

God @ Work Wealth & Poverty

Star Trek IV – *“They’re still using money, we gotta find some.”*

Imagine you had the opportunity to live for a while in heaven, and then come back to earth. What do you think would be your priorities?

I Cor. 7:31

31 Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away. NLT

Wealth & Poverty ‘Tensions’

In our culture

Liberal – wealth is evil, has to be accompanied by corruption.

Poverty creates corruption (theft, out of wedlock births, we have to alleviate poverty to alleviate corruption.

Conservative – wealth (in this country) is usually the result of merit (hard work, ingenuity, etc.).

Corruption creates poverty. People usually are poor (in this country) because they are lazy, immoral (unwed births) or have developed a victim mentality.

In our nature

Wanting success - Desire to improve, conquer (dominion mandate), advance, increase

Fearing success – Concern for misplaced priorities, be content, appreciate, celebrate (Northern vs Southern Europe).

In scripture

- Blessings of Wealth: 2 Cor. 9:6-10 - *he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully* (v. 6) with
- Dangers of Wealth: I Tim. 6:9 – *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* (v. 9).

Congo Leadership Institute

“There is strong Biblical evidence that God has not created man to be poor.”

Three roots of poverty:

- (1) Ignorance (distortion of truth; usually based on religion)
- (2) Idolatry (witchcraft & greed)
- (3) Dependency

Statements from Christian and Conservative Scholars

(Reformation & Puritan Christianity) defined the pursuit of riches, if viewed as an end in itself, as the peak of reprehensibility (wrong). At the same time, if also viewed the acquisition of wealth, when it was the fruit of work in a vocational calling, as God's blessing. – Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic & The Spirit of Capitalism, p. 116

John Wesley

*I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long, **For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches.** But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.*

Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.

(Where prosperity comes with a Christian ethic.)

“I cannot help but recall the saying of a school friend in Bombay. ‘I am going to move to America’ he vowed, ‘I want to live in a country where the poor people are fat.’” Dinesh D’Souza, The Virtue of Prosperity, p. 75

On the growing separation between spirituality and economic activity:

*From a **spiritual being**, who, in order to survive, must devote a reasonable attention to economic interest, man seems to have become **an economic animal**, who will be prudent, nevertheless, if he takes due precautions to assure his spiritual well-being.*

R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism

On the role of nonconformist (Puritan) churches of England,

*Founded on the repudiation of the idea that human effort could avail to win salvation, or human aid to assist the pilgrim in his lonely quest, they saw the world of business and society as a battlefield, across which character could march triumphant to its goal, **not as crude materials waiting for the architect's hand** to set them in their place as the foundation of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism

Jesus

Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matt. 6:33

If we say we are doing this, we have to be able to translate all our activities to a Kingdom outcome!

What we hope to show you in this series, is the world of commerce is not something you attempt to glorify God in spite of, but can glorify God through.

