously in hopes of divine breakthroughs. Similarly, ~~Simon~~ Coleman (2000) argues that prosperity theology constructs a consumeristic form of Christianity in which blessings are traded for donations. Williams

(2022) warns that the prosperity gospel undermines African communal values such as ubuntu, promoting individualism and greed. He links the theology to increased societal corruption and declining integrity among leaders and followers alike. Additionally, Spadaro and Figueroa (2021) argue that prosperity preaching stifles social justice by discouraging critical engagement with structural inequality and political accountability.

Supportive Perspectives

Some scholars and pastors defend prosperity theology as a contextualized expression of biblical promises. They argue that it resonates with the lived experiences of the poor and marginalized. Stephen Mbugua suggests that in economically struggling communities, prosperity preaching offers a sense of hope and agency (Mbugua, 2015). David Oyedepo, a leading African prosperity preacher, asserts that prosperity is part of God's covenant with believers, citing passages such as 3 John 2 and Deuteronomy 8:18 (Oyedepo, 2005). Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) sees prosperity preaching as a localized theology addressing spiritual and material needs of believers.

Liberation Theology Critique

Liberation theologians argue that prosperity preaching distracts from structural issues like poverty, injustice, and inequality: Gutiérrez (1988) maintains that Christian theology should side with the poor against systemic oppression, not glorify wealth. Liberation theology and prosperity preaching represent two vastly different theological approaches to Christian faith and socio-economic realities. Liberation theology critiques prosperity preaching from multiple angles, including its biblical interpretation, focus on individual wealth, neglect of systemic injustice, and detachment from the poor. Liberation Theology emphasizes God's preferential option for the poor and advocates for justice, equity, and the transformation of oppressive structures (Gutiérrez, 1973).

In contrast, Prosperity Theology (also known as the "Health and Wealth Gospel") teaches that faith, positive confession, and tithing can lead to material wealth and physical health. This teaching tends to individualize success and suffering, often attributing poverty to a lack of faith.

Liberation theologians criticize prosperity preaching for promoting materialism and consumerism as signs of divine favor. This view, they argue, distorts the gospel by turning God into a provider of luxury rather than a redeemer of the oppressed. Individual wealth is emphasized in prosperity preaching, often neglecting community welfare or the conditions of the poor. Liberation theology asserts that the gospel calls for communal justice, not personal enrichment. God is not a vending machine to be manipulated for wealth," argues Leonardo (1972).

On the other hand: liberation theology calls for critical awareness of social injustice, urges action against oppressive political and economic systems and advocates for the transformation of society, not just personal circumstances. It also accuses the preachers who are abusers of prosperity gospel of selective and manipulative use of Scripture with emphasis on:

- i. Jesus' identification with the poor (Luke 4:18, Matthew 25:35–40).
- ii. The early church's communal lifestyle (Acts 2:44–45).
- iii. Prophetic calls for justice and mercy (Amos 5:24, Isaiah 1:17).
- iv. Liberation theologians argue that Scripture should be interpreted from the perspective of the oppressed, not the privileged.

Socio-Economic and Ethical Implications

Prosperity theology encourages giving, but the proponents often use it to manipulate their followers. In addition, it inspires faith but may blame the poor for their condition. Furthermore, it can build large churches, but may neglect discipleship and justice (Gifford, 2007).

Religious Exploitation

Religious exploitation involves manipulating followers through spiritual authority for material or psychological gain. Religious exploitation occurs when leaders manipulate followers for personal gain under spiritual pretense. In the prosperity context, this includes: Promising miracles for money, instilling

fear of divine punishment for lack of giving. Elevating the status of pastors as untouchable mediators (Gifford, 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005) vulnerable believers—such as the unemployed, the sick, or the emotionally distressed—are often pressured to give sacrificially in hopes of a breakthrough, while church leaders benefit disproportionately. Religious exploitation occurs when religious leaders manipulate followers for personal enrichment, psychological control, or institutional gain. Ukah (2007) notes that in some Nigerian Pentecostal churches, pastors are seen not only as spiritual leaders but also as business entrepreneurs, employing emotional tactics and ‘divine threats’ to control followers’ giving. These leaders often claim exclusive access to divine truth and demand total allegiance, which discourages critical thinking among followers (Agazue, 2013).

Mechanisms of Exploitation

Religious exploitation, particularly through the lens of prosperity preaching, poses significant dangers not only to individual believers but also to the collective body of Christ and the broader society. In the African context, the manipulation of faith for financial gain undermines core Christian doctrines and erodes societal trust. In many African churches, prosperity preachers use fear, manipulation, and promises of miracles to compel followers to give large sums of money. These "sacrificial seeds" are said to unlock divine favor. However, critics note that the promised miracles rarely materialize, leaving many in worse economic conditions (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005). Joshua ~~Robert~~ Barron (2022) observes that some African pastors live in opulence while their congregants remain poor. He describes this dynamic as a power imbalance rooted in spiritual intimidation. In countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, popular preachers own private jets, luxury homes, and expensive cars, often funded by tithes and offerings from low-income members (Gifford, 2007).

The Damage of Religious Exploitation

Religious exploitation has resulted in so many damages which include:

Spiritual Damage to the Body of Christ

The body of Christ refers to the collective community of believers united in faith and mission. The abuse of prosperity preaching distorts the gospel message shifting focus from Christ-centered discipleship to material gain. According to Gifford (2004), the prosperity message "strips Christianity of its central theme of suffering and self-denial and replaces it with a formula for personal enrichment." This distortion creates a consumerist faith, where giving becomes a transactional act aimed at receiving miracles rather than worshipping God in spirit and truth. Coleman (2000) argues that such theology commodifies divine blessings and breeds a "spiritual marketplace," where pastors act as brokers of miracles. Moreover, the emphasis on wealth as proof of divine favor alienates struggling believers, causing them to question their salvation and worth. Obadare (2018) highlights that in Pentecostal spaces where success is spiritualized, poverty is often misinterpreted as a sign of sin, laziness, or lack of faith.

Moral and Ethical Breakdown

Religious exploitation promotes moral decay within the church leadership and the laity. Prosperity preachers often live in opulence while their congregants remain impoverished, a practice that contradicts Christ’s teachings on servant leadership (Matthew 23:11–12). Williams (2022) asserts that this contradicts the communal ethics of ubuntu, which emphasize shared prosperity, compassion, and accountability.

Additionally, manipulative fundraising tactics—such as miracle-selling, seed-sowing promises, and tithing under duress—amount to spiritual fraud. These tactics foster a form of spiritual abuse, where guilt and fear are used to extract money. As Spadaro and Figueroa (2021) note, the prosperity gospel “replaces moral responsibility and social justice with magical thinking and blind allegiance.”

Fragmentation of Christian Unity

The exploitative nature of some prosperity movements has led to divisions within the Christian community. Theologians who critique this doctrine are sometimes labeled as “faithless” or “religious enemies.” This creates doctrinal rifts and undermines biblical unity (Ephesians 4:3–6).

Furthermore, many disillusioned members leave the church after repeated disappointments. Barron (2022) observes that believers often become spiritually numb or cynical when promised breakthroughs fail to manifest, resulting in a decline in church attendance and trust.

Societal Damage and Disempowerment

Beyond the church, religious exploitation weakens social institutions and deepens poverty. In many cases, believers divert scarce financial resources to churches in hopes of divine reward, neglecting investments in education, health, or enterprise. Onyinah (2011) records cases in Ghana where people sold properties and defaulted on loans after being promised miraculous returns. Moreover, prosperity theology often discourages critical civic engagement. By framing poverty as a spiritual rather than structural problem, it deflects attention from corruption, bad governance, and social injustice. Comaroff & Comaroff (1999) describe this as "millennial capitalism," where religion becomes a tool for coping with crisis rather than confronting it. As a result, the church becomes complicit in the perpetuation of inequality, rather than serving as a prophetic voice for justice and equity (Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:24).

Psychological and Emotional Harm

Religious exploitation also affects mental health. Unrealistic expectations, chronic disappointment, and spiritual guilt contribute to anxiety and depression. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), many victims of false prophetic promises struggle with low self-esteem and spiritual confusion. Community testimonies further illustrate this harm. Online platforms reveal believers expressing regret over years of giving without tangible results. One follower lamented: "They make you feel cursed if you stop giving. You carry shame and fear thinking you failed God" (Reddit, 2024).

Voices from the Community

Personal testimonies reflect the emotional and financial toll of prosperity preaching. According to online platforms like Reddit and local newspapers, many Africans feel spiritually betrayed after years of giving without seeing results. A Kenyan user lamented, "They are followed on false hope... and when they don't get it... they stop believing in God totally" (Reddit, 2024). These experiences underscore the urgent need for theological accountability and pastoral integrity.

Meanwhile, some scholars advocate a contextual theology that emphasizes productivity, stewardship, and community well-being. Barron (2022) refers to this as the "Productivity Gospel," which shifts the focus from magical giving to responsible living and economic empowerment.

Financial Burden and Poverty

Prosperity preaching often encourages excessive giving with the promise of future wealth. As Gifford (2007) notes, many believers give beyond their means, hoping for miraculous returns. This frequently leads to deeper poverty, debt, and disillusionment when expectations are unmet.

Doctrinal Imbalance

Focusing on material blessings often sidelines critical doctrines like suffering, repentance, and self-denial. Meyer (2004) asserts that many churches reduce God to a transaction partner, where obedience is motivated not by love or holiness, but by material gain.

Socioeconomic Impacts

The socioeconomic consequences of prosperity preaching include rising debt, disillusionment, and eroded trust in religious institutions. The widespread belief that poverty results from spiritual failure reinforces shame and silence. Instead of addressing systemic issues like poor governance or economic inequality, believers are taught to focus on personal sin, demons, and disobedience as root causes of suffering (Obadare, 2018).

Psychological Disillusionment and Guilt

When expected miracles don't occur, followers often experience guilt, thinking their faith or giving wasn't sufficient. This contributes to emotional burnout and disconnection from the church (Obadare, 2016). Furthermore, Obadare (2018) argues that prosperity preachers often exert psychological pressure, making poverty appear as a result of sin or lack of faith. This creates guilt, fear, and spiritual insecurity, especially when healing or financial blessings do not occur.

Dependency on Spiritual Leaders

Prosperity teaching often discourages critical thinking or personal spiritual development. Believers depend excessively on pastors for direction, reducing their capacity for personal discernment (Wariboko, 2014).

Spiritual Materialism

The theology promotes the idea that divine approval is reflected in wealth. This can lead to judging others' faith by their material possessions, undermining biblical values like humility and contentment (Nouwen, 1992). Prosperity theology risks trivializing the gospel by reducing salvation to material comfort. According to Togarasei (2011), this theology alters the focus from Christ's redemptive work to personal affluence, undermining the essence of Christian discipleship.

Economic Consequences

Many believers are encouraged to give "seed offerings" beyond their means, including taking loans or selling property to receive divine blessings. Meanwhile, church leaders accumulate wealth and display lavish lifestyles (Marshall, 2009). The widening gap between wealthy pastors and struggling congregants fosters inequality and resentment (Ukah, 2005).

Negative impacts of religious exploitation through prosperity preaching on family life

Gifford (2007) opines that prosperity preaching often encourages followers to make extravagant financial sacrifices—such as giving first fruits, seeds, and tithes—with the promise of future prosperity. This can cause financial hardship in families, especially when one spouse is committed to sacrificial giving without mutual agreement, leading to marital tensions and unmet household needs. Many families are burdened by manipulation in the principle of giving, resulting in a neglect of basic family responsibilities in the name of sowing into the kingdom." (Gifford, 2007). Agazue (2013) argues that when one partner adheres strongly to prosperity doctrines, it may lead to conflict in financial decisions, particularly when family resources are diverted to churches without accountability. This often fosters mistrust, blame, and division in marriages, especially when expected financial breakthroughs do not materialize. "Prosperity teachings have indirectly caused divisions in homes as spouses disagree on the priority of religious giving over family welfare." (Agazue, 2013)

According to Onyinah (2011), some families have sold land, withdrawn children's school fees, or defaulted on loans in their quest to receive divine breakthroughs. When expectations fail, believers either blame themselves for lacking faith or abandon Christianity altogether. According to Meyer (2004), parents who are indoctrinated by prosperity teachings often feel pressured to achieve visible material success to validate their faith. This can lead to anxiety, guilt, and feelings of failure, especially when family progress lags behind public expectations. It fosters a culture of pretentious living, which may erode emotional well-being at home. "The pressure to appear blessed places unrealistic expectations on breadwinners, creating emotional strain within the household." (Meyer, 2004)

Togarasei (2011) criticizes the way prosperity churches often focus primarily on material success while neglecting deeper emotional, moral, and spiritual teachings. Families may then lack proper spiritual foundations and ethical guidance, as teachings on love, patience, forgiveness, and humility are sidelined. Family life suffers when churches fail to nurture holistic values, emphasizing wealth over godly character and unity. (Togarasei, 2011). According to Obadare (2018), prosperity preachers sometimes promote a patriarchal and authoritarian view where the man is seen as the sole channel of God's blessing. This can undermine women's roles and autonomy in the home, leading to gender imbalance and emotional abuse

in some cases. "The prosperity gospel's gendered messaging often disempowers women, reinforcing submission to controlling husbands who act as spiritual gatekeepers". (Obadare, 2018)

Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) notes that children raised under prosperity teachings are often taught to expect success without effort, based on faith confessions and giving. This may result in poor work ethics, entitlement mentality, and disappointment, especially when results do not match declarations. "Children are subtly taught that spiritual manipulation, not hard work, leads to success, weakening their resilience and discipline." (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005)

Bowler (2013) warns that some followers of prosperity preachers prioritize church programs and "faith assignments" over family time and responsibilities. This leads to alienation, neglect of children, and weakened emotional bonds, especially when religious loyalty is equated with neglecting secular duties. "Devotion to church over family under the guise of faithfulness has created emotional gaps and absentee parenting in many homes." (Bowler, 2013)

Defenses by Proponents of Prosperity Preaching

Some theologians argue that prosperity messages offer hope and empowerment in poverty-stricken societies. According to Omenyo (2006), the theology resonates with the African worldview that sees spirituality as integrated with material well-being. It also challenges fatalistic views by promoting hard work and expectation. (*bring the sub-title 'Toward ethical and contextual theology here'*)

Examples of Nigeria and the United States

Nigeria

In Nigeria, prosperity theology has become deeply rooted in churches such as Living Faith Church and Christ Embassy. These churches preach wealth as a sign of divine favor and link poverty to sin or laziness. Critics argue that this encourages consumerism and distracts from social responsibility (Ojo, 2006; Gifford, 2004).

United States

American televangelists like Kenneth Copeland and Creflo Dollar have long promoted the prosperity gospel. These Ministers have faced criticism for misusing church funds and leading lifestyles that starkly contrast with those of their congregants (Bowler, 2013). Kenneth Copeland and Creflo Dollar have been subjects of investigation regarding lavish lifestyles funded by church donations (Bowler, 2013). Even some pastors in Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa operate mega-churches that promote seed-sowing doctrines, often at the expense of the poor (Ukah, 2007; Gifford, 2004).

The position of the author of this article

Prosperity is biblical and it is the mind of God that his children should prosper in body, soul and spirit. Since this is clearly stated in 3 John 1:2 'Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers'. Godly prosperity ranges from spiritual- physical - material. The soul must be rich in God first and when this happens, all spiritual blessings such as joy, peace and happiness will be released by God. The physical prosperity such as sound health and material blessings will also be released. Therefore, the preaching and teachings of prosperity must not focus on material possessions while the soul is neglected. The principles of prosperity must not be applied for selfish interest or personal gains. The teaching must be balanced and it has to range from spiritual to physical.

Recommendations

1) Seminaries and Bible schools must integrate critical reflection on prosperity theology and ethics.

How to Achieve It

Curriculum Development: Introduce specific courses in seminaries and Bible colleges that critically assess prosperity theology, biblical ethics, and the dangers of spiritual manipulation.

Scholarly Engagement: Encourage theological institutions to host conferences and publish journals that explore prosperity theology from historical, biblical, and socio-economic perspectives.

Guest Lectures and Workshops: Invite experienced theologians and ethicists to engage students in real-life case studies on how doctrines affect the church and society.

Integration of Contextual Theology: Promote contextual theology that addresses local economic struggles without distorting the gospel into a get-rich-quick scheme.

2) Churches should establish financial transparency and leadership accountability to curb exploitation.

How to Achieve It:

Financial Reporting Systems: Require churches to produce audited annual financial statements accessible to members.

Elder Boards and Oversight Committees: Form independent church councils or boards that monitor financial and administrative decisions.

Code of Conduct for Clergy: Implement and enforce a national code of pastoral ethics outlining boundaries regarding finances, counseling, and leadership roles.

Peer Review and Denominational Oversight: Encourage denominational headquarters or associations to conduct regular audits and reviews of local pastors and churches.

3) Empower believers to study Scripture in context and resist manipulative teachings.

How to Achieve It:

Bible Study Groups: Organize regular, systematic Bible study programs in churches with trained facilitators who teach proper hermeneutics (interpretation).

Access to Study Materials: Provide congregants with study Bibles, commentaries, and digital resources that explain Scripture in historical and cultural context.

Lay Theological Training: Offer weekend or evening theological courses to non-clergy members to deepen their understanding of Scripture.

Media Outreach: Use social media, radio, and podcasts to teach sound doctrine and expose false interpretations related to prosperity messages.

4) Government and religious councils should monitor religious organizations to prevent abuse.

How to Achieve It:

Legal Registration and Compliance: Require churches to register under corporate and tax laws, submitting annual reports and complying with transparency standards.

Religious Council Frameworks: Strengthen existing religious councils or interfaith bodies to monitor doctrinal practices and discipline erring ministers.

Hotline and Complaint Channels: Set up official channels where members of the public can report suspected abuse or exploitation for investigation.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Collaborate with the media and civil society to educate the public on signs of religious fraud and the importance of ethical ministry.

Conclusion

The damage of religious exploitation through prosperity preaching is both deep and multifaceted. It distorts Christian doctrine, weakens ethical standards, fractures the body of Christ, and undermines social development. True Christianity calls for stewardship, justice, humility, and love—not the commodification of faith for profit. To repair the damage, churches must embrace biblical literacy, pastoral accountability, ethical theology, and a renewed focus on holistic discipleship. Prosperity preaching, when unchecked, leads to spiritual, emotional, and economic exploitation. While God does bless His people, those blessings are not always material. While prosperity preaching may inspire hope, its exploitative misuse causes spiritual damage, economic hardship, and doctrinal distortion. A biblically grounded, ethically responsible approach to Christian ministry is essential for sustaining the integrity of the faith and protecting believers from manipulation. The views of scholars suggest that while prosperity preaching may inspire ambition, its misapplication often causes significant damage to family life. Issues such as financial tension, emotional neglect, marital discord, and misguided parenting are common outcomes when teachings are not balanced with scriptural truth and practical wisdom. True prosperity lies in wholeness; spiritual, emotional, and social—not merely in material wealth. Balanced theology emphasizes that God blesses people in diverse ways; not only materially but also through peace, relationships, growth, and eternal hope (Piper, 2007). The present-day church must boldly correct doctrinal abuses and return to a Christ-

centered message that emphasizes faithfulness, humility, and eternal hope-not just financial gain. The biblical witness promotes generosity, humility, and trust in God's providence over material guarantees.

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