

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise A Four-Part Series¹

Part 1: Property Rights

Having ownership and control over tangible assets is an expression of what it means to be human. Moreover, property rights also are essential to economic and personal freedom — types of freedom that also are at the heart of what it means to be human.

When it comes to defending God or the Bible or Jesus, there are a lot of great apologists, [b]ut in terms of apologists specifically addressing the political schemes of the left, and by name calling out people that have malicious designs for America, most apologists don't have the fortitude to really get in the down and dirty fray of defending the country or the economic model that has been our M.O. for two centuries plus....If you are a Christian, if you are a follower of Jesus, and I would say a thinking reflective Christian who's willing to really sort through this, you really could not in good conscience advocate for socialism.

—Alex McFarland²—

Where an excess of power prevails, property of no sort is duly respected.
No man is safe in his opinions, his person, his faculties, or his possessions.

—James Madison³—

Key point: No property rights, no freedom; know property rights, know freedom.

In their excellent work titled *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews*, authors Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel offer clear and concise definitions for both socialism and capitalism, or free enterprise.

- **Socialism** is “an economic system based upon governmental or communal ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services.”⁴
- **Capitalism** or **free enterprise** is “an economic system in which capital assets are privately owned, and the prices, production, and distribution of goods and services are determined by competition within a free market.”⁵

With these definitions in mind, in October of 2022 I posted a 100-word paragraph against socialism at Word Foundations.⁶ It states,

¹ This series is available online at <https://discoveredbedrocktruth.org/thebibleandeconomicfreedom/>

² <https://t.ly/u4Csj>

³ <https://t.ly/alt78>

⁴ Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, Colorado / Colorado Springs, Colorado: Summit Ministries / David C. Cook, 2016), 100.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://t.ly/6DEGn>

In the early 1600s, settlers at both Jamestown and Plymouth initially sought to produce food and wealth according to a communal system. Workers contributed the fruits of their labors to a “common store” on which all relied. This approach pushed both settlements to the brink of starvation. The people knew they would starve if they continued operating this way, so they assigned land directly to individuals and families, who then could reap the benefits of their own work. After this change, both communities prospered. History proves socialism leads to bondage and misery, and that free enterprise promotes freedom and prosperity.⁷

Despite socialism’s abysmal track record⁸ in both the distant and recent past, many Christians are deceived, or at best confused, about the Bible’s perspective on economic systems. Many young people, including a great many next-generation Christians, are captivated by rhetoric claiming⁹ that socialism is designed to help those who are oppressed and disadvantaged. *Isn’t this consistent with biblical teachings?* they wonder. (The social justice movement, with its ties to socialism and critical theory, offers similar perilous enticements.¹⁰) Yet it is neither compassionate nor just for the government to take — steal — wealth from those who have worked hard to earn it and then give it to those who, for a variety of reasons, have less and are therefore deemed to be “in need.”¹¹

According to critical theory (CT), the “oppressed” (and therefore those in need) don’t even necessarily have *less*; they actually may have *more* but have been “oppressed” because they are black, female, and/or gay. Despite the reality that government is to be impartial and is to uphold justice as it’s been historically understood,¹² CT calls on government to favor the “oppressed” groups we’ve just mentioned. This is *inherently* unjust.¹³

What Does the Bible Say?

Among those who believe the Bible to be a true and reliable guidebook for individuals and even for nations, it is essential to determine if the Bible advocates, or even permits, socialism. Some Christians are convinced that the Bible does indeed teach socialism and even that Jesus Himself was a socialist (or at least that He advocated socialist principles). They further believe that the early church practiced socialism. Certain other Christians believe the Bible is neutral about economic systems and *allows* for socialism. In this four-part series, I’d like to dispel all of these ideas by examining twelve passages of Scripture that affirm the free enterprise market system and that therefore deal death blows to socialism.

I readily affirm that the Bible is not *primarily* a book of science, mathematics, philosophy, history, literature, economics, psychology, human relationships, or some other discipline we tend to view as mainly academic or intellectual. First and foremost, the Bible is a book of truth God has revealed about Himself, humanity, sin, good, evil, life, death, eternity, the spiritual realm, why human beings need Him, and how they can approach Him on His terms and have a relationship with Him.¹⁴ This is

⁷ You can learn more about Jamestown at <https://t.ly/6TOtd> and Plymouth at <https://t.ly/URqME>.

⁸ <https://t.ly/YNZ7H>

⁹ <https://t.ly/ufBOE>

¹⁰ <https://breakpoint.org/is-critical-theory-biblical/>

¹¹ <https://wordfoundations.com/inherently-unjust/>

¹² <https://wordfoundations.com/justice-needs-no-adjectives/>

¹³ https://t.ly/jfRB_

¹⁴ <https://t.ly/INQWu>

why we often call the Bible “God’s Word.” Yet Scripture doesn’t reveal truth about religious matters only. When it touches on any topic it addresses, it does so truthfully and reliably.

First and foremost, the Bible is a book of truth God has revealed about Himself, humanity, sin, good, evil, life, death, eternity, the spiritual realm, why human beings need Him, and how they can approach Him on His terms and have a relationship with Him. This is why we often call the Bible “God’s Word.”

Even if and when we discover biblical teachings that surprise us, we need to let the Bible speak for itself. This means we need to let God speak for Himself! Moreover, especially when we have questions, we need to seek answers and interpret the sacred text as objectively and fairly as possible,¹⁵ relying on

- The rest of what Scripture says (Scripture enhances our understanding and interpretation of Scripture),
- God’s Spirit to guide us (see John 16:12-14), as well as
- the insights of well-informed and experienced Christians.

One more thing: We have to be wary of cultural trends that can heavily influence our posture toward the Scriptures as we read God’s Word today. Contemporary cultural winds are harsh toward Christianity and biblical values, and they influence many in today’s society to approach the Bible with their minds already made up against it. Yes, the Bible offends many, but this is because it is a book of truth (see Ps. 119:160), and the truth often is offensive. Jesus prayed to God, His Father, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). He also said, “[Y]ou shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

In the twelve passages we will examine (see <https://t.ly/b5AwS>), we will see the whole of biblical teaching, not just isolated portions of Scripture that some might nefariously use to promote agendas that aren’t biblical at all. In other words, while we will examine twelve passages directly and mine from them the principles they teach, we also will cite a great many additional related passages that affirm the same principles and truths.

Private Property Rights: The Core Issue

Before we begin, it’s important to understand that in the definitions of socialism and free enterprise we’ve cited already, the critical difference between these systems relates to how each one addresses production and allocation of goods and services — in other words, property. In the reproduced definitions that follow, emphases have been added.¹⁶

- **Socialism** is “an economic system based upon **governmental or communal ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services.**”

¹⁵ <https://wordfoundations.com/principles-of-bible-interpretation/>

¹⁶ For the source for both of the definitions that follow, see footnote #4.

- **Capitalism or free enterprise is “an economic system in which capital assets are privately owned, and the prices, production, and distribution of goods and services are determined by competition within a free market.”**

The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights.

Therefore, the matter of property rights is a linchpin issue. The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights. Socialism cannot exist in a society that recognizes and affirms private property rights — the rights to personally and privately own and control finances and other tangible assets. Conversely, a free market economy cannot exist among a people who reject and deny these rights.¹⁷ Remember this takeaway: You tell me what you believe about private property rights, and I’ll tell you whether you tend to favor socialism or a free market economy. The more you disparage private property rights, the more you favor socialism; the more you promote those rights, the more you favor free enterprise.

The Ten Commandments: A List of Moral and Ethical Regulations — And Inherent Rights

Against the backdrop of all the information highlighted above, let’s consider these passages of Scripture.

First, Exodus 20:15, the Eighth of the Ten Commandments, declares, “You shall not steal.” This is a clear affirmation of the right of personal ownership of wealth and other tangible assets. Stealing occurs when someone takes something *belonging* to another. Were personal ownership not a reality, stealing could not occur.

Second, Exodus 20:17 directs, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

¹⁷ Here’s what this means in practical terms. With socialism and its “governmental or communal ownership” of all resources, redistribution of resources inevitably will place — on an ongoing basis. If you “have at your disposal” more material goods than someone else, you don’t own them; the government does! The state will see to it that those in “need” will receive what you currently “have in excess.” Why? Because the state has deemed that they “need” it. It isn’t just socialism that advocates this, but also the social justice movement. While Wikipedia says, “**Social justice** is justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society,” Conservapedia more accurately states (see <https://t.ly/wB6Km>),

Social Justice, also known as economic justice, is a term describing the redistribution of wealth supposedly for the common good of all. However, this comes at the expense of wage earners and liberty by demanding a society to conform. Those who work and have must give to those who don’t work and don’t have. This is the fundamental basis of Marxism and championed by liberal progressives (emphasis added).

Exodus 20:17 contains no less than seven possessive nouns and pronouns referring to one's neighbor — and in each case the one used indicates personal and private ownership! Indentured servanthood was permitted in ancient Israel; but it was not the kind of slavery we think of today. Slavery was regulated in the Old Testament and acknowledged as a reality in the New Testament.¹⁸

Even though Scripture does not condemn slavery directly, consistent application of biblical principles has led to its demise in country after country where Christianity has taken hold.

Property rights are not merely to be tolerated, but also respected and honored.

The primary point here, however, isn't about slavery. It's that God's law did and does forbid coveting anything belonging to another. To covet is to intensely desire someone or something belonging to someone else.¹⁹ Therefore, property rights are not merely to be tolerated, but also respected and honored.

The Eighth and Tenth Commandments (Ex. 20:15,17) uphold private property rights, not only as legitimate, but also as inherent, God-given rights. Just as

- the right to worship God according to His instructions (vv. 3-11),
- the right to rest periodically from work and the right to engage in regular, ongoing work (vv. 8-11),
- the right to be honored as a parent by one's children (v.12),
- the right to life (v. 13),
- the right to have one's marriage recognized and respected by others (v. 14), and
- the right to one's reputation (v. 16)

are God-given, the rights to own and use one's property as he or she sees fit also are God-given and inherent.

In fact, recognition of rights rooted in the Ten Commandments is essential to ordered liberty²⁰. Government has a duty to recognize and protect inherent rights. It does so by fulfilling its God-given task of maintaining order (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4) by commending those who do right and punishing those who do wrong (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The right and wrong in these passages are clearly those things that are "good" and "evil," respectively, according to God's standard of righteousness.²¹

¹⁸ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html>

¹⁹ Aspiring to work hard to acquire wealthy and material goods, however (as we will see in future posts), is commended in the Bible and therefore is different from coveting.

²⁰ <https://t.ly/9eEQE> — Download this important, one-page article titled "How Liberty Works."

²¹ Right and wrong are rooted in absolute truth, which is rooted in God's holy character. In Isaiah 5:20-21 the inspired prophet declared,

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

More to Come

Next time we will explore another of the Ten Commandments as well as its corresponding rights and responsibilities. Both the rights and responsibilities involved have ties to private property and private property rights. We'll also talk about the ways the Bible commends addressing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

Hang tight! We're just getting started!

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Part 1: Property Rights

Having ownership and control over tangible assets is an expression of what it means to be human. Moreover, property rights also are essential to economic and personal freedom — types of freedom that also are at the heart of what it means to be human.

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Describe some of the potential costs of ignoring or neglecting the Bible's teachings on "non-spiritual" topics and themes.
 2. Why are property rights, including the rights of ownership and management, essential for personal freedom?
 3. Why are individual property rights essential for personal prosperity? Why are they also essential for national prosperity?
 4. Describe the relationship between rights and responsibilities.
 5. How are inherent rights protected when government commends those who do right and punishes those who do wrong, according to Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17? How is order preserved, according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4?
 6. Social scientists call inherent rights — rights America's
- Founding Fathers called "unalienable" — *negative rights*. They're called negative because they are rights to act freely as one chooses to act, as long as the rights of others are not hindered by that person's actions. On the other hand, the existence of *positive rights* require intervention by others or, most commonly, by the government. Such intervention typically means government creates, engineers, and dispenses those "rights." With this background information in mind, describe how the perspective of rights held by most contemporary Americans differs from the perspective of rights held by the Founding Fathers.
7. When most of the citizenry in a country believe they are entitled to "rights" only the government can create and maintain, what are some possible ways their demand for these kinds of rights hinders individuals' inherent, negative, God-given rights?

Recommended resource: A short-article titled "How Liberty Works," available at <https://t.ly/9eEQE>.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 2: Who Has the Responsibility of Meeting the People's Needs? The Purpose of Work

Countrymen, the long experience of our late miseries, I hope is sufficient to persuade everyone to a present correction of himself, and think not that either my pains, nor the Adventurers' purses, will ever maintain you in idleness and sloth. I speak not this to you all, for diverse of you I know deserve both honor and reward, better than is yet here to be had; but the greater part must be more industrious, or starve....Therefore he that offendeth, let him assuredly expect his due punishment.

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Captain John Smith<sup>22</sup> of Jamestown, implementing a hard and fast rule for every worker in the colony soon after he took charge in 1608. Anyone not working would not be allowed to eat. This was the same principle of which the apostle Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, and a principle that, when implemented in Jamestown, brought the colony back from the brink of starvation.

The failure of this experiment of communal service, which was tried for several years, and by good and honest men proves the emptiness of the theory...that the taking away of private property, and the possession of it in community, by a commonwealth, would make a state happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For in this instance, community of property (so far as it went) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much employment which would have been to the general benefit and comfort.

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William Bradford,²³ Governor of the Plymouth Colony, explaining why the Pilgrims ditched socialism after two years and replaced it with a model that upheld private property rights. As happened with the changes implemented in Jamestown, this decision on the part of the Pilgrims saved Plymouth from extinction.

Key point: The marriage of Responsibility and Inherent Rights has produced children named Liberty, Prosperity, Compassion, and Charity. All these are members of the same family.

We're exploring twelve Bible passages that destroy socialism and uphold free market principles. Many verses in the Bible do that — far more than twelve; and even though advocating economic freedom isn't the Bible's main theme or primary message, only someone who is foolish, ignorant, a crowd pleaser, a coward, or a combination of two or more of these would ignore what the Scriptures say about economic systems merely because that topic isn't a "spiritual" one (and might even be considered "political"). Too many Christians and Christian leaders today fail to understand the Bible tells us, not only how to prepare for the next life, but also how to live this one, both individually and corporately.

²² <https://t.ly/IIa9F>

²³ <https://t.ly/iYUsw>

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In part 1 we cited the Eighth and Tenth (Ex. 20:15 and 17) of the Ten Commandments (vv. 1-17) to emphasize that private property rights are inherent, God-given rights just as are other rights²⁴ reflected in the Decalogue.²⁵ (Exodus 20:15 and 17 are the first two of the twelve Bible passages we examine in this series.) We now move forward to explore additional Bible verses that are friends of free enterprise and enemies of socialism. Keep your eyes and mind open! You are likely to see principles in Scripture you've never seen before!

The Biblical Work Ethic and Free Enterprise: Able and Productive Partners

Third, the Fourth of the Ten Commandments affirms the value of work — with the clear implication the work commanded is to be performed primarily to accumulate wealth and resources to meet the needs of oneself and one's family. Exodus 20:8-11 states,

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Wait a minute! someone may object. *How do we know the work commanded in Exodus 20:9 is work first and foremost to improve the lot of self and family?* Because of all the other things the Bible teaches about work, wealth, accumulation and stewardship of wealth, and private property. In this series, we are actively exploring these and related biblical teachings. Keep reading!

Note that the Commandment is specifically directed to everyone in or in some way connected to the family unit. Who is prohibited from working on the Sabbath? On that special day "you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates."

In part 1 we saw that the Eighth and Tenth Commandments (see Ex. 20:15,17) uphold private property rights and that property rights were among several God-given rights set forth in all of the Ten Commandments.²⁶ Pay close attention to the remaining verses we cite in this series, especially the next two, which come from the New Testament.

Fourth and fifth, we can confidently point to 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:8 as evidence that, according to Scripture, compensation for work is to benefit the worker and his or her family.

²⁴ <https://t.ly/hR04L>

²⁵ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Ten-Commandments.html>

²⁶ See "How Liberty Works" at <https://t.ly/9eEQE>.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the apostle reminded the Thessalonian believers of a principle he held when he was in their company: “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”

In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul wrote to Timothy, “[I]f anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Who is responsible for meeting the needs of a nation’s people? Each person is responsible — not the government. And beyond the reasonable expectation that each individual will work to meet his or her own basic needs, family members are responsible. These are biblical teachings.

Who, then, has a duty to meet the most basic needs one has? Each person is responsible for himself or herself — not the government. And beyond the reasonable expectation that each individual will work to meet his or her own basic needs, family members are responsible. These are biblical teachings. Contrary to the emotional rhetoric of many evangelical social justice crusaders today, redistribution of wealth by the government is *not* a biblical idea. We will see this with increasing clarity as this series continues to unfold.

The Key to *Really* Helping the Poor

Note that in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 Paul advocated denying food to those who *would not* work, not those who *could not*. I am not arguing here against a government “safety net” for those who are unable to work and whose families, for valid reasons, can’t meet their needs. I *am* arguing against government handouts that discourage work among the able-bodied and that thereby encourage slothfulness.

Founding Father Benjamin Franklin²⁷ (1706-1790) had tremendous insights²⁸ about the best ways to help the poor.

I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I traveled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.

Let me reiterate. Personal responsibility isn’t just about individuals; it’s also about families. If the members of someone’s family lack food, clothing, and other necessities, that individual is responsible to work to meet the needs of his or her family members, if he or she is able to do so

²⁷ <https://t.ly/fY50X>

²⁸ Source: A previously published article at [thefederalistpapers.org](https://t.ly/wpuGq), a PDF of which is available at <https://t.ly/wpuGq>.

(see 1 Tim. 5:3-4). This is especially true of husbands and fathers, whom God has appointed as providers for their wives and children (see Gen. 2:15; 3:1-16). Parents also should be cared for as they continue to age and their physical needs increase; and of course, their children stand first-in-line to assume responsibility to care for them. Circumstances vary, of course; but Scripture is clear about family members being responsible for other family members.

Declaring War on the Rich Doesn't Help the Poor

Although I don't remember from whom I heard it, I have never forgotten this important point: Declaring war on the rich doesn't help the poor — but it may make certain people feel good. Here's how the point was made:

Ask yourself this question —

If the needs of the poor could be met without taking away resources from the rich, would I support such an approach, or would I instead insist on one that demanded that the rich surrender their resources to help the poor?

Mark it down. If an individual won't readily support an approach that helps the poor without penalizing the rich, he or she clearly is more concerned about hurting the rich than helping the poor.

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There's more! Anyone who is genuinely concerned about helping the poor will already be doing so voluntarily, on his or her own — without waiting for or asking the government to step in and redistribute wealth and other resources.

Government's Divinely-Written Job Description

We can be thankful that our nation's Founding Fathers understood the proper role of government. At the conclusion of part 1 we said,

[R]ecognition of [God-given] rights [which are] rooted in the Ten Commandments are essential to ordered liberty.²⁹ Government has a duty to recognize and protect inherent rights. It does so by fulfilling its God-given task of maintaining order (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4) by commending those who do right and punishing those who do wrong (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The right and wrong in these passages clearly are those things that are "good" and "evil," respectively, according to God's standard of righteousness.

Pay close attention; these next statements are critically important: If a nation wants its responsible citizens to remain responsible, it will protect the property rights that belong to them just because they are human beings whom God created in His image. The surest way to thwart prosperity is to punish those who succeed.

²⁹ <https://t.ly/9eEQE>

If a nation wants its responsible citizens to remain responsible, it will protect the property rights that belong to them just because they are human beings whom God created in His image. The surest way to thwart prosperity is to punish those who succeed.

The successes of prosperous people benefit, not only them, but others as well; not only because successful people need employees, but also because they offer goods and services that others want and for which they are willing to pay. During his Inaugural Address of 1801,³⁰ Thomas Jefferson³¹ (1743-1826), America's third president, wisely observed that

a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government....³²

John Adams³³ (1735-1826), you will remember, was America's second president. He said this: "The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the law of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence."³⁴

Adams also declared, "We hold that each man is the best judge of his own interest,"³⁵ and "Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men...."³⁶

Jefferson and Adams were not alone in their thinking. To their credit and to the benefit of millions of Americans who would arrive on the scene in subsequent generations, America's Founding Fathers knew government wasn't responsible to help the poor; instead, its own citizens were.

Genuine Compassion Often Is Mistaken for Callousness

Don't for a New York minute think the Founding Fathers and early leaders of America weren't compassionate. Indeed, they were! Yet they did not allow charitable deeds or public policy decisions to be driven by emotions alone. True compassion often doesn't appear to be what it really is — and in our emotionally driven society, many times that which *looks* and *feels* compassionate actually is, in the long run, destructive.

³⁰ <https://t.ly/tKhIE>

³¹ <https://t.ly/4DKkH>

³² <https://t.ly/tKhIE>

³³ <https://t.ly/AdPXp>

³⁴ <https://t.ly/Vr4N9>

³⁵ <https://t.ly/sP2ov>

³⁶ <https://t.ly/nosxa>

Do what *does* good, not what merely *feels* good.
—Dennis Prager—

I believe Dennis Prager would say that America's Founders rightly evaluated their actions and decisions, not by what made them *feel good*, but by what actually would *accomplish good*.³⁷ Furthermore, they understood that good government is charged with certain responsibilities (see 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) and not charged with others. Charity³⁸ is to be voluntary; it is a job for individuals and organizations acting on their own.

I know I don't have to tell you that George Washington³⁹ (1732-1799) served as America's first president, but you may not know that in a letter to his nephew, Bushrod Washington, he wisely advised,

Let your heart feel for the afflictions and distresses of every one, and let your hand give in proportion to your purse; remembering always the estimation of the widow's mite, but, that it is not every one who asketh, that deserveth charity; all, however, are worthy of the inquiry, or the deserving may suffer.⁴⁰

James Madison⁴¹ (1751-1836) was our nation's fourth president; he succeeded Thomas Jefferson in that office. Madison wrote, "Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government."⁴² Yet he also declared, "It is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other."⁴³

If it sounds to you as though the Founding Fathers grasped much of what we've been discussing here, then you understand more than most about America's Christian heritage. Of course, the first four US presidents and the other men who founded the United States were not perfect. Even so, they got a great deal right.

Not all were Christians, but for the most part, they held a biblical worldview.⁴⁴ We remain direct beneficiaries of their beliefs, convictions, courage, decisions, and actions. Make no mistake: The principles⁴⁵ upon which they founded this nation were and are Christian. These principles eventually led to the end of slavery in the US.⁴⁶ To learn more about the tenets on which America was established, consider engaging in a free Bible study titled "Principles of Liberty: Ten Biblical Truths Embedded in the Declaration of Independence." You can access it at <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org> or <https://t.ly/2e6mQ>.

³⁷ <https://t.ly/Wlrm2>

³⁸ <https://t.ly/IYxwA>

³⁹ <https://t.ly/WCyMM>

⁴⁰ <https://t.ly/q4Mab>

⁴¹ <https://t.ly/kR05C>

⁴² <https://t.ly/-Jw-u>

⁴³ <https://t.ly/Lf2E8>

⁴⁴ <https://t.ly/xoPjp>

⁴⁵ <https://t.ly/2WAEz>

⁴⁶ <https://t.ly/3Czy2>

The Bottom Line

The five Bible passages we have highlighted in this series thus far are Exodus 20:15,17,8-11; 1 Timothy 5:8; and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Numerous points of application arise, with these being chief among them: If we really care about helping the poor, we will not advocate government redistribution of wealth to achieve equal outcomes.⁴⁷ Instead, we will work to make sure that all are equally *unhindered* by the government and by other citizens from taking advantage of their natural opportunities — as well as those they themselves have created — to achieve and prosper in a free society. Further, we will seek to uphold and practice the principles of free enterprise. This has to mean rejecting socialism and warning against it.

Generally speaking, where free markets prevail, the harder one works to serve others,

- the more he or she is rewarded,
- the more that individual prospers,
- the more his or her family benefits from the success, and
- the more the general public benefits, as well.

Yet people can't be blamed for putting their own interests first. This is not selfishness, but acting responsibly! The miracle of free enterprise is this: People pursue their own interests *by working hard to meet the needs and desires of others and by offering them what they need and want at a reasonable cost.*

Economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) astutely put it this way: "By pursuing his own interest (the individual) frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good."⁴⁸

That's the way it's supposed to work; and not coincidentally, it's the biblical way. *Be careful!* Don't be misled by those who try to convince us that Smith and other advocates of free-market capitalism are promoting greed "because," they tell us, "greed is embedded in the fabric of capitalism itself." Of course capitalists can be greedy, but we need to understand that the free-market system does not inherently encourage it. Instead, when it is allowed to operate as it should, capitalism promotes *responsibility*. In a powerful and insightful 5-minute video⁴⁹ from the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, Brooke McIntire⁵⁰ explains. The video also is available at <https://t.ly/lGVL7>.

Keep Reading!

In part 3 we will explore clear biblical evidence that the free enterprise model of production and exchange of goods and services was indeed designed by God. You won't want to miss it!

⁴⁷ <https://t.ly/-PIo6> — This URL links to an article titled "The Unfairness of Equal Outcomes," and authored by Steven Horwitz.

⁴⁸ <https://t.ly/3BJNi>

⁴⁹ <https://t.ly/s52s4>

⁵⁰ <https://t.ly/sCh3u>

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise
Part 2: Who Has the Responsibility of Meeting the People's Needs?
The Purpose of Work

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Exodus 20:8-11 presents both the right and responsibility to rest from work and to worship God on the Sabbath (Saturday for the Israelites, but Sunday has been called the "Christian Sabbath"). The passage also showcases both the right and responsibility to work on the other six days, making it possible for an individual who does this to benefit from and even enjoy the fruits of his or her labor. How does the passage convey this is an individual responsibility, both to meet the needs of oneself and one's family?

following bold portion of this statement from the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —**That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...**" ? Explain your answer.
2. While 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:8 are directed primarily to believers, there are implications from these verses for society at large. What are some things government needs to *refrain from doing* to create and promote a cultural atmosphere that fosters personal responsibility?
3. What is government's job, according to Scripture? What do you think of expressing this responsibility with this phrase — *dispensing and maintaining justice*? Because the term *justice* has been redefined today, it is widely misunderstood. Dispensing justice is *not* meeting the needs of people or groups. It is giving people what they truly deserve. Later, read an expanded discussion of the true meaning of *justice* at <https://t.ly/hUpVx>. Does the phrase *dispensing and maintaining justice* express well the job assigned to government in Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17? Explain your answer.
4. How well does the phrase *dispensing and maintaining justice* summarize the
5. Historian and author and Christian leader William J. Federer has noted that "There is no biblical command for government to help the poor, or take care of the sick, or operate schools, or provide jobs, healthcare, education, or other entitlements" (see <https://t.ly/u4Csj>). Why might government be ill-equipped to perform such tasks, and even terrible at trying? How might government, even with the best of intentions, actually make individuals' and families' situations worse? We will return to consider William Federer's observation once again in part 4.
6. Go to <https://t.ly/Fi1D3>, where you can read all of the quotations from America's founding era cited in part 2. Which one is most surprising to you? Explain.
7. How can we who understand the compassionate nature of holding people accountable and promoting responsibility help people understand that upholding accountability and responsibility are genuinely compassionate?

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

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

Socialism of any type leads to a total destruction of the human spirit.

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn⁵¹—

A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.

—George Washington⁵²—

Key point: Even though capitalism or free enterprise can be abused and misused by sinful and selfish human beings, it still remains a self-evident reality that the God of the Bible is its architect.

In this, the third of four articles in which we are exploring twelve Bible passages that are friends to free enterprise and enemies to socialism, we come now to our sixth passage, which we will look at momentarily. But first, here is a quick review of the Scripture portions we've examined thus far, along with some additional pertinent information.

We examined:

- Exodus 20:15 and 17 in part 1; and
- Exodus 20:8-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; and 1 Timothy 5:8 in part 2.

You can access all of these quickly and easily at <https://t.ly/BLk8A>.

- In part 1, which explored property rights, we examined Exodus 20:15,17, and we did so against the backdrop of an understanding that (1) socialism is an enemy of individual private property rights; and (2) capitalism, or free enterprise, is an ally. Although very few pastors and other religious leaders will emphasize this principle, private property rights are God-given rights. These include ownership of tangible assets and the freedom to decide how one will use the resources that are his. Moreover, these rights are just as inherent as all the other rights reflected in the Ten Commandments.⁵³ In other words, government has a duty to protect property ownership and other property rights; it did not grant them, and it has no authority to take them away. Do not be lulled into a stupor by the World Economic Forum's line⁵⁴ that, sadly, seems to have hypnotized many. We've been told, "In 2030, you'll own nothing. And you'll be happy." The WEF is serious! It currently is calling for an end to, or at least a reduction of, private car ownership.⁵⁵ The effort is all a part of the WEF's push for "The Great Reset," a major effort to end national (especially US) sovereignty and to place

⁵¹ <https://t.ly/BuOPN>

⁵² <https://t.ly/tY7Ek>

⁵³ <https://t.ly/9eEQE>

⁵⁴ <https://t.ly/oWFNL>

⁵⁵ <https://t.ly/7H4xd>

elites in power through globalism. Be forewarned⁵⁶ about this major push! It aims to severely curtail personal rights and freedom! Moreover, it is a not-so-subtle slap against the Founding Fathers of the United States — men who understood the inseparable link⁵⁷ between 1) happiness and satisfaction in life and 2) private property rights, and who were unashamed to speak of it.⁵⁸

- In part 2 we examined the purpose of work. We first discussed the Fourth Commandment, which is found in Exodus 20:8-11. This divine command authorizes worship of the one true God and rest on the Sabbath day after six days of regular work. What is the primary purpose of the work in which we are to be engaged each week? We looked at two verses from the New Testament that help us answer this question — 1 Timothy 5:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. We are to work to meet our own needs and the needs of the members of our families. We cannot do this without the ability to work to acquire, own, and make wise use of wealth and other tangible assets. As we discussed previously in both parts 1 and 2, it is the task of government to make sure people are unhindered from fulfilling these responsibilities. What about those who, for whatever reasons, are less well-off or even living in poverty? It is not the responsibility of the government to feed, clothe, or house them; instead, it is the responsibility of the private sector, including Christian individuals and the church and other Christian ministries, to address their needs.⁵⁹ Able-bodied family members should take on this responsibility first. Assistance can and should include training people to function in society and to become productive and self-sufficient. When government intervenes and meets people's needs, people tend to become dependent on the government and are robbed of incentives to discover ways to establish their own independence. Here I'm not making a case against a "safety-net" for those who truly are vulnerable and unable to work. Those who refuse to work, however, need a healthy dose of Paul's prescription for their particular ailment. He wrote that prescription in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Fortunately for Americans, the Founding Fathers of the United States understood human nature and believed that the free enterprise economic system effectively and efficiently compels people to engage in constructive, productive, and beneficial activity (aka work). We still benefit from their understanding because they sought to build this nation on those and other bedrock principles.⁶⁰ Yet today, a host of nefarious players, including elites at the World Economic Forum and other leaders in our country advocating globalism, are working to erode that foundation. This series of articles and many of the other resources you'll find at Word Foundations and Discover Bedrock Truth are offered to help restore it.⁶¹

The Free Market Has God's "Fingerprints" All Over It!

We move now to briefly study our sixth, seventh, and eighth Bible passage. We will see in these Scriptures that the free market economic model, or what many people commonly call "capitalism," motivates people to do well by serving others.

⁵⁶ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/danger-of-the-great-reset/> or https://t.ly/Ut_Wk

⁵⁷ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/happiness-and-wealth/> or <https://t.ly/NXTB2>

⁵⁸ <https://t.ly/BdDLV>

⁵⁹ <https://t.ly/IYxwA>; See Psalm 112:5; Proverbs 11:24-25; 19:17; 22:9; Luke 6:38; 12:29-34; Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 9:11; Galatians 6:2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:16-18.

⁶⁰ <https://t.ly/eoYzg>

⁶¹ <https://wordfoundations.com>; <https://wordfoundations.org>; <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org>

What benefits one participant in the process also benefits many others. The free market entices without coercing. It calls on people to be creative and to use their talents productively and constructively.

Concisely put, free enterprise gives people opportunities to reflect the God-given image they have stamped upon them (see Gen. 1:26-27). Further, it gives them motivation to do so. We will see the clear connection between

- free enterprise and
- the opportunities and motivation people have to demonstrate that they bear God's image

most clearly in the third of the three passages we will consider in this article.

While capitalism is not a perfect system and can be abused, we would be utterly foolish to address the abuse by replacing the free market with socialism. Instead, we need to rid free enterprise of its distortions and abuse.

Margaret Thatcher understood this! This audio clip⁶² is from this video,⁶³ titled "Socialists Hate Freedom."

Free Enterprise: A Divine Blueprint for National and Individual Freedom and Prosperity

Our **sixth** passage is from the Old Testament. Returning there, we see that a major free-market transaction took place as early as Genesis 23, especially vv. 14-20. Earlier in the chapter, we see Abraham embarking on a quest to find a place to bury the body of Sarah, his deceased wife. He was "a foreigner and a visitor among" (Gen. 23:4) the people where and when his need arose. He desired to purchase "the cave of the cave of Machpelah" (v. 9) from its owner, "Ephron the son of Zohar" (v. 8).

Even though Ephron was willing to give Abraham the cave and the field where it was located, Abraham insisted on paying the full price, and did so. The transaction is a model of the free enterprise system operating as it should. Verses 14-20 describe the transaction. The words and phrases set apart by **bold type** are especially significant.

¹⁴ And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵ "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." ¹⁶ And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham **weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named** in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, **were deeded** ¹⁸ **to Abraham as a possession** in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

⁶² <https://t.ly/kjmbR>

⁶³ <https://t.ly/fu8li>

¹⁹ And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ So **the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property** for a burial place.

The principles underlying this transaction — which, remember, occurred very early in Scripture, even in Genesis — are free market principles.⁶⁴

Seventh, in Deuteronomy 8:18, the Lord instructed the Israelites, who at the time were on the cusp of entering the promised land, “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” Accumulation of wealth is never to be an end in and of itself, but each one is to “remember the LORD,” because “it is He who gives...power to get wealth.”

Everything attained through work and wise investment of resources is to be used in ways that honor God. This includes saving for future needs and helping others. In fact, much fulfillment and satisfaction are derived from productive and responsible work, wise use of resources, prudent investment of assets, *and* using one’s possessions generously to benefit others. Nor is it inherently wrong to improve one’s own situation with the wealth he or she legitimately has acquired (see Prov. 22:29; Acts 16:11-15; and 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
—Deuteronomy 8:18—

Eighth, in Genesis 1:26-28, God gave a special command to Adam and Eve, and through them, to every human being that would populate the earth. Significantly, God made, and makes, all human beings in His image.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

We find a command from God in verse 28, which I have set in **bold type**. This verse has been called “the cultural commission.”⁶⁵ Ask yourself this: *Is there any way to fulfill this command, or even to try to fulfill it, without being able to*

1. *own and*
2. *exercise control over*

⁶⁴ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/teneconomicprinciples/>

⁶⁵ Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 295; see <https://t.ly/JAQKe>.

wealth and property? I know of none. Consider that this command from God to humanity predates government. God gave this directive, not to government, but to individuals and to married husbands and wives.

God Created People to Be Free to Reflect His Image

At the beginning of part 3, we quoted Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who said, “Socialism of any type leads to a total destruction of the human spirit.”⁶⁶ Why is this so? Because God created people to be free to reflect His image, which He stamped upon them. This means He designed them to be

- free to be creative and productive,
- free to worship Him, free to serve other members of the human race, and
- free to pursue their dreams and aspirations within the moral and ethical guidelines established by His own character.

Socialism thwarts this by making citizens slaves of the state.

Francis Schaeffer astutely declared, “The ‘condition of man’ is not what modern man thinks it is.”⁶⁷ Many “moderns” embrace the views of Karl Marx, who made these statements among many other similar ones.

- There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.⁶⁸
- My object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism.⁶⁹

By contrast, George Washington wisely observed, “A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.”⁷⁰

A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.

—George Washington—

Clearly, Karl Marx believed that the people exist for the government, but America’s Founding Fathers believed that government exists for the people.

⁶⁶ <https://t.ly/BuOPN>

⁶⁷ Francis Schaeffer, “What Difference Has Looking Made? (A Christmas Study)” *No Little People*, in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer, Vol. 3: A Christian View of Spirituality*, [Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982] 123-124).

⁶⁸ <https://t.ly/8liq3>

⁶⁹ <https://t.ly/94Yff>

⁷⁰ <https://t.ly/tY7Ek>

This is why America has been a nation that has, through most of its history, affirmed and protected inherent rights and free enterprise. Although not perfect, capitalism is the economic system that recognizes inherent rights and provides incentives that fuel creativity, productivity, and wise use of resources. It is the system that promotes both freedom and prosperity. It is the system that is compatible with the true “condition of man.”

Let’s consider just one more quote. In his landmark book, *How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin J. Schmidt rightly declares (emphasis added),

Just as God does not want people to be coerced in spiritual matters, so too he does not want them to be coerced in earthly matters, for instance, in their economic activities. *There is not a single reference in either the Old or New Testament in which God denies economic freedom to people, as in fascism, socialism, and communism.*⁷¹

We will revisit this quote in part 4.

Four More Passages to Go!

We’ve now considered eight Bible passages upholding free enterprise.⁷² These are not isolated passages but are representative of what the Bible in its entirety teaches about economic systems. Also, our list of twelve will not be exhaustive. Of the twelve, we have four more to go. We’ll study these briefly next time and make some important concluding remarks!

Stay tuned!

⁷¹ Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 205.

⁷² <https://t.ly/pE7vL>

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>.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 4: Ethics, Justice, Order, and Freedom Are Essential Elements of a Fair and Just Free Market

The Bible contains many endorsements of free enterprise, including verses in the Gospels and Proverbs.

— “Free enterprise and the Bible,” a short but insightful article at conservapedia.com⁷³—

Capitalism is not economic anarchy. It recognizes several necessary conditions for the kinds of voluntary relationships it recommends. One of these presuppositions is the existence of inherent human rights, such as the right to make decisions, the right to be free, the right to hold property, and the right to exchange what one owns for something else. Capitalism also presupposes a system of morality. Capitalism should be thought of as a system of voluntary relationships within a framework of laws which protect peoples’ rights against force, fraud, theft, and violations of contracts.

— Ronald Nash⁷⁴ —

Key point: Not only was Jesus not a socialist, He actually assumed and affirmed the principles of capitalism and free enterprise — not always overtly, but nevertheless unmistakably. King Solomon, the apostles Paul and Peter, and the early church did as well — and modern-day Christians and the church in the 21st century need desperately to understand this. The free market is a biblical approach to economic policy, and socialism is unbiblical — even blatantly so.

In parts 1, 2, and 3 we examined eight passages of Scripture that are supportive of the free market economic model and that push back against socialism. They are: Exodus 20:15,17,8-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 23:14-20; Deuteronomy 8:18; and Genesis 1:26-28 (<https://t.ly/pE7vL>). As we come now to consider the remaining four of the twelve verses or sets of verses we’re highlighting in this series, I encourage you to keep in mind the observation we emphasized in part 1:

The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights. Socialism cannot exist in a society that recognizes and affirms private property rights — the rights to own and control finances and other tangible assets. Conversely, a free market economy cannot exist among a people who reject and deny property rights.

You show me a person who thinks supporters of private property right are selfish, and I’ll show you a socialist, an enemy of freedom, and a tyrant or a friend of tyranny (even if he or she doesn’t realize it).

You show me a person who thinks supporters of private property right are selfish, and I’ll show you a socialist, an enemy of freedom, and a tyrant or a friend of tyranny.

⁷³ <https://t.ly/MN6ES>

⁷⁴ <https://t.ly/K84Hv>

Our **ninth** Bible passage, Proverbs 10:4-5, affirms that just as there is a direct correlation between laziness and poverty, so, too, there is a direct correlation between hard work and wealth. Were property rights not a reality, this principle wouldn't be true. In the New International Version (NIV) these verses state, "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son." Many other passages in Proverbs⁷⁵ (including what Proverbs 31 says about the virtuous wife) echo this principle. Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 echoes it too!

Tenth, Ephesians 4:28 by itself deals a death blow to socialism. Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians, "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."

Here we see the importance of each of these elements:

- repenting of disobedience to God's commands (in this case, stealing),
- changing one's habits to conform to His commands (laboring with one's hands, and, by implication, with one's mind, ingenuity, and imagination),
- engaging in constructive, productive work to produce something beneficial and helpful,
- accumulating wealth legitimately (including following God's guidelines⁷⁶ for economic transactions),
- using resources wisely, and
- voluntarily helping those in need.

All of these elements are consistent with a free market economic system, and none of them is fostered or encouraged by socialism. This is why socialism is not compassionate, and it's why socialism doesn't work!

Eleventh, in Matthew 20:1-16 we find Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard. A landowner needed laborers in his vineyard, and throughout the day, he hired numerous workers at various times. Those he hired early in the morning agreed to a day's wage, and they went to work. Later in the day the landowner took on others, promising to pay them "whatever is right" (v. 4).

The owner of the vineyard even hired people to work for him very late in the day, making that same commitment to them. When the workday was over, he arranged for the workers he'd hired last to be paid first. Each one received a day's wage — the same amount the landowner had agreed to pay those he'd hired early and who'd worked the entire day.

When the people who had worked the full day saw this, they began to expect they would be paid more. They were disappointed when they received a day's wage, even though this was the amount the landowner had promised them at the beginning of the day when he hired them.

When they complained, the landowner responded to "one of them," saying, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius [a day's wage]? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you" (vv. 13-14). Then, significantly, the landowner added, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?" (v. 15).

⁷⁵ Proverbs 6:6-11; 12:11,14,24,27; 13:2,4,7,11,22,25; 14:4,23; 16:26; 20:4; 21:25-26; 24:30-34; 28:19; 31:10-31 — Visit https://t.ly/Ql_O1 for an online presentation of these verses.

⁷⁶ <https://t.ly/JnM4h>

Even though private property ownership and control over one's assets are not among the primary themes of this parable, we are wise to note that these themes are an inherent in it. Verse 15 is a clear and unmistakable affirmation of private property rights; Jesus *assumed* private property rights and other free market principles, not only in this parable, but in many of His other parables⁷⁷ as well.⁷⁸

Twelfth, in Acts 5:1-11 we read the horrific account of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. This couple were members of the early church and gave the church a portion of the money they'd received from selling a piece of property they had owned. The problem was that Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount they gave; they claimed they'd contributed the full amount they received from the sale, but instead they held a portion of the money back for themselves. The apostle Peter knew and confronted Ananias, saying,

“Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God” (vv. 3-4).

Ananias dropped dead on the spot! (see v. 5). His wife wasn't present at the time, but Peter confronted her as well when she appeared a few hours later — and she, too, “fell down...and breathed her last” (v. 10). Verse 11 tells us, “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.”

Reread Peter's words to Ananias carefully (they are printed above). Note that Peter affirmed that the two were free to do as they wished regarding the sale of the property and to decide how much, if any, of the proceeds from the sale they would donate to the church. Ananias and Sapphira would not have sinned if they had kept the property for themselves; nor would they have sinned if they had sold the property and kept the full amount for themselves. Their sin was in their *lying* about the amount they gave! Again, they claimed they had given the full amount of the sale when they had not.

All of this is important because Peter's words to Ananias affirm and uphold private property rights among all the members of the early church. Sometimes leftist evangelicals contend that the members of the early church practiced socialism. They point to Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35 — passages that actually describe the voluntary giving that took place, and the church's meeting the needs of its members, not the forced reapportioning of resources by the government that socialism demands.

The government was not involved. All were free to give, or not give, as they wished. Moreover, the gifts that were given were “laid...at the apostles' feet” (Acts 4:35,37). Hear Dr. D. James Kennedy explain the significance of this phrase at <https://t.ly/o7QbM>. This clip comes from Dr. Kennedy's sermon “The Bankruptcy of Socialism,” which is showcased at <https://t.ly/c1Bay>.

As we've indicated already, everything Peter said to Ananias about the rights of ownership and control he and Sapphira had over their assets applied to all the other members of the church as

⁷⁷ See <https://t.ly/QTq1K> for more than a dozen examples.

⁷⁸ You can explore Jesus' perspective on economic ideas at <https://t.ly/1sMJq>.

well. Keep in mind that the events of Acts 5:1-11 take place on the heels of the events occurring in Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35. Again, in the early church we see absolutely no evidence of socialism; in fact, we see private property rights clearly upheld.

Conclusion: Collectivism Eliminates Rights — and Freedom

All twelve of the passages we've highlighted in this series of studies are displayed online at <https://t.ly/uschh>. Our list is far from exhaustive. Throughout Scripture, free market economic principles are both assumed and inherently affirmed.

We conclude with three insightful quotations — one from a US president; a second from a former professor, social researcher, and author; and finally, a third from an American historian and former pastor.

In a speech he delivered at William and Mary College in 1926, President Calvin Coolidge declared,

No method of procedure has ever been devised by which liberty could be divorced from local self-government. No plan of centralization has ever been adopted which did not result in bureaucracy, tyranny, inflexibility, reaction, and decline. Of all forms of government, those administered by bureaus are about the least satisfactory to an enlightened and progressive people. Being irresponsible they become autocratic, and being autocratic they resist all development. Unless bureaucracy is constantly resisted it breaks down representative government and overwhelms democracy. It is the one element in our institutions that sets up the pretense of having authority over everybody and being responsible to nobody.⁷⁹

In other words, plans of centralization and tyrannies are found in the same places. Tyrannies become laws unto themselves because they refuse to recognize God's law — and it is no coincidence that they also curtail and even totally squash personal freedom. People — human beings who are made in God's image — reflect His image when they can act freely within the boundaries of God's laws.

Our **second** quote comes from sociologist, historian, and author Alvin J. Schmidt. In his landmark work *How Christianity Changed the World*, Dr. Schmidt observes (emphasis added),

Just as God does not want people to be coerced in spiritual matters, so too he does not want them to be coerced in earthly matters, for instance, in their economic activities. *There is not a single reference in either the Old or New Testament in which God denies economic freedom to people, as in fascism, socialism, and communism.*⁸⁰

In our **third** quote, we see that historian and former pastor William J. Federer also noticed something Scripture does not say. He observed,

There is no biblical command for government to help the poor, or take care of the sick, or operate schools, or provide jobs, healthcare, education, or other entitlements.⁸¹

⁷⁹ <https://t.ly/Qm63e>

⁸⁰ Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 205.

⁸¹ <https://t.ly/u4CsJ>

Biblically, these tasks are to be addressed and carried out in the private sector, through individual charity and organizational charity, as well as through ministry performed by the church that includes benevolence.

Although it isn't perfect, the free market simultaneously encourages all people (rich and poor alike) to take advantage of their natural opportunities to improve their situations and to carve out additional opportunities to do the same. Recall what happened in Jamestown and Plymouth in North America in the early 1600s.⁸² Socialism fails every time it is tried,⁸³ but free enterprise paves the way to prosperity and freedom.⁸⁴

You see, free markets encourage people of all talents and backgrounds to use their gifts creatively to find their particular niche, making it possible for people to do well by doing what they enjoy doing. Opportunities entice people and engage them in using their imaginations, ingenuity, and innovation to be productive and to render helpful services to others. In a free market, people can actively work to fulfill the cultural commission in Genesis 1:28 and to follow the principles and commands in other biblical passages on work, stewardship, productivity, and charity.⁸⁵ They benefit from the rewards that the market affords them by serving others efficiently and well.

Don't be misled. Socialism and Scripture are incompatible — completely.

⁸² <https://t.ly/OFGEW>; <https://t.ly/kkblL>

⁸³ <https://t.ly/DGd-8>; <https://t.ly/20j3t>

⁸⁴ <https://t.ly/QBmrX>

⁸⁵ Passages like the ones we've studied here [<https://t.ly/uschh>], among many others.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 4: Ethics, Justice, Order, and Freedom Are Essential Elements of a Fair and Just Free Market

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. When we considered our ninth passage — Proverbs 10:4-5 — we tapped a verse that carries a theme that many Bible verses carry regarding motivation to work: *The circumstance of life, especially the natural needs for food, shelter, and clothing, compel or motivate a person to engage in productive work.* Describe what being denied property rights by the government will do to the otherwise natural incentive one has to work.
2. Describe the elements of the free enterprise system evident or assumed in Ephesians 4:28. Describe the elements in the verse that align with God's directives for enjoying a relationship with Him. What provision does the verse make for those in need?
3. How does Matthew 20:15 deal a death blow to socialism? What are some other parables of Jesus that contain additional affirmations of free enterprise? Note that private property ownership and management of possessions are so woven into the fabric of Scripture that we often overlook it. This series aims to put these in the spotlight!
4. Explain why what the church practiced in Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35 was not socialism. Explain how Acts 5:1-11 reinforces the truth that it was not socialism. Is there a name for what the early church practiced? If so, what is it?
5. In our concluding section of this article and this series of articles, we cited three quotes — one from President Calvin Coolidge, another from sociologist, historian, and author Alvin Schmidt, and a third from historian and author, and former pastor William J. Federer. You can access all of these at <https://t.ly/CyUgf>. **1)** Read the Coolidge quote and explain why there is a positive correlation between central planning and tyranny. **2)** Read the Schmidt quote and explain how the free enterprise system honors human freedom without necessarily sacrificing charity. **3)** Read the Federer quote and explain why individuals and charitable organizations are far better equipped than government to perform tasks involving benevolence.
6. Our final remarks once again highlighted socialism's abysmal track record in Jamestown and Plymouth (the places where we started this series in Part 1).⁸⁶ We cited other examples as well.⁸⁷ Yet, against the backdrop of the carnage and death that socialism has left in history is the contrasting good news of free enterprise, especially when it is not abused. But many don't realize this. Despite the horrors socialism and communism have created, the socialist rhetoric of equality and compassion for those in need is winning people over. The truth isn't always what seems right or feels right, but we must learn from history and affirm the truth. Richard Nixon said, "Capitalism works better than it sounds, while socialism sounds better than it works."⁸⁸ Emotions often deceive! Economist Walter Williams observed, "Prior to capitalism, the way people amassed great wealth was by looting, plundering and enslaving their fellow man. Capitalism made it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man."⁸⁹ Nothing in Scripture refutes this; and, as we have seen, many Bible passages uphold free enterprise and its elements. Using the insights highlighted in this study, make the case that, indeed, capitalism makes "it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man."
7. How can you use the 12 verses we've highlighted in this series⁹⁰ to help other believers understand the amazing alignment of free enterprise to God's plan for human beings, as well as its alignment with the nature of human beings? **Suggestions:** You can start by sharing this article series⁹¹ with your Christian friends and encouraging them to read and study it. Also, consider leading a Bible study/discussion group at your church or in your home. Explore additional resources at <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/bible-studies/>.

⁸⁶ <https://t.ly/dETNt>

⁸⁷ <https://t.ly/YNZ7H>

⁸⁸ <https://t.ly/5Z4SV>

⁸⁹ <https://t.ly/R9q0X>

⁹⁰ <https://t.ly/uschh>

⁹¹ <https://t.ly/QQhyA>

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise A Four-Part Series¹

Part 1: Property Rights

Having ownership and control over tangible assets is an expression of what it means to be human. Moreover, property rights also are essential to economic and personal freedom — types of freedom that also are at the heart of what it means to be human.

When it comes to defending God or the Bible or Jesus, there are a lot of great apologists, [b]ut in terms of apologists specifically addressing the political schemes of the left, and by name calling out people that have malicious designs for America, most apologists don't have the fortitude to really get in the down and dirty fray of defending the country or the economic model that has been our M.O. for two centuries plus....If you are a Christian, if you are a follower of Jesus, and I would say a thinking reflective Christian who's willing to really sort through this, you really could not in good conscience advocate for socialism.

—Alex McFarland²—

Where an excess of power prevails, property of no sort is duly respected.
No man is safe in his opinions, his person, his faculties, or his possessions.

—James Madison³—

Key point: No property rights, no freedom; know property rights, know freedom.

In their excellent work titled *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews*, authors Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel offer clear and concise definitions for both socialism and capitalism, or free enterprise.

- **Socialism** is “an economic system based upon governmental or communal ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services.”⁴
- **Capitalism** or **free enterprise** is “an economic system in which capital assets are privately owned, and the prices, production, and distribution of goods and services are determined by competition within a free market.”⁵

With these definitions in mind, in October of 2022 I posted a 100-word paragraph against socialism at Word Foundations.⁶ It states,

¹ This series is available online at <https://discoveredbedrocktruth.org/thebibleandeconomicfreedom/>

² <https://t.ly/u4CsJ>

³ <https://t.ly/alt78>

⁴ Jeff Myers and David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, Colorado / Colorado Springs, Colorado: Summit Ministries / David C. Cook, 2016), 100.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ <https://t.ly/6DEGn>

In the early 1600s, settlers at both Jamestown and Plymouth initially sought to produce food and wealth according to a communal system. Workers contributed the fruits of their labors to a “common store” on which all relied. This approach pushed both settlements to the brink of starvation. The people knew they would starve if they continued operating this way, so they assigned land directly to individuals and families, who then could reap the benefits of their own work. After this change, both communities prospered. History proves socialism leads to bondage and misery, and that free enterprise promotes freedom and prosperity.⁷

Despite socialism’s abysmal track record⁸ in both the distant and recent past, many Christians are deceived, or at best confused, about the Bible’s perspective on economic systems. Many young people, including a great many next-generation Christians, are captivated by rhetoric claiming⁹ that socialism is designed to help those who are oppressed and disadvantaged. *Isn’t this consistent with biblical teachings?* they wonder. (The social justice movement, with its ties to socialism and critical theory, offers similar perilous enticements.¹⁰) Yet it is neither compassionate nor just for the government to take — steal — wealth from those who have worked hard to earn it and then give it to those who, for a variety of reasons, have less and are therefore deemed to be “in need.”¹¹

According to critical theory (CT), the “oppressed” (and therefore those in need) don’t even necessarily have *less*; they actually may have *more* but have been “oppressed” because they are black, female, and/or gay. Despite the reality that government is to be impartial and is to uphold justice as it’s been historically understood,¹² CT calls on government to favor the “oppressed” groups we’ve just mentioned. This is *inherently* unjust.¹³

What Does the Bible Say?

Among those who believe the Bible to be a true and reliable guidebook for individuals and even for nations, it is essential to determine if the Bible advocates, or even permits, socialism. Some Christians are convinced that the Bible does indeed teach socialism and even that Jesus Himself was a socialist (or at least that He advocated socialist principles). They further believe that the early church practiced socialism. Certain other Christians believe the Bible is neutral about economic systems and *allows* for socialism. In this four-part series, I’d like to dispel all of these ideas by examining twelve passages of Scripture that affirm the free enterprise market system and that therefore deal death blows to socialism.

I readily affirm that the Bible is not *primarily* a book of science, mathematics, philosophy, history, literature, economics, psychology, human relationships, or some other discipline we tend to view as mainly academic or intellectual. First and foremost, the Bible is a book of truth God has revealed about Himself, humanity, sin, good, evil, life, death, eternity, the spiritual realm, why human beings need Him, and how they can approach Him on His terms and have a relationship with Him.¹⁴ This is

⁷ You can learn more about Jamestown at <https://t.ly/6TOtd> and Plymouth at <https://t.ly/URqME>.

⁸ <https://t.ly/YNZ7H>

⁹ <https://t.ly/ufBOE>

¹⁰ <https://breakpoint.org/is-critical-theory-biblical/>

¹¹ <https://wordfoundations.com/inherently-unjust/>

¹² <https://wordfoundations.com/justice-needs-no-adjectives/>

¹³ https://t.ly/jfRB_

¹⁴ <https://t.ly/INQWu>

why we often call the Bible “God’s Word.” Yet Scripture doesn’t reveal truth about religious matters only. When it touches on any topic it addresses, it does so truthfully and reliably.

First and foremost, the Bible is a book of truth God has revealed about Himself, humanity, sin, good, evil, life, death, eternity, the spiritual realm, why human beings need Him, and how they can approach Him on His terms and have a relationship with Him. This is why we often call the Bible “God’s Word.”

Even if and when we discover biblical teachings that surprise us, we need to let the Bible speak for itself. This means we need to let God speak for Himself! Moreover, especially when we have questions, we need to seek answers and interpret the sacred text as objectively and fairly as possible,¹⁵ relying on

- The rest of what Scripture says (Scripture enhances our understanding and interpretation of Scripture),
- God’s Spirit to guide us (see John 16:12-14), as well as
- the insights of well-informed and experienced Christians.

One more thing: We have to be wary of cultural trends that can heavily influence our posture toward the Scriptures as we read God’s Word today. Contemporary cultural winds are harsh toward Christianity and biblical values, and they influence many in today’s society to approach the Bible with their minds already made up against it. Yes, the Bible offends many, but this is because it is a book of truth (see Ps. 119:160), and the truth often is offensive. Jesus prayed to God, His Father, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17). He also said, “[Y]ou shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

In the twelve passages we will examine (see <https://t.ly/b5AwS>), we will see the whole of biblical teaching, not just isolated portions of Scripture that some might nefariously use to promote agendas that aren’t biblical at all. In other words, while we will examine twelve passages directly and mine from them the principles they teach, we also will cite a great many additional related passages that affirm the same principles and truths.

Private Property Rights: The Core Issue

Before we begin, it’s important to understand that in the definitions of socialism and free enterprise we’ve cited already, the critical difference between these systems relates to how each one addresses production and allocation of goods and services — in other words, property. In the reproduced definitions that follow, emphases have been added.¹⁶

- **Socialism** is “an economic system based upon **governmental or communal ownership of the means of production and distribution of goods and services.**”

¹⁵ <https://wordfoundations.com/principles-of-bible-interpretation/>

¹⁶ For the source for both of the definitions that follow, see footnote #4.

- **Capitalism or free enterprise is “an economic system in which capital assets are privately owned, and the prices, production, and distribution of goods and services are determined by competition within a free market.”**

The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights.

Therefore, the matter of property rights is a linchpin issue. The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights. Socialism cannot exist in a society that recognizes and affirms private property rights — the rights to personally and privately own and control finances and other tangible assets. Conversely, a free market economy cannot exist among a people who reject and deny these rights.¹⁷ Remember this takeaway: You tell me what you believe about private property rights, and I’ll tell you whether you tend to favor socialism or a free market economy. The more you disparage private property rights, the more you favor socialism; the more you promote those rights, the more you favor free enterprise.

The Ten Commandments: A List of Moral and Ethical Regulations — And Inherent Rights

Against the backdrop of all the information highlighted above, let’s consider these passages of Scripture.

First, Exodus 20:15, the Eighth of the Ten Commandments, declares, “You shall not steal.” This is a clear affirmation of the right of personal ownership of wealth and other tangible assets. Stealing occurs when someone takes something *belonging* to another. Were personal ownership not a reality, stealing could not occur.

Second, Exodus 20:17 directs, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

¹⁷ Here’s what this means in practical terms. With socialism and its “governmental or communal ownership” of all resources, redistribution of resources inevitably will place — on an ongoing basis. If you “have at your disposal” more material goods than someone else, you don’t own them; the government does! The state will see to it that those in “need” will receive what you currently “have in excess.” Why? Because the state has deemed that they “need” it. It isn’t just socialism that advocates this, but also the social justice movement. While Wikipedia says, “**Social justice** is justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society,” Conservapedia more accurately states (see <https://t.ly/wB6Km>),

Social Justice, also known as economic justice, is a term describing the redistribution of wealth supposedly for the common good of all. However, this comes at the expense of wage earners and liberty by demanding a society to conform. Those who work and have must give to those who don’t work and don’t have. This is the fundamental basis of Marxism and championed by liberal progressives (emphasis added).

Exodus 20:17 contains no less than seven possessive nouns and pronouns referring to one's neighbor — and in each case the one used indicates personal and private ownership! Indentured servanthood was permitted in ancient Israel; but it was not the kind of slavery we think of today. Slavery was regulated in the Old Testament and acknowledged as a reality in the New Testament.¹⁸

Even though Scripture does not condemn slavery directly, consistent application of biblical principles has led to its demise in country after country where Christianity has taken hold.

Property rights are not merely to be tolerated, but also respected and honored.

The primary point here, however, isn't about slavery. It's that God's law did and does forbid coveting anything belonging to another. To covet is to intensely desire someone or something belonging to someone else.¹⁹ Therefore, property rights are not merely to be tolerated, but also respected and honored.

The Eighth and Tenth Commandments (Ex. 20:15,17) uphold private property rights, not only as legitimate, but also as inherent, God-given rights. Just as

- the right to worship God according to His instructions (vv. 3-11),
- the right to rest periodically from work and the right to engage in regular, ongoing work (vv. 8-11),
- the right to be honored as a parent by one's children (v.12),
- the right to life (v. 13),
- the right to have one's marriage recognized and respected by others (v. 14), and
- the right to one's reputation (v. 16)

are God-given, the rights to own and use one's property as he or she sees fit also are God-given and inherent.

In fact, recognition of rights rooted in the Ten Commandments is essential to ordered liberty²⁰. Government has a duty to recognize and protect inherent rights. It does so by fulfilling its God-given task of maintaining order (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4) by commending those who do right and punishing those who do wrong (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The right and wrong in these passages are clearly those things that are "good" and "evil," respectively, according to God's standard of righteousness.²¹

¹⁸ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html>

¹⁹ Aspiring to work hard to acquire wealthy and material goods, however (as we will see in future posts), is commended in the Bible and therefore is different from coveting.

²⁰ <https://t.ly/9eEQE> — Download this important, one-page article titled "How Liberty Works."

²¹ Right and wrong are rooted in absolute truth, which is rooted in God's holy character. In Isaiah 5:20-21 the inspired prophet declared,

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
Woe to *those who are* wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

More to Come

Next time we will explore another of the Ten Commandments as well as its corresponding rights and responsibilities. Both the rights and responsibilities involved have ties to private property and private property rights. We'll also talk about the ways the Bible commends addressing the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

Hang tight! We're just getting started!

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 1: Property Rights

Having ownership and control over tangible assets is an expression of what it means to be human. Moreover, property rights also are essential to economic and personal freedom — types of freedom that also are at the heart of what it means to be human.

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Describe some of the potential costs of ignoring or neglecting the Bible's teachings on "non-spiritual" topics and themes.
2. Why are property rights, including the rights of ownership and management, essential for personal freedom?
3. Why are individual property rights essential for personal prosperity? Why are they also essential for national prosperity?
4. Describe the relationship between rights and responsibilities.
5. How are inherent rights protected when government commends those who do right and punishes those who do wrong, according to Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17? How is order preserved, according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4?
6. Social scientists call inherent rights — rights America's Founding Fathers called "unalienable" — *negative rights*. They're called negative because they are rights to act freely as one chooses to act, as long as the rights of others are not hindered by that person's actions. On the other hand, the existence of *positive rights* require intervention by others or, most commonly, by the government. Such intervention typically means government creates, engineers, and dispenses those "rights." With this background information in mind, describe how the perspective of rights held by most contemporary Americans differs from the perspective of rights held by the Founding Fathers.
7. When most of the citizenry in a country believe they are entitled to "rights" only the government can create and maintain, what are some possible ways their demand for these kinds of rights hinders individuals' inherent, negative, God-given rights?

Recommended resource: A short-article titled "How Liberty Works," available at <https://t.ly/9eEQE>.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 2: Who Has the Responsibility of Meeting the People's Needs? The Purpose of Work

Countrymen, the long experience of our late miseries, I hope is sufficient to persuade everyone to a present correction of himself, and think not that either my pains, nor the Adventurers' purses, will ever maintain you in idleness and sloth. I speak not this to you all, for diverse of you I know deserve both honor and reward, better than is yet here to be had; but the greater part must be more industrious, or starve....Therefore he that offendeth, let him assuredly expect his due punishment.

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Captain John Smith<sup>22</sup> of Jamestown, implementing a hard and fast rule for every worker in the colony soon after he took charge in 1608. Anyone not working would not be allowed to eat. This was the same principle of which the apostle Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, and a principle that, when implemented in Jamestown, brought the colony back from the brink of starvation.

The failure of this experiment of communal service, which was tried for several years, and by good and honest men proves the emptiness of the theory...that the taking away of private property, and the possession of it in community, by a commonwealth, would make a state happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For in this instance, community of property (so far as it went) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much employment which would have been to the general benefit and comfort.

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William Bradford,²³ Governor of the Plymouth Colony, explaining why the Pilgrims ditched socialism after two years and replaced it with a model that upheld private property rights. As happened with the changes implemented in Jamestown, this decision on the part of the Pilgrims saved Plymouth from extinction.

Key point: The marriage of Responsibility and Inherent Rights has produced children named Liberty, Prosperity, Compassion, and Charity. All these are members of the same family.

We're exploring twelve Bible passages that destroy socialism and uphold free market principles. Many verses in the Bible do that — far more than twelve; and even though advocating economic freedom isn't the Bible's main theme or primary message, only someone who is foolish, ignorant, a crowd pleaser, a coward, or a combination of two or more of these would ignore what the Scriptures say about economic systems merely because that topic isn't a "spiritual" one (and might even be considered "political"). Too many Christians and Christian leaders today fail to understand the Bible tells us, not only how to prepare for the next life, but also how to live this one, both individually and corporately.

²² <https://t.ly/IIa9F>

²³ <https://t.ly/iYUsw>

Even though advocating economic freedom isn't the Bible's main theme or primary message, only someone who is foolish, ignorant, a crowd pleaser, a coward, or a combination of two or more of these would ignore what the Scriptures say about economic systems merely because that topic isn't a "spiritual" one, and might even be considered "political."

In part 1 we cited the Eighth and Tenth (Ex. 20:15 and 17) of the Ten Commandments (vv. 1-17) to emphasize that private property rights are inherent, God-given rights just as are other rights²⁴ reflected in the Decalogue.²⁵ (Exodus 20:15 and 17 are the first two of the twelve Bible passages we examine in this series.) We now move forward to explore additional Bible verses that are friends of free enterprise and enemies of socialism. Keep your eyes and mind open! You are likely to see principles in Scripture you've never seen before!

The Biblical Work Ethic and Free Enterprise: Able and Productive Partners

Third, the Fourth of the Ten Commandments affirms the value of work — with the clear implication the work commanded is to be performed primarily to accumulate wealth and resources to meet the needs of oneself and one's family. Exodus 20:8-11 states,

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Wait a minute! someone may object. *How do we know the work commanded in Exodus 20:9 is work first and foremost to improve the lot of self and family?* Because of all the other things the Bible teaches about work, wealth, accumulation and stewardship of wealth, and private property. In this series, we are actively exploring these and related biblical teachings. Keep reading!

Note that the Commandment is specifically directed to everyone in or in some way connected to the family unit. Who is prohibited from working on the Sabbath? On that special day "you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates."

In part 1 we saw that the Eighth and Tenth Commandments (see Ex. 20:15,17) uphold private property rights and that property rights were among several God-given rights set forth in all of the Ten Commandments.²⁶ Pay close attention to the remaining verses we cite in this series, especially the next two, which come from the New Testament.

Fourth and fifth, we can confidently point to 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:8 as evidence that, according to Scripture, compensation for work is to benefit the worker and his or her family.

²⁴ <https://t.ly/hR04L>

²⁵ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Ten-Commandments.html>

²⁶ See "How Liberty Works" at <https://t.ly/9eEQE>.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10, the apostle reminded the Thessalonian believers of a principle he held when he was in their company: “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”

In 1 Timothy 5:8, Paul wrote to Timothy, “[I]f anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Who is responsible for meeting the needs of a nation’s people? Each person is responsible — not the government. And beyond the reasonable expectation that each individual will work to meet his or her own basic needs, family members are responsible. These are biblical teachings.

Who, then, has a duty to meet the most basic needs one has? Each person is responsible for himself or herself — not the government. And beyond the reasonable expectation that each individual will work to meet his or her own basic needs, family members are responsible. These are biblical teachings. Contrary to the emotional rhetoric of many evangelical social justice crusaders today, redistribution of wealth by the government is *not* a biblical idea. We will see this with increasing clarity as this series continues to unfold.

The Key to *Really* Helping the Poor

Note that in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 Paul advocated denying food to those who *would not* work, not those who *could not*. I am not arguing here against a government “safety net” for those who are unable to work and whose families, for valid reasons, can’t meet their needs. I *am* arguing against government handouts that discourage work among the able-bodied and that thereby encourage slothfulness.

Founding Father Benjamin Franklin²⁷ (1706-1790) had tremendous insights²⁸ about the best ways to help the poor.

I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I traveled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.

Let me reiterate. Personal responsibility isn’t just about individuals; it’s also about families. If the members of someone’s family lack food, clothing, and other necessities, that individual is responsible to work to meet the needs of his or her family members, if he or she is able to do so

²⁷ <https://t.ly/fY50X>

²⁸ Source: A previously published article at thefederalistpapers.org, a PDF of which is available at <https://t.ly/wpuGq>.

(see 1 Tim. 5:3-4). This is especially true of husbands and fathers, whom God has appointed as providers for their wives and children (see Gen. 2:15; 3:1-16). Parents also should be cared for as they continue to age and their physical needs increase; and of course, their children stand first-in-line to assume responsibility to care for them. Circumstances vary, of course; but Scripture is clear about family members being responsible for other family members.

Declaring War on the Rich Doesn't Help the Poor

Although I don't remember from whom I heard it, I have never forgotten this important point: Declaring war on the rich doesn't help the poor — but it may make certain people feel good. Here's how the point was made:

Ask yourself this question —

If the needs of the poor could be met without taking away resources from the rich, would I support such an approach, or would I instead insist on one that demanded that the rich surrender their resources to help the poor?

Mark it down. If an individual won't readily support an approach that helps the poor without penalizing the rich, he or she clearly is more concerned about hurting the rich than helping the poor.

If an individual won't readily support an approach that helps the poor without penalizing the rich, he or she clearly is more concerned about hurting the rich than helping the poor.

There's more! Anyone who is genuinely concerned about helping the poor will already be doing so voluntarily, on his or her own — without waiting for or asking the government to step in and redistribute wealth and other resources.

Government's Divinely-Written Job Description

We can be thankful that our nation's Founding Fathers understood the proper role of government. At the conclusion of part 1 we said,

[R]ecognition of [God-given] rights [which are] rooted in the Ten Commandments are essential to ordered liberty.²⁹ Government has a duty to recognize and protect inherent rights. It does so by fulfilling its God-given task of maintaining order (see 1 Tim. 2:1-4) by commending those who do right and punishing those who do wrong (see Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The right and wrong in these passages clearly are those things that are "good" and "evil," respectively, according to God's standard of righteousness.

Pay close attention; these next statements are critically important: If a nation wants its responsible citizens to remain responsible, it will protect the property rights that belong to them just because they are human beings whom God created in His image. The surest way to thwart prosperity is to punish those who succeed.

²⁹ <https://t.ly/9eEQE>

If a nation wants its responsible citizens to remain responsible, it will protect the property rights that belong to them just because they are human beings whom God created in His image. The surest way to thwart prosperity is to punish those who succeed.

The successes of prosperous people benefit, not only them, but others as well; not only because successful people need employees, but also because they offer goods and services that others want and for which they are willing to pay. During his Inaugural Address of 1801,³⁰ Thomas Jefferson³¹ (1743-1826), America's third president, wisely observed that

a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government....³²

John Adams³³ (1735-1826), you will remember, was America's second president. He said this: "The moment the idea is admitted into society that property is not as sacred as the law of God, and that there is not a force of law and public justice to protect it, anarchy and tyranny commence."³⁴

Adams also declared, "We hold that each man is the best judge of his own interest,"³⁵ and "Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity, and happiness of the people; and not for profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men...."³⁶

Jefferson and Adams were not alone in their thinking. To their credit and to the benefit of millions of Americans who would arrive on the scene in subsequent generations, America's Founding Fathers knew government wasn't responsible to help the poor; instead, its own citizens were.

Genuine Compassion Often Is Mistaken for Callousness

Don't for a New York minute think the Founding Fathers and early leaders of America weren't compassionate. Indeed, they were! Yet they did not allow charitable deeds or public policy decisions to be driven by emotions alone. True compassion often doesn't appear to be what it really is — and in our emotionally driven society, many times that which *looks* and *feels* compassionate actually is, in the long run, destructive.

³⁰ <https://t.ly/tKhIE>

³¹ <https://t.ly/4DKkH>

³² <https://t.ly/tKhIE>

³³ <https://t.ly/AdPXp>

³⁴ <https://t.ly/Vr4N9>

³⁵ <https://t.ly/sP2ov>

³⁶ <https://t.ly/nosxa>

Do what *does* good, not what merely *feels* good.
—Dennis Prager—

I believe Dennis Prager would say that America's Founders rightly evaluated their actions and decisions, not by what made them *feel good*, but by what actually would *accomplish good*.³⁷ Furthermore, they understood that good government is charged with certain responsibilities (see 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17) and not charged with others. Charity³⁸ is to be voluntary; it is a job for individuals and organizations acting on their own.

I know I don't have to tell you that George Washington³⁹ (1732-1799) served as America's first president, but you may not know that in a letter to his nephew, Bushrod Washington, he wisely advised,

Let your heart feel for the afflictions and distresses of every one, and let your hand give in proportion to your purse; remembering always the estimation of the widow's mite, but, that it is not every one who asketh, that deserveth charity; all, however, are worthy of the inquiry, or the deserving may suffer.⁴⁰

James Madison⁴¹ (1751-1836) was our nation's fourth president; he succeeded Thomas Jefferson in that office. Madison wrote, "Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government."⁴² Yet he also declared, "It is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other."⁴³

If it sounds to you as though the Founding Fathers grasped much of what we've been discussing here, then you understand more than most about America's Christian heritage. Of course, the first four US presidents and the other men who founded the United States were not perfect. Even so, they got a great deal right.

Not all were Christians, but for the most part, they held a biblical worldview.⁴⁴ We remain direct beneficiaries of their beliefs, convictions, courage, decisions, and actions. Make no mistake: The principles⁴⁵ upon which they founded this nation were and are Christian. These principles eventually led to the end of slavery in the US.⁴⁶ To learn more about the tenets on which America was established, consider engaging in a free Bible study titled "Principles of Liberty: Ten Biblical Truths Embedded in the Declaration of Independence." You can access it at <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org> or <https://t.ly/2e6mQ>.

³⁷ <https://t.ly/Wlrm2>

³⁸ <https://t.ly/IYxwA>

³⁹ <https://t.ly/WCyMM>

⁴⁰ <https://t.ly/q4Mab>

⁴¹ <https://t.ly/kR05C>

⁴² <https://t.ly/-Jw-u>

⁴³ <https://t.ly/Lf2E8>

⁴⁴ <https://t.ly/xoPjp>

⁴⁵ <https://t.ly/2WAEz>

⁴⁶ <https://t.ly/3Czy2>

The Bottom Line

The five Bible passages we have highlighted in this series thus far are Exodus 20:15,17,8-11; 1 Timothy 5:8; and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Numerous points of application arise, with these being chief among them: If we really care about helping the poor, we will not advocate government redistribution of wealth to achieve equal outcomes.⁴⁷ Instead, we will work to make sure that all are equally *unhindered* by the government and by other citizens from taking advantage of their natural opportunities — as well as those they themselves have created — to achieve and prosper in a free society. Further, we will seek to uphold and practice the principles of free enterprise. This has to mean rejecting socialism and warning against it.

Generally speaking, where free markets prevail, the harder one works to serve others,

- the more he or she is rewarded,
- the more that individual prospers,
- the more his or her family benefits from the success, and
- the more the general public benefits, as well.

Yet people can't be blamed for putting their own interests first. This is not selfishness, but acting responsibly! The miracle of free enterprise is this: People pursue their own interests *by working hard to meet the needs and desires of others and by offering them what they need and want at a reasonable cost.*

Economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) astutely put it this way: "By pursuing his own interest (the individual) frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good."⁴⁸

That's the way it's supposed to work; and not coincidentally, it's the biblical way. *Be careful!* Don't be misled by those who try to convince us that Smith and other advocates of free-market capitalism are promoting greed "because," they tell us, "greed is embedded in the fabric of capitalism itself." Of course capitalists can be greedy, but we need to understand that the free-market system does not inherently encourage it. Instead, when it is allowed to operate as it should, capitalism promotes *responsibility*. In a powerful and insightful 5-minute video⁴⁹ from the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, Brooke McIntire⁵⁰ explains. The video also is available at <https://t.ly/lGVL7>.

Keep Reading!

In part 3 we will explore clear biblical evidence that the free enterprise model of production and exchange of goods and services was indeed designed by God. You won't want to miss it!

⁴⁷ <https://t.ly/-PIo6> — This URL links to an article titled "The Unfairness of Equal Outcomes," and authored by Steven Horwitz.

⁴⁸ <https://t.ly/3BJNi>

⁴⁹ <https://t.ly/s52s4>

⁵⁰ <https://t.ly/sCh3u>

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise
Part 2: Who Has the Responsibility of Meeting the People's Needs?
The Purpose of Work

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. Exodus 20:8-11 presents both the right and responsibility to rest from work and to worship God on the Sabbath (Saturday for the Israelites, but Sunday has been called the "Christian Sabbath"). The passage also showcases both the right and responsibility to work on the other six days, making it possible for an individual who does this to benefit from and even enjoy the fruits of his or her labor. How does the passage convey this is an individual responsibility, both to meet the needs of oneself and one's family?

following bold portion of this statement from the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —**That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...**" ? Explain your answer.
2. While 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Timothy 5:8 are directed primarily to believers, there are implications from these verses for society at large. What are some things government needs to *refrain from doing* to create and promote a cultural atmosphere that fosters personal responsibility?
3. What is government's job, according to Scripture? What do you think of expressing this responsibility with this phrase — *dispensing and maintaining justice*? Because the term *justice* has been redefined today, it is widely misunderstood. Dispensing justice is *not* meeting the needs of people or groups. It is giving people what they truly deserve. Later, read an expanded discussion of the true meaning of *justice* at <https://t.ly/hUpVx>. Does the phrase *dispensing and maintaining justice* express well the job assigned to government in Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17? Explain your answer.
4. How well does the phrase *dispensing and maintaining justice* summarize the
5. Historian and author and Christian leader William J. Federer has noted that "There is no biblical command for government to help the poor, or take care of the sick, or operate schools, or provide jobs, healthcare, education, or other entitlements" (see <https://t.ly/u4Csj>). Why might government be ill-equipped to perform such tasks, and even terrible at trying? How might government, even with the best of intentions, actually make individuals' and families' situations worse? We will return to consider William Federer's observation once again in part 4.
6. Go to <https://t.ly/Fi1D3>, where you can read all of the quotations from America's founding era cited in part 2. Which one is most surprising to you? Explain.
7. How can we who understand the compassionate nature of holding people accountable and promoting responsibility help people understand that upholding accountability and responsibility are genuinely compassionate?

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

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

Socialism of any type leads to a total destruction of the human spirit.

—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn⁵¹—

A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.

—George Washington⁵²—

Key point: Even though capitalism or free enterprise can be abused and misused by sinful and selfish human beings, it still remains a self-evident reality that the God of the Bible is its architect.

In this, the third of four articles in which we are exploring twelve Bible passages that are friends to free enterprise and enemies to socialism, we come now to our sixth passage, which we will look at momentarily. But first, here is a quick review of the Scripture portions we've examined thus far, along with some additional pertinent information.

We examined:

- Exodus 20:15 and 17 in part 1; and
- Exodus 20:8-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; and 1 Timothy 5:8 in part 2.

You can access all of these quickly and easily at <https://t.ly/BLk8A>.

- In part 1, which explored property rights, we examined Exodus 20:15,17, and we did so against the backdrop of an understanding that (1) socialism is an enemy of individual private property rights; and (2) capitalism, or free enterprise, is an ally. Although very few pastors and other religious leaders will emphasize this principle, private property rights are God-given rights. These include ownership of tangible assets and the freedom to decide how one will use the resources that are his. Moreover, these rights are just as inherent as all the other rights reflected in the Ten Commandments.⁵³ In other words, government has a duty to protect property ownership and other property rights; it did not grant them, and it has no authority to take them away. Do not be lulled into a stupor by the World Economic Forum's line⁵⁴ that, sadly, seems to have hypnotized many. We've been told, "In 2030, you'll own nothing. And you'll be happy." The WEF is serious! It currently is calling for an end to, or at least a reduction of, private car ownership.⁵⁵ The effort is all a part of the WEF's push for "The Great Reset," a major effort to end national (especially US) sovereignty and to place

⁵¹ <https://t.ly/BuOPN>

⁵² <https://t.ly/tY7Ek>

⁵³ <https://t.ly/9eEQE>

⁵⁴ <https://t.ly/oWFNL>

⁵⁵ <https://t.ly/7H4xd>

elites in power through globalism. Be forewarned⁵⁶ about this major push! It aims to severely curtail personal rights and freedom! Moreover, it is a not-so-subtle slap against the Founding Fathers of the United States — men who understood the inseparable link⁵⁷ between 1) happiness and satisfaction in life and 2) private property rights, and who were unashamed to speak of it.⁵⁸

- In part 2 we examined the purpose of work. We first discussed the Fourth Commandment, which is found in Exodus 20:8-11. This divine command authorizes worship of the one true God and rest on the Sabbath day after six days of regular work. What is the primary purpose of the work in which we are to be engaged each week? We looked at two verses from the New Testament that help us answer this question — 1 Timothy 5:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:10. We are to work to meet our own needs and the needs of the members of our families. We cannot do this without the ability to work to acquire, own, and make wise use of wealth and other tangible assets. As we discussed previously in both parts 1 and 2, it is the task of government to make sure people are unhindered from fulfilling these responsibilities. What about those who, for whatever reasons, are less well-off or even living in poverty? It is not the responsibility of the government to feed, clothe, or house them; instead, it is the responsibility of the private sector, including Christian individuals and the church and other Christian ministries, to address their needs.⁵⁹ Able-bodied family members should take on this responsibility first. Assistance can and should include training people to function in society and to become productive and self-sufficient. When government intervenes and meets people's needs, people tend to become dependent on the government and are robbed of incentives to discover ways to establish their own independence. Here I'm not making a case against a "safety-net" for those who truly are vulnerable and unable to work. Those who refuse to work, however, need a healthy dose of Paul's prescription for their particular ailment. He wrote that prescription in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Fortunately for Americans, the Founding Fathers of the United States understood human nature and believed that the free enterprise economic system effectively and efficiently compels people to engage in constructive, productive, and beneficial activity (aka work). We still benefit from their understanding because they sought to build this nation on those and other bedrock principles.⁶⁰ Yet today, a host of nefarious players, including elites at the World Economic Forum and other leaders in our country advocating globalism, are working to erode that foundation. This series of articles and many of the other resources you'll find at Word Foundations and Discover Bedrock Truth are offered to help restore it.⁶¹

The Free Market Has God's "Fingerprints" All Over It!

We move now to briefly study our sixth, seventh, and eighth Bible passage. We will see in these Scriptures that the free market economic model, or what many people commonly call "capitalism," motivates people to do well by serving others.

⁵⁶ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/danger-of-the-great-reset/> or https://t.ly/Ut_Wk

⁵⁷ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/happiness-and-wealth/> or <https://t.ly/NXTB2>

⁵⁸ <https://t.ly/BdDLV>

⁵⁹ <https://t.ly/IYxwA>; See Psalm 112:5; Proverbs 11:24-25; 19:17; 22:9; Luke 6:38; 12:29-34; Acts 20:35; 1 Corinthians 9:11; Galatians 6:2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:16-18.

⁶⁰ <https://t.ly/eoYzg>

⁶¹ <https://wordfoundations.com>; <https://wordfoundations.org>; <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org>

What benefits one participant in the process also benefits many others. The free market entices without coercing. It calls on people to be creative and to use their talents productively and constructively.

Concisely put, free enterprise gives people opportunities to reflect the God-given image they have stamped upon them (see Gen. 1:26-27). Further, it gives them motivation to do so. We will see the clear connection between

- free enterprise and
- the opportunities and motivation people have to demonstrate that they bear God's image

most clearly in the third of the three passages we will consider in this article.

While capitalism is not a perfect system and can be abused, we would be utterly foolish to address the abuse by replacing the free market with socialism. Instead, we need to rid free enterprise of its distortions and abuse.

Margaret Thatcher understood this! This audio clip⁶² is from this video,⁶³ titled "Socialists Hate Freedom."

Free Enterprise: A Divine Blueprint for National and Individual Freedom and Prosperity

Our **sixth** passage is from the Old Testament. Returning there, we see that a major free-market transaction took place as early as Genesis 23, especially vv. 14-20. Earlier in the chapter, we see Abraham embarking on a quest to find a place to bury the body of Sarah, his deceased wife. He was "a foreigner and a visitor among" (Gen. 23:4) the people where and when his need arose. He desired to purchase "the cave of the cave of Machpelah" (v. 9) from its owner, "Ephron the son of Zohar" (v. 8).

Even though Ephron was willing to give Abraham the cave and the field where it was located, Abraham insisted on paying the full price, and did so. The transaction is a model of the free enterprise system operating as it should. Verses 14-20 describe the transaction. The words and phrases set apart by **bold type** are especially significant.

¹⁴ And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ¹⁵ "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." ¹⁶ And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham **weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named** in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

¹⁷ So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, **were deeded** ¹⁸ **to Abraham as a possession** in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

⁶² <https://t.ly/kjmbR>

⁶³ <https://t.ly/fu8li>

¹⁹ And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. ²⁰ So **the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property** for a burial place.

The principles underlying this transaction — which, remember, occurred very early in Scripture, even in Genesis — are free market principles.⁶⁴

Seventh, in Deuteronomy 8:18, the Lord instructed the Israelites, who at the time were on the cusp of entering the promised land, “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” Accumulation of wealth is never to be an end in and of itself, but each one is to “remember the LORD,” because “it is He who gives...power to get wealth.”

Everything attained through work and wise investment of resources is to be used in ways that honor God. This includes saving for future needs and helping others. In fact, much fulfillment and satisfaction are derived from productive and responsible work, wise use of resources, prudent investment of assets, *and* using one’s possessions generously to benefit others. Nor is it inherently wrong to improve one’s own situation with the wealth he or she legitimately has acquired (see Prov. 22:29; Acts 16:11-15; and 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.
—Deuteronomy 8:18—

Eighth, in Genesis 1:26-28, God gave a special command to Adam and Eve, and through them, to every human being that would populate the earth. Significantly, God made, and makes, all human beings in His image.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, **“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

We find a command from God in verse 28, which I have set in **bold type**. This verse has been called “the cultural commission.”⁶⁵ Ask yourself this: *Is there any way to fulfill this command, or even to try to fulfill it, without being able to*

1. *own and*
2. *exercise control over*

⁶⁴ <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/teneconomicprinciples/>

⁶⁵ Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1999), 295; see <https://t.ly/JAQKe>.

wealth and property? I know of none. Consider that this command from God to humanity predates government. God gave this directive, not to government, but to individuals and to married husbands and wives.

God Created People to Be Free to Reflect His Image

At the beginning of part 3, we quoted Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who said, “Socialism of any type leads to a total destruction of the human spirit.”⁶⁶ Why is this so? Because God created people to be free to reflect His image, which He stamped upon them. This means He designed them to be

- free to be creative and productive,
- free to worship Him, free to serve other members of the human race, and
- free to pursue their dreams and aspirations within the moral and ethical guidelines established by His own character.

Socialism thwarts this by making citizens slaves of the state.

Francis Schaeffer astutely declared, “The ‘condition of man’ is not what modern man thinks it is.”⁶⁷ Many “moderns” embrace the views of Karl Marx, who made these statements among many other similar ones.

- There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.⁶⁸
- My object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism.⁶⁹

By contrast, George Washington wisely observed, “A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.”⁷⁰

A people...who are possessed of the spirit of commerce, who see and who will pursue their advantages may achieve almost anything.

—George Washington—

Clearly, Karl Marx believed that the people exist for the government, but America’s Founding Fathers believed that government exists for the people.

⁶⁶ <https://t.ly/BuOPN>

⁶⁷ Francis Schaeffer, “What Difference Has Looking Made? (A Christmas Study)” *No Little People*, in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer, Vol. 3: A Christian View of Spirituality*, [Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982] 123-124).

⁶⁸ <https://t.ly/8liq3>

⁶⁹ <https://t.ly/94Yff>

⁷⁰ <https://t.ly/tY7Ek>

This is why America has been a nation that has, through most of its history, affirmed and protected inherent rights and free enterprise. Although not perfect, capitalism is the economic system that recognizes inherent rights and provides incentives that fuel creativity, productivity, and wise use of resources. It is the system that promotes both freedom and prosperity. It is the system that is compatible with the true “condition of man.”

Let’s consider just one more quote. In his landmark book, *How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin J. Schmidt rightly declares (emphasis added),

Just as God does not want people to be coerced in spiritual matters, so too he does not want them to be coerced in earthly matters, for instance, in their economic activities. *There is not a single reference in either the Old or New Testament in which God denies economic freedom to people, as in fascism, socialism, and communism.*⁷¹

We will revisit this quote in part 4.

Four More Passages to Go!

We’ve now considered eight Bible passages upholding free enterprise.⁷² These are not isolated passages but are representative of what the Bible in its entirety teaches about economic systems. Also, our list of twelve will not be exhaustive. Of the twelve, we have four more to go. We’ll study these briefly next time and make some important concluding remarks!

Stay tuned!

⁷¹ Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 205.

⁷² <https://t.ly/pE7vL>

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>.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 4: Ethics, Justice, Order, and Freedom Are Essential Elements of a Fair and Just Free Market

The Bible contains many endorsements of free enterprise, including verses in the Gospels and Proverbs.

— “Free enterprise and the Bible,” a short but insightful article at conservapedia.com⁷³—

Capitalism is not economic anarchy. It recognizes several necessary conditions for the kinds of voluntary relationships it recommends. One of these presuppositions is the existence of inherent human rights, such as the right to make decisions, the right to be free, the right to hold property, and the right to exchange what one owns for something else. Capitalism also presupposes a system of morality. Capitalism should be thought of as a system of voluntary relationships within a framework of laws which protect peoples’ rights against force, fraud, theft, and violations of contracts.

— Ronald Nash⁷⁴ —

Key point: Not only was Jesus not a socialist, He actually assumed and affirmed the principles of capitalism and free enterprise — not always overtly, but nevertheless unmistakably. King Solomon, the apostles Paul and Peter, and the early church did as well — and modern-day Christians and the church in the 21st century need desperately to understand this. The free market is a biblical approach to economic policy, and socialism is unbiblical — even blatantly so.

In parts 1, 2, and 3 we examined eight passages of Scripture that are supportive of the free market economic model and that push back against socialism. They are: Exodus 20:15,17,8-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 23:14-20; Deuteronomy 8:18; and Genesis 1:26-28 (<https://t.ly/pE7vL>). As we come now to consider the remaining four of the twelve verses or sets of verses we’re highlighting in this series, I encourage you to keep in mind the observation we emphasized in part 1:

The core difference between socialism and free enterprise is found in the former’s denial versus the latter’s affirmation of private property rights. Socialism cannot exist in a society that recognizes and affirms private property rights — the rights to own and control finances and other tangible assets. Conversely, a free market economy cannot exist among a people who reject and deny property rights.

You show me a person who thinks supporters of private property right are selfish, and I’ll show you a socialist, an enemy of freedom, and a tyrant or a friend of tyranny (even if he or she doesn’t realize it).

You show me a person who thinks supporters of private property right are selfish, and I’ll show you a socialist, an enemy of freedom, and a tyrant or a friend of tyranny.

⁷³ <https://t.ly/MN6ES>

⁷⁴ <https://t.ly/K84Hv>

Our **ninth** Bible passage, Proverbs 10:4-5, affirms that just as there is a direct correlation between laziness and poverty, so, too, there is a direct correlation between hard work and wealth. Were property rights not a reality, this principle wouldn't be true. In the New International Version (NIV) these verses state, "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son." Many other passages in Proverbs⁷⁵ (including what Proverbs 31 says about the virtuous wife) echo this principle. Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 echoes it too!

Tenth, Ephesians 4:28 by itself deals a death blow to socialism. Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians, "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."

Here we see the importance of each of these elements:

- repenting of disobedience to God's commands (in this case, stealing),
- changing one's habits to conform to His commands (laboring with one's hands, and, by implication, with one's mind, ingenuity, and imagination),
- engaging in constructive, productive work to produce something beneficial and helpful,
- accumulating wealth legitimately (including following God's guidelines⁷⁶ for economic transactions),
- using resources wisely, and
- voluntarily helping those in need.

All of these elements are consistent with a free market economic system, and none of them is fostered or encouraged by socialism. This is why socialism is not compassionate, and it's why socialism doesn't work!

Eleventh, in Matthew 20:1-16 we find Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard. A landowner needed laborers in his vineyard, and throughout the day, he hired numerous workers at various times. Those he hired early in the morning agreed to a day's wage, and they went to work. Later in the day the landowner took on others, promising to pay them "whatever is right" (v. 4).

The owner of the vineyard even hired people to work for him very late in the day, making that same commitment to them. When the workday was over, he arranged for the workers he'd hired last to be paid first. Each one received a day's wage — the same amount the landowner had agreed to pay those he'd hired early and who'd worked the entire day.

When the people who had worked the full day saw this, they began to expect they would be paid more. They were disappointed when they received a day's wage, even though this was the amount the landowner had promised them at the beginning of the day when he hired them.

When they complained, the landowner responded to "one of them," saying, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius [a day's wage]? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you" (vv. 13-14). Then, significantly, the landowner added, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?" (v. 15).

⁷⁵ Proverbs 6:6-11; 12:11,14,24,27; 13:2,4,7,11,22,25; 14:4,23; 16:26; 20:4; 21:25-26; 24:30-34; 28:19; 31:10-31 — Visit https://t.ly/Ql_O1 for an online presentation of these verses.

⁷⁶ <https://t.ly/JnM4h>

Even though private property ownership and control over one's assets are not among the primary themes of this parable, we are wise to note that these themes are an inherent in it. Verse 15 is a clear and unmistakable affirmation of private property rights; Jesus *assumed* private property rights and other free market principles, not only in this parable, but in many of His other parables⁷⁷ as well.⁷⁸

Twelfth, in Acts 5:1-11 we read the horrific account of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. This couple were members of the early church and gave the church a portion of the money they'd received from selling a piece of property they had owned. The problem was that Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount they gave; they claimed they'd contributed the full amount they received from the sale, but instead they held a portion of the money back for themselves. The apostle Peter knew and confronted Ananias, saying,

“Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God” (vv. 3-4).

Ananias dropped dead on the spot! (see v. 5). His wife wasn't present at the time, but Peter confronted her as well when she appeared a few hours later — and she, too, “fell down...and breathed her last” (v. 10). Verse 11 tells us, “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.”

Reread Peter's words to Ananias carefully (they are printed above). Note that Peter affirmed that the two were free to do as they wished regarding the sale of the property and to decide how much, if any, of the proceeds from the sale they would donate to the church. Ananias and Sapphira would not have sinned if they had kept the property for themselves; nor would they have sinned if they had sold the property and kept the full amount for themselves. Their sin was in their *lying* about the amount they gave! Again, they claimed they had given the full amount of the sale when they had not.

All of this is important because Peter's words to Ananias affirm and uphold private property rights among all the members of the early church. Sometimes leftist evangelicals contend that the members of the early church practiced socialism. They point to Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35 — passages that actually describe the voluntary giving that took place, and the church's meeting the needs of its members, not the forced reapportioning of resources by the government that socialism demands.

The government was not involved. All were free to give, or not give, as they wished. Moreover, the gifts that were given were “laid...at the apostles' feet” (Acts 4:35,37). Hear Dr. D. James Kennedy explain the significance of this phrase at <https://t.ly/o7QbM>. This clip comes from Dr. Kennedy's sermon “The Bankruptcy of Socialism,” which is showcased at <https://t.ly/c1Bay>.

As we've indicated already, everything Peter said to Ananias about the rights of ownership and control he and Sapphira had over their assets applied to all the other members of the church as

⁷⁷ See <https://t.ly/QTq1K> for more than a dozen examples.

⁷⁸ You can explore Jesus' perspective on economic ideas at <https://t.ly/1sMJq>.

well. Keep in mind that the events of Acts 5:1-11 take place on the heels of the events occurring in Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35. Again, in the early church we see absolutely no evidence of socialism; in fact, we see private property rights clearly upheld.

Conclusion: Collectivism Eliminates Rights — and Freedom

All twelve of the passages we've highlighted in this series of studies are displayed online at <https://t.ly/uschh>. Our list is far from exhaustive. Throughout Scripture, free market economic principles are both assumed and inherently affirmed.

We conclude with three insightful quotations — one from a US president; a second from a former professor, social researcher, and author; and finally, a third from an American historian and former pastor.

In a speech he delivered at William and Mary College in 1926, President Calvin Coolidge declared,

No method of procedure has ever been devised by which liberty could be divorced from local self-government. No plan of centralization has ever been adopted which did not result in bureaucracy, tyranny, inflexibility, reaction, and decline. Of all forms of government, those administered by bureaus are about the least satisfactory to an enlightened and progressive people. Being irresponsible they become autocratic, and being autocratic they resist all development. Unless bureaucracy is constantly resisted it breaks down representative government and overwhelms democracy. It is the one element in our institutions that sets up the pretense of having authority over everybody and being responsible to nobody.⁷⁹

In other words, plans of centralization and tyrannies are found in the same places. Tyrannies become laws unto themselves because they refuse to recognize God's law — and it is no coincidence that they also curtail and even totally squash personal freedom. People — human beings who are made in God's image — reflect His image when they can act freely within the boundaries of God's laws.

Our **second** quote comes from sociologist, historian, and author Alvin J. Schmidt. In his landmark work *How Christianity Changed the World*, Dr. Schmidt observes (emphasis added),

Just as God does not want people to be coerced in spiritual matters, so too he does not want them to be coerced in earthly matters, for instance, in their economic activities. *There is not a single reference in either the Old or New Testament in which God denies economic freedom to people, as in fascism, socialism, and communism.*⁸⁰

In our **third** quote, we see that historian and former pastor William J. Federer also noticed something Scripture does not say. He observed,

There is no biblical command for government to help the poor, or take care of the sick, or operate schools, or provide jobs, healthcare, education, or other entitlements.⁸¹

⁷⁹ <https://t.ly/Qm63e>

⁸⁰ Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 205.

⁸¹ <https://t.ly/u4Csj>

Biblically, these tasks are to be addressed and carried out in the private sector, through individual charity and organizational charity, as well as through ministry performed by the church that includes benevolence.

Although it isn't perfect, the free market simultaneously encourages all people (rich and poor alike) to take advantage of their natural opportunities to improve their situations and to carve out additional opportunities to do the same. Recall what happened in Jamestown and Plymouth in North America in the early 1600s.⁸² Socialism fails every time it is tried,⁸³ but free enterprise paves the way to prosperity and freedom.⁸⁴

You see, free markets encourage people of all talents and backgrounds to use their gifts creatively to find their particular niche, making it possible for people to do well by doing what they enjoy doing. Opportunities entice people and engage them in using their imaginations, ingenuity, and innovation to be productive and to render helpful services to others. In a free market, people can actively work to fulfill the cultural commission in Genesis 1:28 and to follow the principles and commands in other biblical passages on work, stewardship, productivity, and charity.⁸⁵ They benefit from the rewards that the market affords them by serving others efficiently and well.

Don't be misled. Socialism and Scripture are incompatible — completely.

⁸² <https://t.ly/OFGEW>; <https://t.ly/kkblL>

⁸³ <https://t.ly/DGd-8>; <https://t.ly/20j3t>

⁸⁴ <https://t.ly/QBmrX>

⁸⁵ Passages like the ones we've studied here [<https://t.ly/uschh>], among many others.

Twelve Bible Passages that Destroy Socialism and Uphold Free Enterprise

Part 4: Ethics, Justice, Order, and Freedom Are Essential Elements of a Fair and Just Free Market

Discussion Forum: Items for Reflection and Dialogue

1. When we considered our ninth passage — Proverbs 10:4-5 — we tapped a verse that carries a theme that many Bible verses carry regarding motivation to work: *The circumstance of life, especially the natural needs for food, shelter, and clothing, compel or motivate a person to engage in productive work.* Describe what being denied property rights by the government will do to the otherwise natural incentive one has to work.
2. Describe the elements of the free enterprise system evident or assumed in Ephesians 4:28. Describe the elements in the verse that align with God's directives for enjoying a relationship with Him. What provision does the verse make for those in need?
3. How does Matthew 20:15 deal a death blow to socialism? What are some other parables of Jesus that contain additional affirmations of free enterprise? Note that private property ownership and management of possessions are so woven into the fabric of Scripture that we often overlook it. This series aims to put these in the spotlight!
4. Explain why what the church practiced in Acts 2:44-45 and 4:34-35 was not socialism. Explain how Acts 5:1-11 reinforces the truth that it was not socialism. Is there a name for what the early church practiced? If so, what is it?
5. In our concluding section of this article and this series of articles, we cited three quotes — one from President Calvin Coolidge, another from sociologist, historian, and author Alvin Schmidt, and a third from historian and author, and former pastor William J. Federer. You can access all of these at <https://t.ly/CyUgf>. **1)** Read the Coolidge quote and explain why there is a positive correlation between central planning and tyranny. **2)** Read the Schmidt quote and explain how the free enterprise system honors human freedom without necessarily sacrificing charity. **3)** Read the Federer quote and explain why individuals and charitable organizations are far better equipped than government to perform tasks involving benevolence.
6. Our final remarks once again highlighted socialism's abysmal track record in Jamestown and Plymouth (the places where we started this series in Part 1).⁸⁶ We cited other examples as well.⁸⁷ Yet, against the backdrop of the carnage and death that socialism has left in history is the contrasting good news of free enterprise, especially when it is not abused. But many don't realize this. Despite the horrors socialism and communism have created, the socialist rhetoric of equality and compassion for those in need is winning people over. The truth isn't always what seems right or feels right, but we must learn from history and affirm the truth. Richard Nixon said, "Capitalism works better than it sounds, while socialism sounds better than it works."⁸⁸ Emotions often deceive! Economist Walter Williams observed, "Prior to capitalism, the way people amassed great wealth was by looting, plundering and enslaving their fellow man. Capitalism made it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man."⁸⁹ Nothing in Scripture refutes this; and, as we have seen, many Bible passages uphold free enterprise and its elements. Using the insights highlighted in this study, make the case that, indeed, capitalism makes "it possible to become wealthy by serving your fellow man."
7. How can you use the 12 verses we've highlighted in this series⁹⁰ to help other believers understand the amazing alignment of free enterprise to God's plan for human beings, as well as its alignment with the nature of human beings? **Suggestions:** You can start by sharing this article series⁹¹ with your Christian friends and encouraging them to read and study it. Also, consider leading a Bible study/discussion group at your church or in your home. Explore additional resources at <https://discoverbedrocktruth.org/bible-studies/>.

⁸⁶ <https://t.ly/dETNt>

⁸⁷ <https://t.ly/YNZ7H>

⁸⁸ <https://t.ly/5Z4SV>

⁸⁹ <https://t.ly/R9q0X>

⁹⁰ <https://t.ly/uschh>

⁹¹ <https://t.ly/QQhyA>