

BIBLICAL ECONOMICS INTRODUCTION

THE MINISTRY AND ITS FINANCIAL INTEGRITY, [2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15](#)

The Biblical View of Money

Let us read: [Genesis 1:26-31 \(NASB\)](#)

Now the Fall came along. Adam and Eve sinned and the curse fell on the earth. It marred its goodness. It didn't destroy it. It didn't negate it. In fact, He created man with a freedom. You know, I mean, He just literally turned Adam and Eve loose in Eden and said, "Have at it. You've got the run of the place, the run of the Garden of Eden." And when they sinned, that freedom became potentially damaging.

The freedom is still there, but, sadly, man can now take the resource of the earth and turn them into war machines. He can now take the good gifts of physical love and turn it into sexual perversion. He can take the production of plants and turn them into poisons and drugs and destroy people's lives with them. There is risk in the freedom now. But the earth is still good, it's still very good.

You see, the sin is not in enjoying it. The sin is in overindulgence. The sin is in flaunting your wealth. The sin is in self-centered, self-indulgent, begrudging, compassionless consumption. It's the attitude of the heart that is the sin. **If you enjoy the richness of what God has provided and you give Him thanks, and that thanks turns into obedience, and you're willing to be generous with others, then you've made the righteous use of the material world.**

The point is that God has made us rich. God has given us the ability to get wealth; and to different people, different capabilities in that regard. He doles out the capacities, He doles out the opportunities to enjoy those riches as He sovereignly sees fit. Not all of us are going to be as wealthy as others.

There is a measure of comfort and joy and beauty and wonder and fulfillment in this life for all of us. And some will be very, very rich and some not so rich, and there are all different levels. It's just a brief little time, a vapor that appears for a little while, but God has spread His riches out sovereignly as He chooses to do that for His own glory and His own purpose. Even the wicked prosper, momentarily, under God's goodness in this expression of common grace.

So when you come to understand that this world is wealthy, look, I mean, He made a planet that is just loaded with riches. He made a planet that's even full of diamonds. Did He expect them to stay down buried in the ground? Or did He expect somebody to dig

them up, put them in a jewelry store so you could give some to a girl when you wanted to marry her?

I mean, you could say, “Well, you know, that’s indulgence.” But on the other hand, if I look at that thing and it somehow in a small way is symbolic of how I prize this woman of my love, and if I can see the beauty of God’s creation in it and thank Him for that, it’s an attitude of the heart, right? That is always the issue.

For example, I was just saying to a pastor, a large diamond might offend you. This was a gift given to me, it’s a gold ring, it might offend somebody in Brazil where I was and this diamond wedding ring would offend somebody in Philippines, if all they were looking at was the materialistic side and didn’t know the symbols of all of those things and if they didn’t know my heart. I think you can enjoy the things that God gives you, a home and a car. Obviously there is a reasonableness in this, but you can enjoy those things because God has made a world which yields those riches. It’s just a little taste of the riches to come. Enjoy it. Realize it’s not eternal.

It’s a small taste of heaven where there will be riches beyond description. And there you will really be rich. Earthly wealth is from God for a brief time. It’s not going to be the issue in eternity, and I think things may get turned the other way when we get there. But it shows how kind He is to His creatures and how He wants to put on display His incredible, incredible mind.

So God made it clear in [Genesis](#) that the created soulless world was designed by Him for just a brief little period of time in the midst of eternity to provide joy and delight, even things like a nice car and a nice house and a garden, clothes, appliances, a warm fireplace, whatever. **Pastor John Schneider** says, “Human delight is a precious expression of God’s glory. In its proper form it is a sacrament to God’s dominion over chaos and darkness.”

Now, while you’re in [Genesis](#), turn to [chapter 8](#) for a moment. And I want to illustrate something that we’ve just been talking about, with a couple of scriptures here that look at Noah. God created this marvelous world for us to enjoy, to be a delight to us. Look at [chapter 8 verse 21](#). [Verse 20](#) talks about Noah building an altar, and he was going to have a barbecue. We call it a sacrifice, but it’s actually a barbecue. Every clean animal, every clean bird he offered as a burnt offering. Isn’t that a barbecue? Isn’t that what your wife says? “What is that, a burnt offering?”

This is a barbecue. And I love this, [verse 21](#), “**And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma.**”

Genesis 8:20-21 (NASB)

²⁰ “**Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.**

²¹ **The LORD smelled the soothing aroma;** and the LORD said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for

the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

Did you know God loves the smell of barbecue? I like the smell of barbecue. I'll tell you what; I love the smell of a barbecue. It is so superior to the smell of boiling broccoli. Even God likes the smell of a barbecue and He has...listen, He built that into that. He built that into that. Food didn't have to have a pleasant aroma but He made it have that for our joy and enjoyment.

"And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma, and the Lord said to Himself," a little inter-Trinitarian conversation here, **"I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent or the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, I will never again destroy every living thing as I have done."**

You know what He's saying? "I'm not going to destroy this creation again; I'm going to leave it here. And even though he's evil I'm going to let him enjoy it. I'm going to let him smell the aromas and taste the food, smell the flowers, dig out the minerals, enjoy the power, the fresh water, the cool breeze, the waterfall, the whole business."

[Verse 22,](#)

Genesis 8:22 (NASB)

²²"While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease."

God says, "I'm not going to destroy it anymore until the final destruction. I'm going to let man enjoy it. And then in [chapter 9,](#)

Genesis 9:1-2 (NASB)

¹"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

²The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given."

You're in charge. You determine whether they live or whether they die. **"With everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given."**

We understand that. I don't think some environmentalists understand that. We're in charge of all that. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you. I give all to you as I gave the green plant. I give it all to...it's all for you. And listen, He knew what was in this planet. He knew what was here.

You say, "Well isn't mining and all of that a modern enterprise?" No, read [Job 28,](#) [Job](#) is the oldest book in the Bible and [Job 28](#) is about mining. It's about going down into the ground so deep where no eye has ever seen and coming up from the mine and the gold and the silver and the richness there.

Job 28:1-11 (NASB)

¹“Surely there is a mine for silver And a place where they refine gold.

²Iron is taken from the dust, And copper is smelted from rock.

³*Man* puts an end to darkness, And to the farthest limit he searches out The rock in gloom and deep shadow.

⁴He sinks a shaft far from habitation, Forgotten by the foot; They hang and swing to and fro far from men.

⁵The earth, from it comes food, And underneath it is turned up as fire.

⁶Its rocks are the source of sapphires, And its dust *contains* gold.

⁷The path no bird of prey knows, Nor has the falcon's eye caught sight of it.

⁸The proud beasts have not trodden it, Nor has the *fierce* lion passed over it.

⁹He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the base.

¹⁰He hews out channels through the rocks, And his eye sees anything precious.

¹¹He dams up the streams from flowing, And what is hidden he brings out to the light.

It's not new. Don't kid yourself. Man isn't getting better; he's getting worse as he declines from the fall. And there was a level of human genius in those early periods that would even exceed us greatly. It's all for you, every bit of it is for you, every bit of it. Enjoy it. Use it, be enriched by it. Delight in it.

Now, in the delighting you glorify God, you thank God, and out of gratitude you obey God and you have the hope of heaven. That's what He asks. And that does a check on the heart, doesn't it, and keeps you from self-indulgence and proud parading of your wealth. But it lets you enjoy the comforts with a thankful heart.

And there's one other very important issue to God. Turn to **Deuteronomy chapter 14, [Deuteronomy 14, verse 22](#)**. By the way, these people who are worried about things going extinct, you know, we don't want to eat any more of these deals because there won't be any left. Listen. Very soon there won't be any of anything left. And extinction is not an issue to God.

We're not here to preserve those life forms; we're here to use them. We're not here to preserve the resources; we're here to use them. And we don't want to abuse them. There's no place for trashing the world, but in a wise way they are here for us for this brief period of time to be used up.

Look at [verse 22](#),

Deuteronomy 14:22 (NASB)

²²“You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year.”

There are going to be people who are going to have fields. They're going to be landowners, people who possess estates and fields and they're called on here to give a tenth.

Deuteronomy 14:23 (NASB)

²³“You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.”

They had to give every year a tenth of everything that they produced. They had to take it to Jerusalem for the great festivals and they had to share it. They had to share it with all the rest of the people who didn't have what they had. In other words, it was a ten percent of those great products and yields of the earth that came to those who possessed land and crops and animals, had to be shared with those who didn't in the great national festivals which built national unity and which allowed for this very important camaraderie and also the sacrificial system and all the things that occurred at those great events.

Verse 24 adds,

Deuteronomy 14:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴“If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring *the tithe*, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, ²⁵ then you shall exchange *it* for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses.”

In other words, you have to sell all of this, get the cash, bring the cash in your hand and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses. Remember, the Lord...worshiping the Lord had occurred in a number of places, finally settled in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 14:26-27 (NASB)

²⁶“You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. ²⁷ Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.”

So what you do is, you celebrate, you eat all this great thing at the feast, and you share with the Levite because he is dependent on...on your sharing since he has no portion or inheritance of his own.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 (NASB)

²⁸“At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit *it* in your town. ²⁹ The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall

come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”

So again, you're sharing with the Levite, you're sharing with the poor. This introduces the idea that we are to make sure, as we receive the riches this world brings, that we share generously.

First Timothy 6 says, “**You tell those that are rich in this present age,**” nothing wrong with their richness but that they share, “**that they share generously,**” sharing generously. And that, again, is the same spirit here in the tithing of the Old Testament. You take a portion of it and you share it.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NASB)

¹⁷“**Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.**

¹⁸*Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,*

¹⁹**storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”**

Also, there was a gleaning that the poor were allowed to do in the corners of the field which couldn't be harvested, and if you dropped some of the crop off your wagon you couldn't pick it up, the poor would come in and pick it up later. There were ways in which the wealthy were to share that were prescribed, and then they, from their own hearts, were to be as generous as God would have them be as well.

Now go back to **Deuteronomy chapter 8** for a moment, and I want to pick up in **verse 7** of **Deuteronomy 8**.

Deuteronomy 8:7-8 (NASB)

⁷“**For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills;**

⁸**a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey.”**

That's just amazing to me. When God made the earth He made it loaded with resources, and when He chose a land for His people Israel He picked the best piece of real estate on the globe. That's the heart of God.

He gave them immense riches and natural resources, a good land, brooks of water, fountains, springs, valleys, hills, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil, honey. A land, **verse 9**,

Deuteronomy 8:9 (NASB)

⁹“**A land where you will eat food without scarcity, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper.”**

“Where you shall eat food without scarcity.” That’s the heart of God. “In which you shall not lack anything, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper.” They were already into getting iron out of the ground and digging copper out of the hills and using those things for all kinds of purposes.

Deuteronomy 8:10 (NASB)

¹⁰“When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.”

There, again, you go back to the issue. God wants you take all the wealth that He has put into this earth, draw it all out, extract it, delight in it, rejoice in it and in the rejoicing give Him thanks so that the heart attitude is one of worship, adoration and praise toward God. That’s a...that’s a...that’s a spiritual approach to the material world.

And then in [verse 11](#), this is very important.

Deuteronomy 8:11 (NASB)

¹¹“Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today.”

That’s the concern of God. He’s not concerned with how wealthy are you; He’s concerned with how well you glorify Him and remember to obey Him.

And if out of all the goodness that He has given you your heart is grateful toward Him, that gratitude shows up in obedience then He is well pleased. His...His warning here in [verse 12](#),

Deuteronomy 8:12 (NASB)

¹²“Otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and have built good houses and lived in them.”

Nothing wrong with having a good house, nothing wrong with having a comfortable house, nothing wrong with living in it, nothing wrong with having herds and flocks and multiplying them.

[Verse 13](#),

Deuteronomy 8:13 (NASB)

¹³“And when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies.”

And the only reason it can do that is because it’s here, right? God has made it all. He’s put it all here.

If He wanted us all to live like communists at the lowest possible level, or if He wanted us all to live like the utterly pagan and godless poor of India, who, in turning away from God have stripped their lives bare of all of His riches, if He wanted us to live

like that He could have created a planet that was a little more than the moon, but He didn't, but He didn't.

So you have your houses and your herds and your flocks and your silver and your gold. The issue is, “when your heart becomes proud” - [verse 14](#) - “and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” That's the issue.

Deuteronomy 8:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ “Then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

Deuteronomy 8:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ “He led you through the great and terrible wilderness, *with its* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; He brought water for you out of the rock of flint.

¹⁶ In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.”

That's always His heart.

Deuteronomy 8:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “Otherwise, you may say in your heart, ‘My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.’”

God doesn't want you poor. God is happy to spread the wealth as long as you know who gave it to you, as long as you thank Him and praise Him and honor Him and glorify Him. And in the delighting and the joy of it comes obedience. And as long as you're willing to share it generously.

Verse 18,

Deuteronomy 8:18-20 (NASB)

¹⁸ “But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

¹⁹ It shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you will surely perish.

²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD makes to perish before you, so you shall perish; because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.”

And again we're right back to the same principle, wealth, possessions; money becomes an index of your spiritual character, doesn't it?