

# Christianity and Hot Button Issues

## Biblical and Cultural Challenges Christians Must Face

### #12 – Is Capitalism Better Than Socialism?

“Socialism only works in heaven, where they don’t need it, and in hell where they already have it.”

Ronald Reagan

“The problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people’s money.”

Margaret Thatcher

"Socialism in general has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it."

Thomas Sowell

What is Communism	What is Socialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A political/economic theory.</li><li>• The abolition of private property.</li><li>• The state owns all property.</li><li>• The means of production is owned by the state.</li><li>• The state controls all economic activity.</li><li>• Attempts to eliminate classes of people.</li><li>• It controls most activities of life.</li><li>• Freedom is limited-you are a ward of the state.</li><li>• Is atheistic at its core (utopian.)</li><li>• The state power is in the hands of the few.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A political/economic theory.</li><li>• The state owns or controls the "means of production.</li><li>• Production is controlled and planned by the state.</li><li>• Characterized by large welfare programs.</li><li>• State power is centralized.</li><li>• The state controls prices.</li><li>• The state controls the allocation of goods.</li><li>• Attempts to limit competition in buying and selling.</li><li>• Embraces certain aspects of communism.</li></ul>

Bible on private property and who owns it. Exodus 20:17 and Psalm 24:1

### 8 Myths According to Jay W. Richards in *Money, Greed, & God* plus 1

#### 1. Can't We Build a Just Society? "The Nirvana Myth."

- “(contrasting free enterprise with an unrealizable ideal rather than with its live [real] alternatives)”
- Wasn't the Early Church Socialistic? No. Acts 4:32-35 and Acts 5:1-6

#### 2. What Would Jesus Do? "The Piety Myth."

- “(focusing on our good intentions rather than on the unintended consequences of our actions)”
- Jesus Cares for the Poor: Luke 19:21; Matthew 5:42; Luke 3:11; and Matthew 25:40
- Jesus Shows Favor Both to Employers and Employees: Matthew 20:1-16; Luke 16:1-13; cf. Matthew 24:45-51; Matthew 25:14-30; Mark 12:1-12
- The Bible on Welfare: Proverbs 12:24; II Thessalonians 3:10; James 1:27; II Thessalonians 3:6; and I Timothy 5:8.
- Giving to Others in Need is the Responsibility of the Godly—Not the Government: Luke 12:33; II Corinthians 9:6-7; and Ephesians 4:28.

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3. **Doesn't the Free-Market Foster Unfair Competition? "The Zero-Sum Gain Myth."**
  - "(believing that trade requires a winner and a loser)"
  - The Parable of the Talents applicability: Matthew 24:14-18
  - The Bible and Proverbs speaks to business: Proverbs 31:16-18; Proverbs 16:11; and Proverbs 16:11
4. **If I Become Rich, Won't Someone Else Become Poor? "The Materialist Myth."**
  - "(believing that wealth isn't created, it's simply transferred)"
  - Bible speaks to giving to the poor and workers: Deuteronomy 24:14-15 and James 5:4
5. **Isn't the Free Market Based on Greed? "The Greed Myth."**
  - "(believing that the essence of free enterprise is greed)"
  - Free enterprise is based on self-interest and providing for one's family: I Timothy 6:9-10
6. **Hasn't Christianity Always Opposed Free Markets?" The Usury Myth."**
  - "(believing that working with money is inherently immoral or that charging interest on money is always exploitative)"
  - The Bible speaks to interest/usury: Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:10; Psalm 15:1-5.
  - Parable of the Talents speaks to interest in a positive sense: Matthew 25:26-27.
7. **Doesn't the Free Market Lead to an Ugly Consumerist Culture? "The Artsy Myth."**
  - (confusing aesthetic judgments with economics arguments)
  - Definition: Consumerism is the desire to possess for the perceived satisfaction someone obtains from the possession or to compete with others who also possess.
  - Motivation is especially important in this area: Philippians 4:11-12 and Proverbs 23:20-21.
8. **Are We Going to Use Up All the Resources? "The Freeze-Frame Myth."**
  - "(Believing that things always stay the same-for example, assuming that population trends will continue indefinitely, or treating a current 'natural resource' as if it will always be needed.)"
  - Christians are blamed for the use of resources because we embrace: Genesis 1:27-28.
    - The earth is God's Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world, and those who live in it."
  - We are stewards of the earth: Genesis 2:15
9. **Don't the Intellectuals Know What is Best? "The Professional Myth."**
  - "(Trusting in the views or opinions of experts and professionals)"
  - "Nonsense remains nonsense even when spoken by great scientists." John Lennox
  - 2 Timothy 3:1-7 and Proverbs 4:7

## Resources

- Book: *Money, Greed, and God* by Jay W. Richards
- Book: *Politics According to the Bible* by Wayne Grudem
- Book: *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith
- Book: *The Road to Serfdom* by Frederick A. Hayek
- Book: *Basic Economics* by Thomas Sowell
- Book: *Capitalism and Freedom* by Milton Friedman
- Video: *Thomas Sowell on the Myths of Economic Inequality* a Youtube video at the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS5WYp5xmvI>