

Week 9 - The Bible & Politics

Economics and Education

Opening Prayer

Review

Last week we spoke on the development of critical theory and its central tenant. That, being the overriding narrative about human existence, is the artificial binary created by the oppressor class to oppress those on the other side of the binary. Whiteness was created explicitly to oppress POC. Maleness was created explicitly to oppress women.

“Lived experience” was also discussed. That is, the voices of the oppressed bear more moral authority than the voices of the oppressor class.

These views conflict with what we learn about the world from God’s revelation and conflicts with reality. It therefore only brings division, conflict, and ruin.

The difficult matter about this series is the limited nature of the time involved. Topics can only be addressed in cursory fashion.

Something more needs to be said about critical theory.

Every lie must draw upon some truth to influence its audience to believe the lie.

With Critical theory, many people are drawn to this false belief system to make sense of their or their friends' lived experiences and hardships.

A family that has enslavement in its history and experienced challenges since then understandably seek to understand why and what is the way forward.

While rejecting the caste system created by critical theory’s view of “Lived experience” we must yet recognize that we need to show compassion, love, and humility to those who have experienced hardships.

Our rejection of critical theory must not lead to a dismissal of the hardships endured by others. Hardships come in various forms: coming from broken family history, or believing a harmful view are just a couple.

Economics: Understanding Human Action

Why Economics

Why would I want to spend any time on this topic?

Isn't economics a course of study involving abstract math and statistics around products? Just a bunch of technical jargon and little meaning in real life? Is it just the tedious stuff that central planners do to make sure everyone gets what they need?

For any of you who were bored to tears by required economics classes in your past are probably thinking this man up here is talking nonsense by taking on this topic.

My hope is to show that economics, when understood rightly, is actually a grand display of the beautiful reality of the Christian worldview.

As the galaxies, the structure of the cell, a vibrant sunset, forgiveness and redemption display the glory of God, so does economics.

The countless interactions of human beings out of pursuit of their individual goals displays the tremendous intricate beauty of what God created us to be.

The main object of any economic exchange is the person, not the thing being purchased.

If we fail to understand the nature of people and society as described by a Christian worldview and relate that to economics then we have traded the beauty of something God created for a broken worldview.

Should we wonder when the only result is more brokenness.

It might be easier if we think of the high school course that used to be offered - Home economics. Managing the household. How you manage your household can either honor God and set the stage for flourishing or dishonor God and lead to suffering. The same is true economics in the larger context.

Let's start with just a couple passages that give some instructive principles;

A Few Basic Economic Principles

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31*

Principle

All pursuits. Every activity. Every plan. Every consideration. Every thought. Every academic consideration. Everything is impacted by how and why it was created. When we fail to understand something's nature, we fail to understand the implications.

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.
Ephesians 4:28

Derived Principles

Property Rights

We own the product of our own labors. We can opt to sell or give away our property. But to coercively take another person's property is theft. Regardless if the thief is a neighbor or a lawmaker.

Free Exchange

voluntary and unrestricted trading or swapping of goods, services, or resources between individuals

Self Reliance

The ability and willingness to take care of oneself, make independent decisions, and meet one's own needs without relying excessively on others or external assistance

Flourishing

More than enough for one's own needs

Charity

Giving to those who are not able to provide for their own needs.

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.
1 Timothy 2:1-2*

Derived Principles

We are to pursue through actions and prayers, that government is to protect our rights, setting the stage for peaceful pursuits.

What peaceful pursuits?

To have what is necessary in abundance so as to be able to share with those in need.

Marxism's Disagreement

Remember that poster on Whiteness from the Smithsonian? Remember what it said about self reliance. It said self reliance is a concept of oppression.

Where did that come from?

That view is downstream of Karl Marx and Marxism

Property Rights

Leads to exploitation.

Wages are a direct consequence of estranged labor, and estranged labor is the direct cause of private property. The downfall of the one must therefore involve the downfall of the other.
Karl Marx

Free Exchange:

The oppressors exploit the oppressed class by extracting surplus value from their labor, resulting in unequal exchanges.

It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom--free trade
Karl Marx

Self Reliance

Self reliance is a manifestation of whiteness. The narrative of individual self-sufficiency has been perpetuated by the dominant class to maintain the existing power structures. In reality, self-reliance can be seen as a manifestation of privilege.

Flourishing

Free exchange, for its tendency to create vast wealth disparities, with some accumulating more than they could ever need while others struggle to meet basic needs. They argue for a system that ensures a more equitable distribution of resources.

Charity

Marxists may see charity as a band-aid solution in response to systemic issues. Instead of relying on charity, they would advocate for structural changes that address the root causes of poverty and inequality.

What is lesson to be learned here?

Worldview impacts everything.

Definitions

Is vs Ought

Something is the case. This is descriptive.
The field of Economics is descriptive

Something ought to be the case. This is prescriptive, it's telling you what should be.
The field of Ethics is prescriptive.

The two are equally dependent upon a Christian worldview for correct observations.

Economics:

The study of human action around the allocation of scarce resources

Human Action

In starting here with economics we are stating that it starts with someone acting.

Not: We did not start with "someone needed to make a market for them, someone needed to create rules, set up a store front, set up governance, by set up laws

Humans act organically. This helps us understand the fundamental element of the market. A market is not created, not imposed, not arranged.

A market is simply the exchange between people

The choices individuals make in pursuit of their goals

Economist Ludwig Von Mises

"Economics is not about goods and services; it is about human choice and action."

Around the Allocation of Scarce Resources

What are some scarce resources: time, effort, money and material resources are limited.

Because we are rational beings we have incentives to do one course of action.

How individuals are incentivized to face limited resources, prioritize and distribute them to maximize their benefit.

Trade offs

Trade offs are made. This direction and not that direction.

Much current economic thought sees it as top down discipline, meaning that man is merely acted upon, but is not a rational actor.

Incentives

This view will produce a failure to understand incentive structure that motivates human behavior.

An influential businessman

"Show me the incentive, and I will show you the outcome".

Example. The intention of welfare is to provide for the wellbeing of the impoverished. The intention of the legislation is irrelevant. What incentive structures are created? In the last 30 years government run welfare has incentivized single motherhood. You give money to women who bear children out of marriage money and you have incentivized women to that behavior.

Milton Friedman

"One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results."

—

Understanding human nature in exchanges helps in the understanding of incentives. Only the Christian Worldview can account for what we see.

Self Interests

Individuals and businesses acting in their own best interest

What does this lead to? Businesses have to continually improve what they provide in a competitive

Adam Smith described it this way in his book, *The Wealth of Nations*: "It is not from the benevolence (kindness) of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."

This accounts for a brief definition of economics: what incentivizes human action and their choices

The second aspect is ethics: what ought to incentivize for human action

Human Flourishing: The spiritual and material peace, abundance, harmony, and joy that is the goal of human activity

Not just material flourishing, that would be materialism. Spiritual abundance sets the material in its proper context as being subservient to the Kingdom of God.

Spiritual abundance seeks the material for the sake of meeting one's own needs and providing charity.

Spiritual abundance will produce spiritual fruit: peace, harmony and joy.

A few practical steps toward

Eliminating Poverty & Stimulate a Flourishing Economy

1. Limited Government
Focuses on its core competence and then allows other institutions, churches, and smaller governmental institutions and families and voluntary organizations to prosper and businesses to prosper. What are those core competences again: protecting rights.
2. Rule of law
3. Detailed private property rights
4. Protection from fraud
5. Economic freedom
6. A virtuous population

So many other considerations: greed, corruption, sound money, exploitation, equality, equity,

My hope: that I so motivate some to read on economics set in the Christian worldview.

You will better understand the man, the world, the market, and how incentives are created or destroyed to produce flourishing.

Education: Imparting Worldview

What is education?

Education is inherently religious
Who is are responsible
Thoughts on fulfilling an education

What is our responsibility in educating our children?

To quote a verse at the beginning of the day and then subject them to secular coursework? No

What is Education

Definition: Education is leading someone out of ignorance into knowledge, this includes values, beliefs, practices, and morals.

Education is Religious

“Education is fundamentally religious. Consequently, there is no question about whether a morality will be imposed in that education, but rather which morality will be imposed.”
— Douglas Wilson, [*The Case for Classical Christian Education*](#)

When we hear a statement about the world, about math, about history, about literature, about science, about current events, about art, about health, we are either being told something about God and His creation.

Options

- That we would honor and rejoice in God as our Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and as Redeemer and in the Good News of His Kingdom as we come to understand any topic. All education should be a prelude to worship.
- That God doesn't exist.
- “Neutrality” - Your version of God may exist but He is irrelevant to an education about the world we live in.

Math displays the order and logic of God and his Creation. How we are have integrity with the numbers in our lives.

History shows the providence of God in the affairs of men. The people and their actions through history are to be judged for how they honored and rejoiced in God.

Literature is to be evaluated for how it speaks truth about God

Science is to give honor to the Creator and Designer in a spirit of awe and curiosity

Current Events is to reveal the nature of the world, man and sin, the consequences of the fall and the hope of mankind

Art is to display the creative mind of God in truth, beauty and goodness.

Health is to honor God in the temple of our body for His Glory and for our good

"The Christian message does not begin with "accept Christ as your Savior"; it begins with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". The Bible teaches that God is the sole source of the entire created order. No other gods compare with Him; no natural forces exist on their own; nothing receives its nature or existence from another source. Thus, His Word, or laws, or creation ordinances give the world its order and structure. God's creative world is the source of the laws of physical nature (natural sciences), human nature (ethics, politics, economics, aesthetics) and even logic. That's why Psalm 119:91 says, "all things are your servants". There is no philosophically or spiritually neutral subject matter."

— Nancy Pearcey, [Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity](#)

Educational Responsibility

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

The training of children is a primary parental responsibility: parents possess a responsibility not only to provide their children's needs but also to train their children to reflect God's glory. This doesn't release the larger community of faith from a responsibility for shaping children's souls. The Great Commission to "make disciples" was given to the whole people of God and includes every age-group (Matt 28:19).

The parents, not the state, are responsible for education.

A question: what worldview is discipling our children into how the world works, their place in this world and the relevance of God to these?

A Love For Learning

Being parents who display pursuit of the gospel, pursuit of joy, of forgiveness, of peace, of patience, of self control, of selflessness, of affection, of laughter, of hope, of gentleness.

Strive to have and display a childlike wonder, awe, and fascination for the beauty of the world God created. A wonder for learning about this God and the world He has made.

Let this growing understanding fan your affection for God.

A love for learning. A love for learning that displays God. A love for learning that brings life.

Your children will see you delight in God. Or your apathy. Where to they watch?

As your children watch you in the kitchen, at a stop light, as you are treated rudely at a store, as you use social media, as you prioritize your own rest, as you have to say 'no' to your own desires for your children, as you walk, as you disagree with your spouse....

And when we fail?

That brings us back to pursuing our need for the gospel for forgiveness and change.

Conclusion

In economics, in education, in parenting.....

That we would honor and rejoice in God as our Creator, Sustainer, Judge, and as Redeemer and in the Good News of His Kingdom

"There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"

Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905)

Economics Resources

David Bahnsen Economics Course - **FREE**

Economics understood from an explicitly Christian
Worldview



There's No Free Lunch: 250 Economic Truths

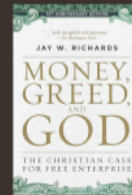
David L. Bahnsen



Economics Resources

Money, Greed, and God 10th Anniversary Edition: The Christian Case for Free Enterprise

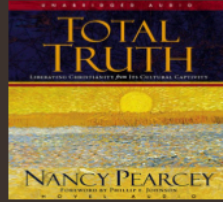
Jay Richards



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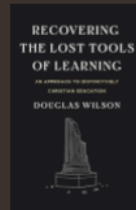
Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity

By Nancy Pearcey



Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning: An Approach to Distinctively Christian Education

Douglas Wilson



Education Resources

Liberty and Learning

By Larry Arnn

