

Thinking Biblically About Socialism (Part 2)

Selected Scripture

“To socialists, suffering is caused by the unequal distribution of stuff – and salvation is achieved by the re-distribution of stuff. There’s no acknowledgment of spiritual issues. There’s just an assumption that if everyone is given equal stuff, all the problems in society will somehow dissolve.

“This worldview contradicts Christianity, which affirms the existence of both a material and non-material world – and teaches that mankind’s greatest problems are spiritual. The Bible says the cause of suffering is sin, and salvation is found in the Cross of Christ, which liberates us from sin.

- Julie Roys

I. What is Socialism?

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“Any economic or political system based on government ownership and [or] control of important businesses and methods of production.”

- dictionary.cambridge.org

II. How is Socialism contrary to God's design?

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A. God created human beings to be stewards of His creation. (Gen.1:26, 28)

B. God gave human beings the privilege and responsibility of having earthly ownership of private property.

“The offertory system of the Old Testament makes no sense when divorced from the system of private property. One of the basic stipulations of making an offering is that you present something which belonged to you. The right of human ownership is something God has assigned as part of our covenant partnership with Him in creation.”

- R.C. Sproul

The 8th Commandment says, *You shall not steal.*

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The 10th Commandment begins, *You shall not covet. . . .*

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And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion (Gen.1:28).

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it (Gen.2:15).

You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

(I Thess.4:11b-12)

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Tim.5:8)

For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

(2 Thess.3:10-12)

“The sanctity of labor is the ground-basis for private property. In both the Old and New Covenants, the call to labor is an emphatic one, bringing fruit as its just reward. The avoidance of labor is regarded as sin. Paul commands labor as an ethical norm.”

- R.C. Sproul

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D. God intends for the work of human beings to be fruitful or productive and rewarding.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen.1:28)

“The Hebrew word translated as “subdue” means to make the earth useful for human beings’ benefit and enjoyment. God was entrusting Adam and Eve, and by implication the entire human race, with stewardship over the earth.

“God wanted them to create useful products from the earth for their benefit and enjoyment — at first, perhaps, simple structures in which to live and store food; later, various forms of transportation, such as carts and wagons; then eventually modern homes, office buildings, and factories, as well as cars and airplanes—the entire range of useful products that could be made from the earth.

“In this way, God gave to human beings the ability to create value in the world that did not exist before.”

- Wayne Grudem

“Because God gave to human beings the command to subdue the earth, it is reasonable to conclude that he also placed in our hearts a desire to fulfill that command.

“We should not dismiss this innate human drive for material productivity and flourishing as greedy materialism [as many Socialists do] or sin.

“It can be distorted by selfishness and sin, but the drive to create, produce, and enjoy useful products ultimately comes from a morally good, God-given instinct that he placed within the human race before there was any sin in the world, when he commanded Adam and Eve to fill the earth, subdue it, and have dominion over all of it.”

- Wayne Grudem

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A talent was a monetary unit worth about twenty years' wages for a laborer

E. God wants us to enjoy the rewards of faithful labor.

The parable of the minas in Luke 19:11-27

A mina was about three months' wages for a laborer

“Socialism seeks as it’s premier goal the equality of wealth and equality of ownership within a society. To accomplish this, the government must be involved in the redistribution of wealth.”

- R.C. Sproul

“The system of personal ownership of property that is affirmed throughout Scripture is essential for human flourishing, because without the ability to own and enjoy something of the fruit of his labor, a person will have little motivation to create and produce.

“We glorify God by understanding and ruling over the creation, then by producing more and more wonderful goods from it for our enjoyment, with thanksgiving to the God who “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17).”

- Wayne Grudem

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

(1 Timothy 6:17-19)