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CHRISTIAN  
CAPITALIST

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*The Gospel of Hard Work  
and Generous Giving*

By  
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# The Christian Capitalist

Reading Guide & Discussion Questions



# Introduction



What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “Christian Capitalist”?

Do you think Christianity aligns more with capitalism or socialism?

The author writes: “The accumulation of wealth is a natural result of hard work.” How has your experience intersected with this statement? Do you think all people who work hard always accumulate wealth?

# Introduction



What is your understanding of the drive to work hard, earn more, and give to others? When you receive a paycheck or other income, who do you thank? Does this come as a blessing from God?

How do you think your relationship with God might be strengthened through hard work and generous giving?



# PART 1

Working and Giving  
as Children of God

# Chapter 1

## We Are Made In God's Image to Work



Work is hardwired into our nature with God because we are made in His image. The author posits that “our desire for work is as innate as our desire to work hard. It is this desire to work hard that fuels capitalism.”

Reflect over your life and your motivations to work and work hard. Has it varied or been consistent? Explain why you think it has been so.

How does imagining God seeing your work incentivize you to work harder? Is it different than knowing your boss is watching you?

How does the story of Nehemiah's group project relate to the work you do in the world and how it fulfills God will?

# Chapter 2

## We Are Made In God's Image to Give



Given Joseph's experience with his brothers, how do you imagine Joseph came to understand that possessing great wealth created an opportunity to share that wealth generously?

The foundation for the Christian Capitalist work ethic is:

#1: Everyone should work.

#2: When the work is done and on a regular basis, those who have been blessed with prosperity because of that work should share it with others.

#3: God will bless the people and the work of those who work hard and share with others.

What are your thoughts about these beliefs so far?

Holy Scripture says there will always be poor people among us. How do you feel about reading that the poor are the responsibility of the rich?

# Chapter 3

## Laying the Foundation for a Christian Ethic of Work and Giving



Proverbs states that those who are kind to the poor are happy (14:21) and blessed (22:9) and those who don't help the poor are miserable and not heard by God (21:13). Reflect on how you have experienced this reciprocal relationship in your life.

Having already heard that wealth is a blessing from God for hard work, discuss the two themes regarding the rich found in the Psalms: (1) the implication that people become rich through some kind of wrongdoing or evil acts; and (2) that reliance on wealth becomes an artificial replacement for trust in God.

How would you describe the similarities and differences between the righteous poor and the righteous rich; the wicked poor and the wicked rich? What role does work play?





# PART 2

Jesus Teaches a New  
Way to Think About  
Working and Giving

# Chapter 4

## Jesus Teaches Us About the Kingdom of Heaven



What is your understanding of the Kingdom of Heaven and how you find it?

How does the parable of the lost sheep relate to the things that you value? What would you want to avoid losing- even if you only lost one percent?

What does the double meaning behind the parable of the lost coin mean to you? Can you imagine God rejoicing over finding a deeper relationship with a lost child? How about rejoicing over giving away a lost coin or valuable possession?

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, how different would the story be if the father had not lavished his wayward son with a feast and gifts?

# Chapter 4

## Jesus Teaches Us About the Kingdom of Heaven



As you read the parable of the Talents, discuss whether you think Christians are called to invest their “talents” and grow the blessings entrusted to them.

Has wealth, or the pursuit of wealth, ever been a distraction for you, preventing you from a close relationship with God? If so, do you think using your wealth to help build the Kingdom of God would help bring you closer to God?

Holy Scripture contains a “not-so-subtle message: take care of the gifts God has given you or He will find someone else who will!” How does that make you feel? Fearful? Inspired? Motivated?

# Chapter 4

## Jesus Teaches Us About the Kingdom of Heaven



Do you agree that modern day business owners should invest the funds they have earned by rewarding those who have assisted them in growing their investments? How do you imagine that might impact the world today?

Holy Scripture tells us that all we have is a gift from God. How then is it difficult (or impossible) for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

Jesus makes it clear that you can't take your wealth with you when you die, but many are motivated to gain wealth to live their best lives now and pass on wealth to their descendants. How does that resonate with the Holy Scripture warning us not to put wealth above God?

# Chapter 5

## Jesus Teaches Us About Work



How does your view of God change when considering the work God has done in creation and Jesus continuing that work in the world?

How do you imagine shifting your thoughts of working for yourself, for security and survival, to working for the glory of God?

How do you interpret the parable of the fig tree that isn't bearing fruit? Who or what is to blame when people don't have any "fruits" to show for their labors?

What can you learn from Jesus' vocations to help you live into yours?

# Chapter 6

## Jesus Teaches Us About Giving



How do you interpret the belief that God gives us everything we need to live when Jesus tells us that “we will always have the poor”?

Does anything prevent you from agreeing with the author’s statement that “food, clothing, housing, and financial assistance” doesn’t simply “rain down on people like manna from Heaven” and that the Christian Capitalist should provide those things?

How do you feel knowing the Christian Capitalist is responsible for more than just giving money without getting involved by possibly providing food, transportation, housing, health care and be required to follow up, like the good Samaritan?

What lesson do you glean from the story about Zaccheaus?

# Chapter 6

## Jesus Teaches Us About Giving



The author writes that Jesus “leaves open the option to serve God through wealth.” What other options would you identify?

Reflect on how you would answer the author’s question: “How does the Christian Capitalist comply with Jesus’s directive to give away all his possessions” in the story from Mark 10?

What does the message that “we cannot serve God and wealth, but we can serve God with our wealth” mean to you?

Are pursuing possessions and pursuing God at odds? Is it true that you cannot serve God and wealth? Have you ever attempted this?

# Chapter 6

## Jesus Teaches Us About Giving



How do you feel about giving “from within” and being guided by what your heart tells you? Do you have any personal experiences of feeling moved to give by your heart and not your mind?

Do you have any concerns about giving to the poor? When you encounter people begging at traffic lights or under bridges, do you feel that giving them cash is helpful, hurtful or both? Do you feel like you can afford to give to “everyone who begs from you” and not “refuse anyone” who wants to borrow money from you? Does your personal safety affect your giving in these situations?

How do you comprehend Jesus saying that “we will always have the poor” among us and the author’s statement that “it is alright to glorify” God with wealth?

Joseph of Arimathea helped Mary and Jesus’ family after His death on the cross by giving them his family’s tomb. What do you think of the conclusion that Joseph of Arimathea is the first Christian Capitalist?





# PART 3

Early Christian Life  
of Work and Giving

# Chapter 7

## Communal Living Experiments



What intrigues you about the story of Joseph of Arimathea and the suggestion that he is the first Christian Capitalist?

What do you think about the early Christians described in Acts as living in community and not claiming any private ownership of any possessions?

The early Christian community described in Acts 2 didn't last very long. Does this contribute to your understanding of capitalism as a Christian way of life?

# Chapter 7

## Communal Living Experiments



What is the difference between a handout and a hand-up, in your experience?

How does hearing the miraculous story of Tabitha being raised to life impact your understanding of good works and generous giving?

How does it feel knowing that God is observing your charitable works? Do you think God is pleased with your actions like he was with Cornelius?

# Chapter 8

## Early Christian Teaching on Work



Paul encourages us to always excel in the “work of the Lord,” knowing that “in the Lord your labor is not in vain”. How does that relate to you and your work?

Is there a difference between works of faith, working to further the Kingdom of God, and working hard to gain wealth?

How do you reconcile Paul commanding people to “keep away from believers who are living in idleness,” telling them they did not “eat anyone’s bread without paying for it” and Jesus’ command to give to the poor?

What is the relationship between works and faith in your experience?

# Chapter 8

## Early Christian Teaching on Work



How have you personally experienced the “energy that God powerfully inspires” so that you can “toil and struggle to do the work” that God has given you? Is it different than being inspired to work for personal gain?

How have you seen the gifts of the Spirit utilized in a business setting?

Have you ever leaned on God to help you adapt and overcome challenges in industry or your workplace?

Do your thoughts about generous giving change when you consider the system of credits that Paul describes in your accounts in Heaven?

# Chapter 9

## Early Christian Teaching on Giving



How have you experienced “bearing one another’s burdens” in your life? Is it easier to bear someone else’s burden or allow someone to bear yours?

What are some of the challenges of being a Christian Capitalist who “does not seek your own advantage, but that of others?”

What evil practices in business or capitalism can you think of that need to be overcome with good, as Paul writes in the letter to the Romans?



LOVE YOUR  
NEIGHBOUR

# PART 4

The Christian  
Capitalist

# Chapter 10

## Working and Giving in the First Fifteen Hundred Years of Christianity



What is your understanding of how the early church grew?

How does the knowledge about the spread of Christianity to urban areas impact your faith?

Think about what drew you to Christian faith. How does learning that “pagans flocked to Christianity because they yearned to feel loved by God and to love their neighbors” resonate with you and your journey to faith?



# Chapter 10

## Working and Giving in the First Fifteen Hundred Years of Christianity



How would you describe the differences and similarities between Constantine and Pachomius and whose approach to Christian faith do you resonate with or respect the most?

How might you decide who the “worthy and deserving poor” are, like the monks did?

How does The Rule of St. Francis relate to Jesus sending out the disciples (Mark 6, Luke 9)?

What are your thoughts on the statement from Thomas Aquinas “that the main spiritual goal of work was to provide a benefit to others”?

# Chapter 11

## The Reformation and Modern Views on Working and Giving



Do you agree with Martin Luther's conclusion that we must "act as a Christ to our neighbors"?

Share your thoughts on John Wesley's advice to "gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can".

Does George Washington's generous giving at the birth of our nation set an example for modern Americans?

Advocates of the Prosperity Gospel claim that God will make its followers rich. Do you agree with this concept? Based on your understanding of Holy Scripture, would God want some of His people to be rich but ignore the poor and needy?

# Chapter 11

## The Reformation and Modern Views on Working and Giving



Should for-profit businesses give to the poor and needy? Should charities be operated like for-profit businesses? What is your take on philanthrocapitalism?

What was your reaction to the research showing that “those who gave money to charity, however, were consistently happier” than those who spent money on themselves?

What factors motivate you to give to the poor and needy? Do you find joy in giving? Does the possibility that you might get a tax deduction for a gift impact your decision to give that gift?

# The 10 Principles of the

## ***Principle 1***

God created everything in the universe and on Earth. As a result, everything that we earn, make, or buy, including the currency involved in all those activities, is part of God's creation and a blessing from Him.

## ***Principle 2***

All humans are made in God's image. Because God worked to create the universe and Earth, He created us to work. Work creates an opportunity to open our hearts in spirit and truth to glorify God.

## ***Principle 3***

Jesus came to the world to finish the work that God started. Now, we work hard in all walks of life to continue the work of Jesus. In all our work, we strive to go forth and make disciples of all nations, as Jesus instructed us in the Great Commission.

## ***Principle 4***

When work generates a benefit, whether it is material goods or currency, we should save as much as we can, to protect our interests and those of our families. Sound personal financial management includes investing to grow the funds that God has entrusted to us. The first step to loving our neighbors as ourselves is ensuring that we, and any family members who depend on us, are self-sufficient and do not become a burden to others. Solid personal financial responsibility is a key to accomplishing this goal.

## ***Principle 5***

We cannot serve God and wealth, but we can serve God with our wealth. God loved us so much that He gave us His only son, Jesus, so that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life. Because we are made in God's image, He likewise created us to give. In every walk of life, we must zealously pursue opportunities for financial gain so that we can share that wealth with others. The more we make, the more we give!

# Christian Capitalist Ethic

## ***Principle 6***

Jesus taught us that we should love God above all else and love our neighbors as ourselves. We thank God for the blessings that He has given us by sharing them with the poor and needy in the name of Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world, and we shine that light to all.

## ***Principle 7***

We act as servant leaders in all business ventures, putting the interests of others first. Regardless of our role in the business, we lead by example and show others the path of Jesus.

## ***Principle 8***

When we give, we should give with humility. These gifts that we make to others are simply sharing the benefits that God has given us. While God loves a cheerful giver, he also loves a humble one.

## ***Principle 9***

True riches are based on wisdom and a closer relationship with God. Like the widow who gave two coins, we don't have to be wealthy to give to others. Likewise, we don't measure our wealth according to the amount of our material possessions. If we have wealth, however, we have to give generously.

## ***Principle 10***

The Gospel of Hard Work and Generous Giving recognizes that any material wealth we possess during our short time here on Earth is fleeting and temporary, just like our lives. The only true reward for working hard, accumulating wealth, and giving generously to others is joy in life and a place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

# Chapter 12

## The Christian Capitalist Ethic: The More We Make, The More We Give



Reflect on the ten principles of The Christian Capitalist Ethic. Which ones challenge you? Which principles motivate you? Do you disagree with any of them?

How have your views and understanding of work and giving changed since reading this book?

What will you do with this new knowledge and perspective?



Thank you for using  
this discussion guide!

