

# OpenTheo

## Economics and the Bible: Was Jesus a Socialist? Part 2

April 1, 2023



### **Knight & Rose Show** - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose look at several passages of the Bible where Jesus speaks about economics issues, and discuss whether his words are more compatible with socialism or free enterprise. What view of property does Jesus assume? Who should redistribute wealth to alleviate poverty - governments or individuals? What does the Bible teach about greed, envy and coveting? We end the episode with book recommendations. This is the second episode of a three-part series.

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Show notes: <https://winteryknight.com/2023/04/01/knight-and-rose-show-episode-31-was-jesus-a-socialist-part-2>

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## **Transcript**

Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today, we are continuing our discussion of last week's topic, Was Jesus a Socialist? I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

Welcome Rose. So, we ended last week's episode by refuting the most commonly cited

passages used to claim that Jesus supported socialism. In this episode, we're going to be looking at some teachings of Jesus that indicate that he was not a socialist.

But before we get to that, you mentioned that there was something you wanted to add about last week's topic. Yeah, I wanted to say something about upward mobility. So, proponents of socialism and Marxism like to pit people against each other.

They identify some people as the bourgeoisie and others as the proletariat. These are the haves and the have-nots. Or in today's language, some are the oppressors and others are the oppressed.

And they try to maintain or argue that the bourgeoisie will always be the rich and the proletariat will always be the poor, as if there's no mobility in these groups whatsoever. Right. Yeah, Thomas Sowell discusses this in his books on economics.

Socialists like to talk about the top 1% or the super wealthy as if it's always the same people in these groups. Right. He argues that in a free enterprise society, this is not the case because there's constant upward mobility.

Every generation starts out with little and rises in the ranks of wealth over time. This information is tracked from the US Census. You can see it.

The names in every quartile are always changing. That doesn't happen in socialist societies. In socialist societies, the few powerful elites remain the powerful elites and everyone else remains poor or actually gets poorer over time as the government runs out of other people's money to spend.

It's just a lie that under capitalism, you will always be in the same station of life that you're in when you're 25 years old. Yeah. When you mention economic mobility, it makes me think of some of the people who are running for president and the previous presidential elections, people like Marco Rubio and Ben Carson, they start out from very modest circumstances and their families are somehow able to get them into these elite circles within a very short time.

I think that that happens more in America than it does in societies that are more socialist. Oh, absolutely. As a matter of fact, that does.

Yeah. Okay. Well, let's continue with today's topic.

We're going to look at the historical sources. Do you see any that indicate that Jesus would not be a socialist? Absolutely. So throughout the Bible accounts, people owned private property and were free to use it however they pleased and private ownership was not only assumed, it was also actually affirmed as a good thing.

So let's look at a few examples. Okay. So the first one that comes to mind is Ananias and

Sapphira from acts.

That's acts chapter five. Okay. Last time we looked at X chapter four, this follows right on the heels of that.

So what happened was Ananias and Sapphira owned property. They sold their property, kept some of the profit for themselves and they donated the rest to the church, but they lied and said they donated the full amount for their property. So Peter then called them out for lying.

He said, Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received from the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings, but to God. Yeah, that's, that's the key part. Like this is a great opportunity for Peter to say to them, Oh, owning land is terrible.

You're a bourgeoisie, you know, right? Making free trades with other people, voluntary exchanges. That's terrible. We should let the government decide, but he doesn't say any of that.

He's like, yeah, private property is fine. Selling and buying is fine, but don't lie about it to make people think that you're being more generous than you are. Exactly.

So Matthew 20 verse 15, the parable of the laborers, as it's sometimes called in this parable about the kingdom of heaven, a landowner hires different workers at different times of the day. At the end of the day, the landowner gives them all the same pay. The workers who started earlier in the day are upset because they think they deserve more than those who didn't start working until later.

The landowner then replies when the, when the people are upset, the workers are upset. He says, I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for denarius? Take your pay and go.

I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my money or are you envious because I am generous? Wow. Okay.

Stop. Let me talk about this. This is very important.

So do you remember that famous quote from Barack Obama, uh, who is, who is a socialist where he said that successful people didn't build their own business. They didn't build their own wealth. He said, you didn't build that and making fun of the productive people.

This is a person, you know, Barack Obama, he was born into luxury. He had a very, very rich family. They put him in very fancy schools and when he graduated, he never went to work in the public, uh, private sector.

So he, he's, he doesn't have that experience of being faced with competitive pressures and being forced to produce or having the business go under. So it's, it's just no wonder to me that someone who doesn't have the experience of having to produce anything for money and please customers would then turn around to the entrepreneurs who take all these risks in order to develop these products and services that people really want and that enhances their lives. And he says to those people, you didn't do anything.

You don't own what you made. Somehow, some other people who weren't there in the computer lab, they deserve credit for your code. The people who didn't, you know, start this restaurant, they deserve credit for your restaurant success.

Let me just say this as a Christian man, I have a Christian life plan and I am delighted when I read passages like this from the Bible, don't I have a right to do what I want with my own money that supports my right to spend what I earn on Christian priorities and not have somebody, a socialist come along and say, you didn't build that. And so I get to spend it. I get really annoyed when I see people come into my life and want to spend my money on their priorities, buying votes, making people like them and all this stuff.

Look, I never saw you in the computer lab. You don't have a right to what I earn. So keep out of it.

I have things I'm trying to achieve. Yeah. I mean, these people can't even pay back their student loans.

So we can't even move out of their parents' basements a lot of the time, but still they want to tell me how to run my life. Exactly. All right.

Yeah. So back to the parable. So the government doesn't get to tell the landowner what to do with his money or how much to pay his workers.

The only problem here is that the worker was envious and that's the biggest problem that leads to socialism. People are envious of what others have. They're jealous and they're willing to employ the government to go and take what rightfully belongs to the people who earned it in order to give it to those who didn't earn it.

Yeah. It seems like these socialist governments are really good at taking what other people produce and redistributing in it to all of their favored groups. That actually reminds me of one of my favorite passages from 1 Samuel 8 verses 10 through 18.

This is exactly what God said would happen when Israel demanded a human king so they could be like all the other nations. So if you don't mind, I'd love to read that and just

listen to God's warnings to Israel through the prophet Samuel as I read this. Listen for the word take and the word and what he's taking it for, whose stuff.

Okay. It starts, "So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, 'These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you.

He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys and put them to his work.

He will take the tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves. And in that day, you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.'" Yeah. It's like it's very, this is a condemnation of the idea of electing a government that is interested in confiscating wealth and using it for their own purposes.

Yep, exactly. So I don't know how it could be that so many Christians would be interested in this idea that a secular government knows best how to redistribute wealth. And notice this motivation they have.

You hear this a lot in the Old Testament. "We want to be like the other nations. That's why we want a king." Is this a good motivation? Do we look at other countries and say, "We have to be like them and that's the reason why we need to become socialist?" I'm seeing that actually a lot today among friends and acquaintances and on social media.

People say, you know, people like, "Oh, I'm so embarrassed to be American. Oh, we're such a horrible nation. We should be more like Europe," and things like that.

And that's just absolutely ridiculous. We see here a very sober warning when that's what we're concerned with, being like the other nations as opposed to being people who live for the glory of God. Right.

Yeah, definitely wanting to be like these other nations that are perceived as more just and more fair. But I think a lot of people are also motivated by just looking at their neighbors who are spending their money in a different way or who are working maybe harder or more focused on their careers. And they just feel this envy or maybe greed, you know, for their neighbors' possessions.

That also seems to be a root cause of this socialist interest. Yeah, definitely. And there are many warnings throughout the Bible against envy and greed.

So God forbade envy in the Ten Commandments when He said, "You shall not covet." And then in Luke 12, a man in the crowd said to Jesus, "Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." And Jesus replied with a warning against greed and a speech about how that man shouldn't be obsessed with material things. So this man is saying, "You know, my brother has all this stuff. He inherited all this stuff.

I want it. Tell him to share it with me." And Jesus doesn't say, "Yeah, everything should be equal. Don't worry.

We'll get it for you." No, He says, "Don't be greedy." Yeah, why are you even thinking about material things as being that important? It's very strange. Like reading these Bible passages just makes me think of conversations that I've had with secular left people in the workplace where they're talking about, "I don't like how this person drives a luxury SUV. I feel that they should be prevented from doing that." Or "I don't like that this person has so many kids.

I don't like their decision making. We need the government to step in and tell them not to make so many kids." You know, it's very strange. Like you're not supposed to compare yourself to other people.

You're not supposed to want their wealth. You're not even supposed to think about wealth as something desirable in this life. Your mind is supposed to be focused on eternal things as a Christian.

And yet we have so many people who are focused on externals like this and thinking, just think about like the, I'm going to say it, the Catholic Church's emphasis on social justice, but not much emphasis on theology. Anyway. Yeah.

Yeah. And I also think it's significant that the means by which socialism is accomplished is government sanctioned theft. And we also see plenty of warnings about theft throughout the Bible too.

That's also in the Ten Commandments, right? You shall not steal. Yeah. So again, it's assumed that private property is legitimate because how could anyone steal from you unless your property was your own? Yeah.

I mean, Christianity really does have the solutions to all of our problems. Yeah. All right.

Let's talk about Jesus in light of the culture from which he came. So some people say that because Jesus was born into a certain culture where private property and free trade were already part of the culture, that he kind of accepted it. And so he didn't really try to reform the economic system.

That wasn't his priority, but maybe he didn't approve of it. Maybe he didn't, you know, he just didn't say anything about it, but maybe he secretly didn't like it. So what do you think about that argument? I've heard that argument too, but I don't think the passages we've looked at allow for such an interpretation.

Personal stewardship of the resources entrusted to us seems important to God throughout the scriptures. Jesus and the apostles affirmed the ownership of private property. They didn't only assume it.

They affirmed it. They also commanded individuals to use their money wisely and generously. That cannot be done under a socialist system.

Yeah. This is a great point. So we actually did an entire episode on Philippians.

We talked about Christians having the goal of partnering with other Christians for the gospel. And if you read Philippians through entirely, you're going to see that giving and exchanging of gifts is important to this idea of partnering for the gospels. And so how can you do that if you cannot keep what you earn, if you can't keep what you produce, and then be free to exchange it with who you see fit? It's not possible.

So in what sense could people really be trying to remove private property and free trade and then saying, "You can still be a Christian." We need these things in order to make our decision-making subject to what we learn in the Bible. Right. Okay.

Are there any instances in the gospels in which Jesus goes against the grain of his culture with regard to finances and economics? Oh, yeah. Actually, that's a really, really good point because he didn't just assume and go along with what was already in place and what was already taught. He actually told a number of parables that involved finance and significantly he presented finance in a positive light.

He even put God, yeah, he even put God in the investor role. Okay. All right.

Let's hear about that. Okay. Well, the ancient economy of the Mediterranean was overwhelmingly agrarian.

It was based on land and farming. The conservative aristocracy were skeptical of the financial markets, which were in the early stages of development then and in that time and place. One of the few alternatives to buying land to gain wealth was to invest in shipping and trading, but that was considered very risky.

Land, on the other hand, was viewed as the culturally appropriate and financially less risky investment. Okay. So here we're expecting Jesus to just stick with the cultural expectation that agriculture is the most positive and that riskier forms of investment were not as good.

Instead, he's holding up investment and risk-taking and producing as a good thing, even picturing God as an investor. Yes. And this is something that is a characteristic of the free enterprise system.

Right. Mm-hmm. So that actually reminds me of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, where there is a lot of investing and getting of returns going on.

Right. Yeah. So that's a great example.

God is pictured as a man with servants going away on a journey and he leaves different amounts of wealth to his servants to manage in his absence. The one who is given five bags of gold gains another five bags. The one who is given two bags gains another two bags.

So both of them have doubled their amount that they were given. Mm-hmm. Then the one who was given one bag of gold buries the bag in a hole and doesn't invest it.

So God is pleased with the two servants who doubled their money, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things." Mm-hmm.

But he said to the third servant, "You wicked, lazy servant. So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest." So God is really saying that with respect to our spiritual gifts, we need to be capitalists.

We should try to get a return on our investment. We should take risks. Yes, for the kingdom.

Yeah. For the kingdom. And I have to believe that in addition to our talents in taking care of other people, in being good listeners, in prayer, in all of the spiritual gifts that surely that being productive, earning and saving and self-denial, like saying, "Well, I really want this boat, but I'm not going to buy a boat because I would rather start a podcast or bring a speaker to my church." I have to believe that managing your money is one of the ways that you produce a return for the kingdom.

And how are we supposed to do that if some socialist comes along, snatches up all of our money and sends it to Ukraine or gives everybody taxpayer-funded sex changes? We're losing our ability to have a Christian life that is productive. Exactly. Yeah.

And this parable just wouldn't make much sense if Jesus thought of finance as an inherently unrighteous profession. If he did, he would basically be saying the means justify the ends. He could do something evil and disgusting as long as it produces a return for the... Yeah.



But the burden of proof has to be on the socialist to point to a parable and say, this is a clear condemnation of private property, free trades, investment, risk-taking, and things like that. But all of these examples use these things and there's no condemnation. So it sounds like not only are they okay, but just reasoning about it, it sounds like these are ways that we Christians would rely on in order to show what our priorities are.

Right. So that's really interesting. Do you have any more reasons to believe that Jesus was not a socialist? Yeah.

There's actually a really interesting book that we were introduced to by a friend of ours called *The Maker and the Takers*. The author is Jerry Bowyer, I think you say it, B-O-W-Y-E-R. It's a pretty new book.

And he demonstrates that Jesus didn't condemn the rich when he was talking to people who earned their wealth through their own hard work. He only warned and condemned the rich when he was talking to those who had extracted it from the people who earned it. He especially condemned government and religious leaders who at that time were usually one and the same.

Yeah. People who kind of wait until the producers have done their producing and then they come along and just scoop up half of it. Right.

So definitely in the Bible, when Jesus is critical of the rich, he's not talking about the people who earn their wealth by producing goods and services. He's usually talking about these people who come in afterwards and just take what's not theirs. That's right.

Exactly. And he had plenty of opportunities to warn and condemn people who were earning wealth through their hard work. Jesus grew up in the province of Galilee, which was a largely entrepreneurial society with broad ownership of property and reasonable prosperity based on things like farming, fishing, building, manufacturing, stone jars.

And within the province of Galilee, Jesus was from the town of Nazareth, which was reasonably prosperous and was up and coming as an olive oil production center. But Nazareth was also very near nearby the cultural, political, and financial center of Sepharus. And we know from recent archaeological finds that Sepharus was quite prosperous.

It had a bank, a theater, wealth citizens, and at least one expansive mansion that likely was even from the time of Jesus, although it may have been a little later. But point being, this was a prosperous town. And as a builder, Jesus certainly spent time in this town.

It was right near his own, like I said, and the projects that were going on there were within his field of carpentry. And so he could have easily condemned people in those areas. He also spent time in Magdala, the hometown of Mary Magdalene, which was also

a wealthy town with many wealthy fishing merchants.

He's definitely exposed to the kind of productive entrepreneur class that produces wealth. So did he condemn them? No. In fact, there are no records of Jesus having confrontations about money with the wealthy Sepharus bankers or with the wealthy fishing merchants of Magdala or with fellow Galilean artisans who made their living on large building projects.

In fact, we never see Jesus condemning the wealthy who received their wealth through honest hard work. Okay. So what I'm getting from this passage is, you know, I'm getting a feeling that there's a loss of wisdom amongst contemporary Christians because the message of the Bible is very clearly wealth producers who make their money by making goods and services and then selling them in a free market are good.

People who are creative are good. Artisans are good. Carpenters are good.

Fishermen are good, you know? And yet today I see so many young Christians saying, because you have money, you're bad. We have to be more subtle than that. We have to be more nuanced.

We have to say, how did you make your money? Did you make it through your own effort in the competitive private sector? Or did you make it by using political power or intimidation? You know, I'm thinking of people like Al Sharpton and these other kind of demagogues who bully businesses into giving them money to make getting donations because of threatening them. Basically, you know, this is the kind of person who would be condemned in the Bible. Somebody who is trying to use power to extract money from someone else.

So there's no condemnation of the wealthy from Jesus in the Bible? I'm sure there must be some. Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Jesus was not critical of entrepreneurs and or investors or people who earned their wealth or took risks and or created or any of those things like we just talked about.

But he does confront and warn the Judeans and specifically the Judean ruling class about their wealth. So let me explain why that's significant. Judea was a high tax jurisdiction.

It was the province where Jerusalem was located. It was the political center for the people of Israel and the home of the ruling class where political and religious leaders made a living by extracting wealth from the hardworking people who had actually earned it. Right.

And then nearby there was Tyre and Sidon. Those were just north of Jerusalem. And that's where the Jerusalem shekel was minted.

And there was some deception associated with that. And there were many people there

who had close economic ties with the rulers of Jerusalem and became wealthy through their political ties. Mm hmm.

It sounds like Jerusalem being the political city would be like Washington DC for us today. And Tyre and Sidon would be like those wealthy suburbs of DC in Virginia and Maryland where we keep hearing about how, you know, the household incomes are into the two hundred thousands. These people are getting rich off of political power, but they're not known for being innovators or entrepreneurs.

Right. Yeah, exactly. So to give an analogy, that's a great, that's a great analogy.

So to make, to kind of expand the analogy, what we see in the gospels would be kind of like Jesus traveling all over the U.S. if he were here today and sharing the good news with honest, hardworking Americans from all walks of life, including wealthy businessmen, staying in their giant homes, gratefully accepting their generous donations and never condemning them for being wealthy, not even maybe not even warning them about the potential evils of money until he gets to Northern Virginia and the Washington, DC area. And then he starts warning people about their power and their status. He starts condemning their wealth.

He starts going out of his way to encourage and lift up the poor. If you didn't know anything about the culture or the situation there, and you were just reading these accounts 2000 years later, if all of that was recorded today, you may not understand. You may conclude that, oh, yeah, Jesus hated the wealthy.

Oh, yeah, he wanted everyone to strive to be poor. That's ridiculous. If you know the cultural situation and you read it in the context in which it was written, you see that Jesus was concerned with people who were extracting wealth from others.

Yeah, I see that. And that's why it's important to read the Bible in its historical context and not just pluck out the verses that apply to my life and give me comfort. The historical context is necessary for us to get the full picture of what's going on here.

Okay. So let me just ask you this. Which economic system encourages and promotes this honest earning of wealth? That would be capitalism.

Okay. That's what Jesus praises. He's praising people who earn their own success.

All right. And which economic system is based on extracting wealth by political pressure, by shaming, by blackmail, those kinds of pressure tactics, strikes, people striking in front of it going on strike and just trying to get more money without actually earning it. Yeah, so that would be socialism.

Okay. This is another indicator that Jesus was not and never would be a socialist. Well, he keeps invoking private property investment and hard work.

And he's condemning the people who are getting their wealth by using power and not by producing anything. Yeah, exactly. I'd say it's a virtual certainty that in a fallen world with imperfect people, Jesus would absolutely not be a socialist.

Excellent. Okay. So we're getting to the end of the podcast.

So do you have any more thoughts about this topic of was Jesus a socialist? What does the historical record tell us about what he believed about money? What was worth condemning? What was he praising and so on? Yeah. Well, we've talked a lot about Jesus, but of course, his followers, his apostles received their teaching from him. So I'd like to maybe close with this teaching from the Apostle Paul that I think disqualifies socialism as a preferred economic system for Christians.

Excellent. Okay. So Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 9.7, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." So socialism precludes Christians from being able to obey this command.

Socialism demands giving under compulsion. It's by force and not voluntary. It doesn't allow for voluntary and cheerful giving as the Apostle Paul tells us to do as Christians.

Socialism is not compatible with the teachings of Jesus. It's not compatible with the teachings of Paul. It's not compatible with the teachings of Peter.

And we'll find out in our next episode that it's actually not compatible with the values and priorities of Christianity as a whole. In fact, socialism is a competitor to Christianity. They do not and cannot coexist, nor were they ever intended to.

Yeah. I want to pick up on that. I hope I'm not stepping on the toes of our next episode that just mentioned that.

It seems to me that if you make a bunch of money and you earn it and then the government takes half, that your ability to give to charity in the areas that you care about would be impacted by that. Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

And that's why that's going to be something that we mention and expound upon in the next episode. There are several other Christian priorities that simply cannot be carried out under a socialist system. Right.

Like if the government steps in and says, "We're going to take control of large sectors of the economy where typically you would be purchasing this freely with your own earned money, but now we're going to own it and you're going to use it the way we want you to use it." So if you are looking for a school that teaches American history accurately, we don't have that for you. But you've already spent the money on us through your taxes. You've already bought a school system run by the government.

And if you now want to take your money and go to a school system that respects your values, too bad you don't have the money for that. Respect to giving. So the government says, "Well, we want to donate money to illegal immigrants and refugees.

So give us your money and we're going to give it to them. This is what we think is charity." And then they turn to you and say, or you say, "I want to give charity to Santa reason," or "Rashio Christi," or "Reasonable faith." And you look in your wallet and your wallet has dust in it. So there's no money available for you to be a cheerful giver.

Right, exactly. And I'll add to that. Under socialism, there would be no stand to reason.

There would be no reasonable faith. The people who sacrifice being rich, using their minds for other things in order to equip people with the reasons for the hope that we have, they wouldn't be able to raise support like they do and produce the kind of content that they produce and spend time doing research on evidence for the resurrection or the historical reliability of the gospels or things like that. They just wouldn't be able to make it as such.

They would do what the government told them to do and it would probably be something that perpetuates very unbiblical beliefs because that's what we see throughout history. Yeah, we're going to do this more in the next episode in this kind of a teaser. But looking at other countries that are further along the high taxes, big government spending road, the rates of charitable giving are down in the dirt.

Exactly. You don't find evangelical apologetics ministries in France or Canada even. So if you're living in Venezuela, you're trying to figure out where you can get water to drink.

If you're living in South Africa, you're trying to figure out when the blackouts of power will stop so that you can turn on your stove and cook something to eat. Water is a big problem there too. Yeah.

If you're in North Korea, you're trying to keep your mouth shut so that you're not the next one to be executed. Right. If you own a Bible, that's a capital offense.

So Christians need to be very careful about this. When you become a Christian, you're not doing this in a way to sort of tell other people, "Hey, I'm a Christian. You can't judge me.

Everybody like me. Oh boy, I'm so glad that I've adopted Christianity so that now no one will condemn me and my life is going to get better. People are going to think good things about me." I kind of see that from some of these elite Christians, this attitude that I'm doing this so that people will think I'm good.

This is not what you're hoping to achieve as a Christian. You want to act out what is in the Bible. And if you see charitable giving partnering for the gospel in the Bible, then

you're very sensitive to the idea that some atheist is going to come, some secular leftist is going to come along, follow you home from the computer lab, and then right before you close the door, they snatch your wallet and take half of what's in there and you get the rest to try to accomplish all the things you're trying to accomplish as a Christian.

It's just not something that's attractive to a Christian who wants to score points not for their salvation, but as part of their relationship with God. Like you want to be known, you want to follow Jesus, you want to engage in activities where you follow after him and have similar experiences. Is it a good idea now for us to talk about books? This will be the last thing we talk about.

Yeah, I think that's a great idea. Yeah, I was thinking after the last episode, we probably should have recommended a few. So that's a great idea.

Yeah, our sound guy actually suggested this to us. So I'm going to recommend one that I like. Everybody knows about famous black economist Thomas Soell, a brilliant... Yes, he's the best.

I was once stating a girl who swore to me that she would never attend college and I lent her a Thomas Soell book to read. She read six in two months and she went on to do an online economics degree and a master's in public policy. So Thomas Soell is magical.

Nobody can read just one. I recommend Basic Economics and some of his other shorter books are great as well. Yep, anything written by him.

Excellent. Okay, your turn. I will recommend Money, Greed and God by Jay Richards.

That is an excellent book. I read the first edition, maybe, I don't know, 10 years ago and had a significant impact on me and I read the updated edition just last year. So highly recommend that.

Yeah, very, very, very good, easy to understand and he hits on the high points. So I have a book that came out fairly recently called Common Sense Economics. It's written by a whole bunch of very prominent economists.

One of them is James D. Gwartney, G-W-A-R-T-N-E-Y. That book is really short. It's used as a college textbook.

It's center right and what is key about it is the examples. They really make it clear what the key economic principles are. If you want to talk about economics and you want to understand it, this is a very good entry level book for people to learn.

Okay, your turn. Yeah, that's great. I'm actually not familiar with Common Sense Economics.

So I'm going to go put that on my list. There's an audio version of it. Oh, excellent.

All right. Well, I will add to our list, *The Maker and the Takers* because I referenced it, I read the whole thing. It was very, very good and that is really helpful if you want to learn evidence for the proposition that we discussed that Jesus was condemning people who extracted wealth from others rather than those who actually earned wealth themselves.

So again, that's by Jerry Bowyer. Yes. And I'll do one more, which is Wayne Grudem.

I think the guy's name is Barry Asmas. Yes. Yes.

And that book is called *The Poverty of Nations* and it's a really interesting book. What he does is this is Tom Solis. He looks at all of the countries in the world.

He looks at their laws and their policies. How easy is it to start a business? How much do they respect private property? How high are the tax rates? All of the things that we talked about that the Bible seems to praise or at least accept that are part of the free market system. He looks at all the countries and decides how they're doing in providing these minimal laws and policies that support a free market system.

And then he looks at how wealthy the people are there. Yeah, I absolutely love that book. In fact, it's funny you mentioned it.

I was thinking when you asked me to add one more, I was like, should I mention just the maker and the takers or should I also mention *The Poverty of Nations*? That's such an excellent book. We're actually going to talk about some of the principles and ideas and evidence in our next episode that Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmas bring up in that book. So we'll probably recommend it again.

I'll recommend it again if we think of it next week, but I'm glad you mentioned it now because everyone has to read that book. It's absolutely phenomenal. Yeah, I want to get people away from doing economics with your feelings, which seems real popular with some of the Christian leaders today who are like, "Oh, boo-hoo, I feel so sad for so and so." This is not the way.

We want to look at what works and then we want to support policies that will get the job done. Exactly. And if you feel bad for someone or empathic or whatever, then you're free under a free market system to go ahead and help them and give them to them.

That's been one of the greatest joys of my life is giving generously. And so I just thank God that I'm in a free country, a free economic system where I can do that. Yeah, great point.

Okay, so let's end there. That's all we have for this episode. So we got one more episode on Christianity and socialism coming up, and maybe there'll be a fourth, but right now it's just going to be the third.

So if you enjoyed this episode, I really urge people, people write to me and they go, "When's the next episode coming out?" What really helps us is we like to see that people are listening to what we produce. And so even if you can't help us in every way, it certainly can help us by sharing the podcast with your friends. What helps us to get exposed to other people on the big platforms is if you write a five star review on Apple or Spotify, then Apple and Spotify share the podcast with more people.

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So giving you guys an assignment to help us produce more. We don't take donations, but we love to see that what the work that we're putting in is being shared and being used to help people to think about these issues, whether you agree with us or whether you don't. Absolutely.

That's great. All right. So we appreciate you taking the time to listen and we will see you again in the next episode.

[Music]