



**What Does the Bible Teach
About Capitalism?
Or, Is God an American?**

Luke 12:13-34

What Does the Bible Teach About Capitalism?

- What is the best system of government and economics in the world? The answer will depend on who you ask and where they come from.
- Everyone believes that God is on the side of their nation in a war.
- Everyone believes that God approves of their form of government.
- Everyone believes that God ordained and prefers their economic system.
- Many of my brethren believe that God is an American.

What Does the Bible Teach About Capitalism?

- Humans must have a form of exchange.
- No pure economic system exists in the world.
- Pure economic systems are theories, not realities.

Types Of Economic Systems

- Market economy operates by voluntary exchange. It is not planned or controlled by a central authority.
- Anarchism is a complete rejection of any central authority, government or corporate.
- Capitalism is private ownership of goods and production allowing personal profit. Government involvement is minimal and the free market determines direction based on supply and demand.

Types Of Economic Systems

- Planned economy has a central authority making decisions on production and wages.
- Feudalism
- Socialism
- Communism

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- “Any economic system must be based on a considerable degree of honesty and altruistic behavior in order to function.” *(Robert H. Nelson, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland)*

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- Anarchism fails because it denies the legitimacy of government to exist.
- Government is needed to address good and evil - Rom. 13:1-7
- There is a whole host of sinful practices that would be readily engaged by the citizens unless government imposed a moral standard.

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- Capitalism is limited morally because it tends to reward the greedy.
- Greed exists independent of any economic system.
- The right to private ownership is noted in the Bible.
 - Acts 5:4 - “While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control?...”
- Capitalism provides no incentive for the poor.
- People must be encouraged to help the poor.
 - Eph. 4:28 - “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- Socialism's decision making body is prone to corruption.
 - Ecc. 5:8 - "If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them."
- Socialism has problems with creating envy.
 - Those who are more productive are told they must give to all, whether they agree or not.
 - Those who are less productive demand that they share what the productive earn. This is institutionalized envy.

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- Scriptures teach that diversification is better than centralization.
 - Ecc. 11:6 - “In the morning sow your seed, And in the evening do not withhold your hand; For you do not know which will prosper, Either this or that, Or whether both alike will be good.”

Is One Economic System More Moral Than Another?

- Communism rewards laziness. Since income is fixed regardless of effort, there is no motivation to additional effort.
- In communism, there is no choice about sharing. Everything is held in common whether you want to or not - Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37; 2Cor. 9:5-14
- Communistic systems in history prove that people remain materialistic.

Morality Is Not Found In A Particular Economic System

- But no economic system can operate without morals and moral people.
- There cannot be an exchange of goods or services without a basic trust between the producer and consumer. Lying is bad for the economy.
- The problem with economic models is that they leave God out of the equation. Israel learned this the hard way - Haggai 1:6-11, 2:17-19

Morality Is Not Found In A Particular Economic System

- Righteousness must precede prosperity
 - 2Cor. 9:7-11 - “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written: He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever. 10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.”

Christians Have A Unique View Of Economics

- We don't serve money
 - Luke 16:13 - “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”
- Yet we use money to accomplish God's will
 - Luke 16:9 - “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”

Christians Have A Unique View Of Economics

- God judges our faithfulness, in part, by our handling of money.
 - Luke 16:10-11 - “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. 11 Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”

Christians Have A Unique View Of Economics

- Christians see themselves as stewards of God, and that all they have belongs to God Who gave it. Whatever they have, they use to the best of their ability to do what is right.
 - Luke 12:33-34 - “Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Christians Have A Unique View Of Economics

- Matt. 6:19-21 - “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”