

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 3: God's Design Fosters Responsibility, Freedom, and Fulfillment

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. What are some of the dangers of the message from the World Economic Forum that "In 2030, you'll own nothing, and you'll be happy"?
2. Recall the definitions of socialism and free enterprise, or capitalism (visit <https://t.ly/RAa7q>). In socialism, who controls goods (property) and services (business activity)? Who controls it in capitalism? Recall that in part 2 we highlighted John Adams's statement, "We hold that each man is the best judge of his own interest" (see <https://t.ly/sP2ov>). Socialism and communism say that the State is the best judge of those interests. Respond to this observation: *If there ever existed a self-evident truth, this is it: For normal, able-bodied, and clear-minded people — and that's the vast majority of us — they themselves are in the best position to judge their needs and to chart their courses in life. The state is not.* What makes the State ill-suited to chart courses for its citizenry?
3. Replay the clip from Margaret Thatcher titled "Socialists hate freedom." Respond to this observation: *For socialists, their push for socialism isn't about what's best for individuals in a nation, but about their own power and their hunger for control.*
4. Reread Genesis 23, which tells us about Abraham's purchase of a burial place for his deceased wife Sarah. Who was involved in this financial transaction? Was it coerced? Was it amicable? Was it fair? Who benefitted? Was the government involved to any extent other than to keep a record of the transaction? What are some additional ways in which Abraham's purchase of the cave and the field where it was located serve as a model for economic transactions today? Note that while the Bible does not directly say that "God endorses this as an example of the way economic transactions should be conducted," neither does the transaction violate any of God's commands or guidelines. Moreover, the purchase as it occurred upholds individual freedom for both sides. Note also that this occurred very early in Scripture.
5. What is meant in Deuteronomy 8:18 by the statement that "it is He [the LORD your God] who gives you power to get wealth"? Interestingly, the word translated *get* in this verse means "to fashion, accomplish, make, or produce" (see <https://t.ly/n4pxR>). This same word is used multiple times in the creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 where we are told God made or created the world and everything in it (again, see <https://t.ly/n4pxR> and scroll down to see the list of specific verses). God's design is that we, as people He made in His image, have the ability to create or produce wealth. This is the *right* He has given us, but this right comes with commensurate *responsibilities*. What are these duties, according to Deuteronomy 8:18?
6. Reread Genesis 1:26-28. In a Word Foundations article available at <https://t.ly/JAQKe>, we noted that "Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey contend that when God gives this directive [Gen. 1:28] to Adam and Eve at this point on the sixth day of creation, He essentially passes the baton of work in the world to the human agents He has created." They call this the "Cultural Commission." In light of this directive, and especially in light of the other two passages we've cited in Part 3, we can say that God's directive involves individual freedom, property rights, and other elements of the free enterprise system. Even though free enterprise can be abused, we are considering here how it fits with God's design when it operates as it should. We've mentioned individual freedom and property rights as elements of free enterprise; what are some other elements? After you make your list, consider the ones listed at <https://t.ly/Todxu>. How well do those elements with God's commands in Scripture? Explain your answers.
7. What is *stewardship*? According to Millard J. Erickson's *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* [(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 191], *stewardship* is "Careful management of the resources of the kingdom of God that have been entrusted to a person or group." Describe how Christian stewardship would look under a socialist or communist regime. Describe it under capitalism or free enterprise. Do you think God would be neutral regarding these two systems? Why or why not? Take note: Karl Marx made the statements showcased at <https://t.ly/CGPi8>.