

STUDY
GUIDE

ECONOMICS FOR EVERYBODY

APPLYING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO
WORK, WEALTH, & THE WORLD

R.C. SPROUL JR.

STUDY GUIDE

Economics for Everybody

Applying Biblical Principles
to Work, Wealth, and the World

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For additional learning resources and curriculum materials go to
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Welcome

Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” The provision of our daily needs matters to us, and it matters to our heavenly Father.

In this series, we are going to look at how God answers this prayer and, in His grace, gives us our daily bread. My prayer is that you will not just come away with a better understanding of how God has ordered His world, but that you will, in turn, become a more faithful steward, remembering that “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.”

In the King’s Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R.C. Sproul, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

R.C. Sproul, Jr.

Introduction

Welcome to the wonderful world of economics! This study guide is intended to go with the video series *Economics for Everybody*, although it can also be read on its own.

Economics for Everybody is designed to be a one-semester economics class for homeschool high school students. The course can be used in two ways:

1. As a stand-alone study to introduce basic economic concepts and worldview thinking.
2. As a study paired with *Basic Economics, Fourth Edition* to go deeper into free market economics, competing economic ideas, and different worldviews. It is available for purchase at CompassClassroom.com/basicecon

This book includes a Scope and Sequence for the lessons, along with an Answer Key to the questions for each lesson.

If you are new to the study of economics, your learning process should be helped if you read the corresponding chapter in this guide after you watch the lesson video.

It might be helpful to realize that the twelve lessons in the study follow a logical sequence. Each lesson builds on the lesson before it.

- Lessons 1 to 5 introduce key economic principles
- Lessons 6 and 7 explain the relationship between theology, philosophy, and economics
- Lessons 9 to 12 examine the application of economics in real-life systems

Note that this study was created in 2010. As a result, some of the examples and statistics cited reflect the situation of the world at that time. It would appear, however, that the faulty economic thinking discussed in this study continues to be followed by most governments in the world. As a result, the economic truths it teaches are as applicable today as they were in 2010—if not more so.

As a final caution, please note that original news footage of famines and violence in some lessons could bother a younger child.

We believe this study contains information that is extremely important for modern Christians to know. Economics is an essential part of our world; we hope this study transforms how you understand it.

Soli Deo gloria.

Thomas Purifoy Jr.

Updated 2021

Scope & Sequence for

One Semester

Economics for Everybody is designed to be the base of a one-semester economics class for homeschool high school students. If this Scope and Sequence is followed, it will good for one-half credit in economics.

The course can be used in two ways: by itself as a lighter study to introduce basic economics concepts (9th & 10th graders), or used together with another economics textbook as a more in-depth study for students with worldview training (10th-12th graders). If you choose to do the latter, we recommend *Basic Economics, Fourth Edition* by Carson and Cleveland. It is available at CompassClassroom.com/basicecon.

Here is how we recommend working through the exercises in this guide:

SHORT ANSWER — Type or write out answers on your computer or paper rather than using this *Study Guide* (there isn't enough space).

DISCUSSION — Verbally talk through these with Parent/Teacher. The goal is to let students explain what they have learned.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT — Found at the end of the lessons, these are optional ways to dig deeper into the material.

One lesson is normally completed per week. Use the charts that follow to mark off what has been finished. Only questions and additional work are scored. You can also use these questions as a way to reflect upon the content with your student after the lesson and readings are complete. A separate teacher's guide for the questions and assignments in the *Basic Economics, Fourth Edition* textbook is available from the publisher at <https://boundarystone.org/product/basic-economics-teachers-guide-pdf/> for an additional cost.

Lesson 1: And God Created Economics		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 1 Video	
	Read Lesson 1 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 1 & 2 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: There are many economic principles and actions listed in Genesis 1-5. Read through these chapters and explain some in a 2-3 page paper.	

Lesson 2: The Economic Problem of Sin		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 2 Video	
	Read Lesson 2 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 3 & 4 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Choose a commandment and research how both the adherence and the violation of it have had direct economic effects in our own day. Write a 2-3 page paper explaining what you find.	

Lesson 3: The Path from Work to Wealth		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 3 Video	
	Read Lesson 3 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 5-7 & 13 [†] of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Set up a visit to a local factory that manufactures something and talk to them about the various sources of all the things necessary to make what they do.	

† Content from this chapter will also apply to Lesson 5.

Lesson 4: The Route from Scarcity to Plenty		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 4 Video	
	Read Lesson 4 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 8-10 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Research the work of a Christian organization like The Chalmers Center (www.chalmers.org) and see what it is doing to teach basic economic principles and encourage the growth of local asset-based and participatory economic structures.	

Lesson 5: The Role of the Entrepreneur		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 5 Video	
	Read Lesson 5 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 13 & 14 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Find a local entrepreneur (either in your church or through your parents) whom you can interview. Find out how he (or she) started, how he has to use the means of production, and what issues he faces. Write a brief report on your findings explaining exactly what it is that the entrepreneur does.	

Lesson 6: A Tale of Two Theologies, Part I		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 6 Video	
	Read Lesson 6 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read <i>The Law</i> by Frederick Bastiat. Download a PDF here: https://mises.org/library/law	
	Complete Additional Work: Choose one modern government from this list and trace out its history that brought it to its modern form. Here is a complete list of governments and types: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_system_of_government	

Lesson 7: A Tale of Two Theologies, Part II		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 7 Video	
	Read Lesson 7 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 15, 19 & 22 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Research the economic thinking of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and John Maynard Keynes, the fathers of free market, socialist, and interventionist economics. Write a 3-4 page paper contrasting their views of economics.	

Lesson 8: Government Intervention		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 8 Video	
	Read Lesson 8 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 12, 15, 20 & 21 [†] of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Purchase or check out a copy of John Gatto's <i>Dumbing Us Down</i> and read Chapter 1. Write a 2-3 page paper explaining how the results he talks about are a result of a particular economic philosophy. (An online version of the chapter is available here: http://www.cantrip.org/gatto.html .)	

Lesson 9: Two Mysteries of Monetary Policy		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 9 Video	
	Read Lesson 9 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapters 8, 9, & 15 [‡] of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	Complete Additional Work: Go to http://www.shadowstats.com/article/archived-438-inflation-measurement and learn about the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the US that supposedly tracks inflation. This article explains how it has been manipulated to show that inflation is less than it truly is. Write a 2-3 page paper explaining some of the key concepts he talks about in this paper.	

† Content from this chapter will also apply to Lesson 10.

‡ Content from this chapter will also apply to Lesson 9.

Lesson 10: The Welfare & Corporate States of America		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 10 Video	
	Read Lesson 10 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L	Read Chapter 20 & 21 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
	<p>Complete Additional Work:</p> <p>Go to www.usgovernmentpending.com and www.usgovernmentrevenue.com. We relied heavily on these sites for getting accurate government spending and taxation numbers. Start by exploring http://www.usgovernmentpending.com/recent_spending and http://www.usgovernmentrevenue.com/recent_revenue. Write a 2-3 page paper explaining what has happened over the past 100 years in terms of government spending and revenue.</p>	

Lesson 11: Economics Has Consequences		SCORE
	Watch Lesson 11 Video	
	Read Lesson 11 in Study Guide	
	Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
	Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
	Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
	Read Chapters 11, 16 & 22 of <i>Basic Economics</i>	
O P T I O N A L	Complete Additional Work: Go to www.torturedforchrist.com and read about the life of Richard Wurmbrand, a Romanian pastor who spent 14 years in a Communist prison for being an outspoken pastor. He went on to found Voice of the Martyrs ministry. Read about his life and how he fought against Communism. You also review what happened to Christians in the Soviet Union here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Christians_in_the_Soviet_Union Write a 2-3 page paper about how Christians have suffered under socialist economies because of their beliefs.	

Lesson 12: Kingdom Economics	SCORE
Watch Lesson 12 Video	
Read Lesson 12 in Study Guide	
Complete Multiple Choice Questions in Study Guide	
Complete Short Answer Questions in Study Guide	
Have Discussion with Parent/Teacher from Study Guide	
O P T I O N A L Complete Additional Work: Write a 4-5 page paper that explains what you think every Christian should understand about economics and why. Base it on what you learned in this series and from reading additional books, materials, and websites.	

For Further Study

List of Additional Resources

TEXTBOOKS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Basic Economics, 4th Ed.— Clarence Carson and Paul Cleveland

[Middle/High School and up]

Available at CompassClassroom.com

Christian Economics Volume 1: Student's Edition— Gary North

[Middle/High School and up]

Free download at GaryNorth.com/CEStudent.pdf

Foundations of Economics: A Christian View—Shawn Ritenour

[Upper High School/College and up]

ECONOMIC TOPICS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Biblical Economics: A Commonsense Guide to Our Daily Bread—R.C.

Sproul, Jr.

Bringing in the Sheaves: Replacing Government Welfare with Biblical

Charity—George Grant

God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life—Gene Veith

Honest Money: The Biblical Blueprint for Money and Banking—

Gary North*

Inherit the Earth: Biblical Blueprints for Economics—Gary North*

Money, Greed & God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem—

Jay Richards

Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity—E. Calvin Beisner

Unmasking the Sacred Lies—Paul Cleveland

Your Wealth in God's World—John Jefferson Davis

OTHER BOOKS

The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression—Jean-Louis Panne, et al.

A Critique of Interventionism—Ludwig Von Mises*

The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy—Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw

Communism: A History—Richard Pipes

Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling—John Taylor Gatto

For Good and Evil: The Impact of Taxes on the Course of Civilization—Charles Adams*

Human Action: A Treatise on Economics—Ludwig von Mises*

Index of Economic Freedom—The Heritage Foundation

Lessons for the Young Economists—Robert Murphy*

The Mystery of Banking—Murray Rothbard*

The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Great Depression and the New Deal—Robert Murphy*

Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis—Ludwig von Mises*

The Socialist Tradition: Moses to Lenin—Alexander Gray*

The State of Humanity—Julian Simon

The Welfare State: 1929–1985—Clarence Carson

The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor—David Landes

The Wealth of Nations—Adam Smith

* Link to free downloadable version available at [Mises.org/books-library](https://www.mises.org/books-library)

And God Created Economics: Stewardship in God's Image

INTRODUCTION

The study of economics begins with God and His creation of the world. In this lesson, we will look at the implications of the creation on economics; the relationship between economics and stewardship; the cultural mandate; the reality of economics in natural law; and the connections between morality and economics.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 1 & 2

Psalms 24 & 104

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To see that God owns everything, but that He created us to be stewards of creation for His glory.
2. To understand that God created economics to enable us to carry out the cultural mandate.
3. To recognize that there are economic laws in the world which we can learn and apply to our work as stewards.

QUOTATION

We do not, therefore, believe the teachings of economics because many people in Western Civilization have believed them, although they have. We do not believe the teachings of economics because experience verifies the truth of economics, although it does. We do not even believe the teachings of economics because all humans have rational minds which allow us to understand that humans act purposefully, although we all do have minds fitted for rational thought. We believe the truths of economics because God has created us in His image with the ability to know and perceive truth, and one of these truths communicated to us in His creation and His Word is that, like God, we act with a purpose.

– Shawn Ritenour, *Foundations of Economics*

INTRODUCTION & FIRST PRINCIPLES

Economics is a scientific discipline that applies to the choices we make in everyday life. Some people divide economics into two areas, the big picture and the little picture. They say that the principles that apply in one area do not apply in the other.

But this isn't true: the economic principles that apply to individuals also apply to large, national economies. Why is this? Because all national economies are made up of individual people making individual choices. Economics always comes down to the choices of individuals.

Economics is the study of how God ordered the world. Sometimes it's presented in a boring, mathematical way, but

this does a disservice to God and His creation. God made economics an interesting and important part of the created order. It's the way that it's approached that often makes it boring. The truth is that God created economics to help man be a better steward of creation.

The first and most basic economic principle is this: **God owns everything**. God created the world *ex nihilo*, or out of nothing. Since it is His creation, it is also His possession and He can do with it as He pleases. God's creation of the world out of nothing is a demonstration of the following two things:

1. His sovereign power: God can choose to *do* whatever He wants.
2. His sovereign authority: God can choose to *direct* His creation to whatever end He wants.

God's creation has as its purpose the manifestation of His glory. We can therefore learn specific things about God by looking at the creation. God governs the world and exercises a purposeful providence over it. God created *natural law* to order His creation and to provide a framework within which man can live. God does all these things not only to manifest His glory, but also to bless man. In seeking to manifest His glory, God ultimately acts in His own self-interest—which is also in the best interest of man.

God created man to reflect His image. As a result, certain attributes of God are mirrored in man's attributes:

- Man acts with purpose.
- Man acts in his own self-interest.

- Man makes choices.
- Man acts rationally.

THE CULTURAL MANDATE

God designed man to do everything under His sovereign authority and for His glory.

God gave the first man Adam specific commands in the Garden of Eden. This is the *cultural mandate*.

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.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so (Genesis 1:28-30).

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:15-17).

Since God owns all things, by putting man in charge of creation, God is making man His *steward*. **A steward is one who, under the authority of the owner, manages his property for the owner's benefit and good.** God gave man wisdom to be a steward, which included the discernment to make choices in light of natural limitations.

One of Adam's first stewardship activities was naming the animals. Adam had to discern the nature of each animal and make choices to put each of them into different categories. Adam showed authority over the animals by naming them, an act of control and dominion (just as parents name their own children). Adam recognized the limitations within each animal—some have two legs, some four; some swim, some fly, etc.—and named them accordingly.

In one sense, natural limitations are part of the created order. There are limitations of time and space. You can't plant two different plants in exactly the same spot. You can't mine metals in the same place you grow a garden. God gave man the ability to make wise choices in the stewardship of His creation in light of these natural limitations. In other words, some places are better for mining and some for agriculture.

ECONOMIC LAWS

Another important aspect of being a good steward is to recognize there are economic laws in the world. **Economics is man making choices as to how to best use his limited resources in order to be a good steward before God.** There are similarities between physical laws and economic laws, but there are also differences. Physical laws deal with

inanimate objects and forces, whereas economic laws deal with living humans and their choices and actions.

Economics is deduced from certain premises just like geometry. In geometry, one must assume the reality of a point, a line and a plane. From those assumptions, one can draw circles, squares, or triangles, which in turn can be used to build real structures, like buildings and bridges. When an assumption is true, it works itself out in a very powerful way in the real world.

Economic principles are derived from the premise that humans act. Those principles provide the foundation for all the economic activity of the world. Two examples include:

1. Gresham's Law says that if one tries to replace more valuable money with less valuable money (such as replacing gold with paper), then people will hoard the good money (gold) and take it out of circulation to keep it. In effect, bad money drives out good.
2. The Division of Labor teaches there is an increase in productivity when work is divided up into specific callings and specializations.

Economics is related to morality. Because economics deals with human action and the choices we make, it is always going to be related to ethical issues. God commands help us to make sound economic decisions.

Economics is not something that can be completely understood apart from the Word of God. Like geometry, however, one does not have to know God or understand Him to employ economic principles with some effectiveness. That said, unless

the moral and ethical aspects of economics are recognized and ultimately acted upon, long-term economic health is impossible.

Why study economics? We offer four reasons:

1. We must be obedient to the cultural mandate as children of Adam and Eve.
2. We can grow in our prosperity if we follow the economic principles God created for our benefit.
3. God expects us to use that prosperity for the growth of His Kingdom both locally and abroad.
4. Ultimately, understanding economics helps us to fulfill the Great Commission.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The first and most basic economic principle is: ____.
 - a. Man owns private property.
 - b. God owns everything.
 - c. Man is to be God's steward.
 - d. Economics is a scientific discipline.

2. Economics is primarily a study of man's ____.
 - a. reason
 - b. nature
 - c. choices
 - d. money

3. A steward is one who, under the authority of the owner, manages his property for ____.
 - a. personal gain
 - b. the welfare of others
 - c. the best use of his family
 - d. the owner's benefit and good

4. Because economics deals with ____, it is always going to be related to ethical issues.
 - a. human action
 - b. monetary function
 - c. fiscal management
 - d. resource allocation

5. Why study economics?
 - a. We must be obedient to the cultural mandate as children of Adam and Eve.
 - b. We can grow in our prosperity if we follow the economic principles God created for our benefit.
 - c. God expects us to use that prosperity for the growth of His Kingdom both locally and abroad.
 - d. All of the above.

SHORT ANSWER

1. Explain the relationship between stewardship and economics.
2. Name some ways that the cultural mandate is related to economics in your own life.
3. Why do you think economics is often divorced from morality in the modern world?
4. How might economics enable us to fulfill the Great Commission beyond just providing missionaries with financial support?

DISCUSSION

1. Almost everyone today agrees that economics is important. But many will say they are confused by it. Why do you think that is? If understanding economics is important to men and women being faithful stewards, what might be the reasons it is not widely taught either in society or the church?
2. What are some of the ways that economics is related to morality?

3. If economics is “man making choices as to how to best use his limited resources in order to be a good steward before God,” what are some specific ways you act economically in your particular calling?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Basic Economics, 4th Ed. – Carson & Cleveland – Chapters 1-2

Foundations of Economics – Ritenour – Introduction, Chapter 1

Prosperity and Poverty – Beisner – Introduction

The Economic Problem of Sin: Law, Liberty & Government

INTRODUCTION

Sin is one of the primary issues that affects economics. In this lesson, we will look at the impact of the fall on economics; the way sin affects our relationships to the creation and to other men and women; the economic results of the Law and the Ten Commandments; the importance of liberty; and the role of civil government.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 3-9

Exodus 20

Romans 13

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the impact of sin on economics.
2. To see the importance of the Law to economic growth.
3. To recognize the role of civil government in any economic system.

QUOTATION

God promises prosperity and blessing to societies that abide by His Law. But He warns of misery and judgment on those who reject it. The prosperity and blessing, on the one hand, and the misery and judgment, on the other, are not solely caused by God's response to our actions. They are also the natural, cause-and-effect results of behavior consistent or inconsistent with the moral and physical laws God has woven into the fabric of creation. The Biblical worldview, by recognizing these laws and teaching people to operate consistently with them, underlies the prosperity of the West.

– E. Calvin Beisner, *Prosperity and Poverty*

THE IMPACT OF SIN

The impact of the Fall of Adam and Eve extended to all of creation. Before the Fall, it's difficult to imagine how rich and fertile the original garden must have been. As a result of Adam's sin, however, God told Adam: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground ..." (Genesis 3:17-19).

God's curse of the ground means there is now *scarcity* beyond the natural limitations of space and time. **Scarcity is the problem of a cursed ground that will not naturally provide for man's needs.** Scarcity greatly worsens the challenge of natural limitations. As a result of the curse and the problem

of scarcity, the basic question of man's life is now "How will I survive from day to day?"

Scarcity combined with sin and ignorance consistently leads to poverty. Although the nations of the West have been prosperous for centuries, the majority of the world's population has been poor through most of world history. It remains that way for billions of people today. No system of economics is going to eradicate poverty; history shows us, however, that some economic systems tend toward increasing poverty while other systems tend toward lessening poverty.

Since we, as Christians, are interested in reducing poverty, we should also be interested in the economic system that works best to marginalize and reduce poverty as well as to help us be better stewards of God's creation. ***Stewardship is man governing and using the created order for God's purposes and for God's glory.***

The Fall has greatly affected who we are as men made in the image of God. This includes the economic work God desires us to do. Those consequences include:

- We do not think in a rational way with consistency.
- We ignore our calling as stewards under God's authority.
- We work for our own purposes instead of God's purposes.
- We find ways to steal, to lie, and to exploit other men, especially through various forms of slavery.

A comparison of the line of Cain with the line of Seth in the first chapters of Genesis shows the radical departure within Cain's line from what God intended.

Lamech, of the line of Cain, said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold” (Genesis 4:23-24).

But in the line of Seth: “Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him” (Genesis 5:22-24). The cultural mandate and God’s call to stewardship remain, but our sinful natures prevent us from being able to fulfill them without God’s grace.

Whenever we are overcome by sin, God intervenes in our lives to save us from ourselves. He gives us His law to provide boundaries within which we can find prosperity. Moses said, “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 28:1-2). He demonstrates His grace to us by redeeming us from judgment and blessing us in our obedience.

The story of Noah is a picture of God’s call to stewardship and blessing. Noah was given a specific economic task to build an ark using land, labor and capital. Noah’s obedience was an example of godly stewardship. God saved Noah and blessed his obedience, then repeated to Noah the cultural mandate: “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be

fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1). God also gave Noah specific commands that helped him and his family live on the land. God did this to a much greater degree when He gave Moses His laws on Mt. Sinai.

THE LAW OF GOD

Most people don't think about economics when they think about the Ten Commandments, but they provide the cultural and legal framework necessary for a people to create a community in which they can be stewards under God.

Although the Ten Commandments have a personal aspect to them, they also have a corporate, societal aspect that has great bearing on our economic lives.

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are divided into two tables, one dealing with our relationship to God and the other with our relationship to man. Both sets of relationships are important to economics.

1. *You shall have no other gods before me.*

The first commandment tells us that all aspects of our lives must be lived in submission to God as faithful stewards.

2. *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them ...*

The second commandment tells us that we must not make idols of anybody in our community or of anything

that we can create, whether it be products, tools, or services.

3. *You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain ...*
The third commandment tells us not to exploit the name of God as if it were some magic talisman to bring us power, wealth and economic success.
4. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.*
The fourth commandment not only commands us to rest, but also commands us to work. We see that the Biblical ratio of work to rest means that 6 days out of a week should be spent working as stewards in the callings God has given us, both inside and outside the home.
5. *Honor your father and your mother; that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*
The fifth commandment establishes a framework of authority and submission that starts with the family. Recognizing the authority structures that pervade society, then honoring them, is a pathway to blessing and prosperity.
6. *You shall not murder.*
The sixth commandment establishes the protection of life as the foundation of any healthy society. History shows that societies that do not protect life quickly succumb to economic catastrophe: it is impossible to work and trade for long in an environment of death.

7. *You shall not commit adultery.*

The seventh commandment shows us the importance of protecting marriage and families through the laws of a society. Marriages of one man and one woman producing healthy families are the building blocks of any civilization: families are the self-perpetuating method God uses to grow up godly boys and girls to work as faithful stewards with their own families. A society that disregards the importance of marriage and family erodes the walls that support the entire economy.

8. *You shall not steal.*

The eighth commandment establishes the economic principle of private property; that is, individuals have the right to own things and to choose to do what they want with them. Stealing is taking someone's private property without his permission. A healthy economic system prohibits stealing at all levels.

9. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

The ninth commandment sets up the groundwork for statements of fact, agreements, and contracts. Telling the truth is basic for economic life: one must be able to depend on the integrity of other people to engage in effective long-term trade and business relationships.

10. *You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.*

The tenth commandment is perhaps surprising in its economic context, but it makes perfect sense in light of man's insatiable greed. Covetousness is often the root

of our exploitation of others, when we're unhappy with the way God has blessed us in comparison with others. An economy made up of people who strive not to covet would be a prosperous economy indeed.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

God has not only given us His Law, but He has given us the civil government as a means of enforcing laws in society. God established the authority of civil government in the world when He spoke to Noah after leaving the ark: "And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Genesis 9:5-6).

Civil government is an agency of force. It "wields the sword" of governmental coercion, and therefore has the ability to take the lives of those under its rule. As Genesis 9 points out, there are some biblically-justified instances of capital punishment.

Yet it is not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New, that the sphere of civil government is affirmed. Paul says in his letter to the Romans:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the

one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed (Romans 13:1-7).

According to these passages, **the primary role of civil government is to set down the rule of law and to punish evildoers.** This view of government is an extremely limited view compared to that of modern governments that redistribute wealth, take care of the poor, and engage in countless economic endeavors.

Instead, the biblical role of government establishes a fence and boundary within which a people can live and grow economically as stewards of God's creation. This "rule of law" includes protection of life, property, marriage and family, defense against invaders, and upholds the integrity of agreements and contracts.

Yet the power of the sword provides a dangerous temptation to those inside and outside the government. Historically, people have vied with one another for control of that sword to oppress others while they benefited themselves. Liberty

and tyranny are the two opposite extremes that struggle with each other for control of the government. The former seeks to limit it to its natural province, while the latter seeks to expand it to do its will.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

There is a clear connection between obedience to God's commands and national economic prosperity. History demonstrates that those nations that were most influenced by the Protestant Reformation (Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the United States, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and others) have historically enjoyed the greatest prosperity in the world. Other European and European-influenced nations that have followed a Christian view of the world stand close beside them.

Why is this? It is because our corporate understanding of God influences how we understand what man is. In other words, our theology ultimately influences our economics. We can see it in this sequence:

1. The study of God (theology)
2. Leads to believing certain things about man (anthropology),
3. Which in turn informs a political philosophy
4. And the political system,
5. Which ultimately provides a foundation for an economic philosophy
6. And an economic system.

As we pursue this study, we will see that what we believe about God ultimately determines whether we will enjoy prosperity and liberty or whether we will live in poverty and tyranny.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ____ is the problem of a cursed ground that will not naturally provide for man's needs.
 - a. Death
 - b. Food
 - c. Scarcity
 - d. Dust

2. The cultural mandate and God's call to stewardship remain, but ____ prevent us from being able to fulfill them without God's grace.
 - a. our sinful natures
 - b. natural laws
 - c. our tendencies to exploit others
 - d. our premature deaths

3. The Ten Commandments provide the ____ necessary for a people to create a community in which they can be stewards under God.
 - a. personal ethical standards
 - b. cultural and legal framework
 - c. elementary rules
 - d. economic laws

4. Civil government is an agency of ____.
 - a. taxation
 - b. welfare
 - c. provision
 - d. force

5. Our ____ ultimately influences our economics.
- ontology
 - teleology
 - theology
 - eschatology

SHORT ANSWER

1. Explain why some economic systems tend toward increasing poverty while other systems tend toward decreasing it.
2. Why is the law important for economics? For personal liberty?
3. What are some economic roles the civil government has undertaken in the modern world? What does the Bible say (or not say) about those roles?

DISCUSSION

1. Some people have referred to the “grace of law.” How is law a grace in terms of our economic lives?
2. How does sin exacerbate a nation’s economic problems, especially those of countries that reject God?
3. What are some specific ways the Ten Commandments are necessary for a healthy economic life?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Basic Economics, 4th Ed.* – Carson & Cleveland – Chapters 3-4
Prosperity and Poverty – Beisner – Chapters 11 & 14
Biblical Economics – Sproul, Jr. – Chapter 9

Answer Key

Lesson 1: And God Created Economics

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- The first and most basic economic principle is: ____.
 - Man owns private property.
 - God owns everything.**
 - Man is to be God's steward.
 - Economics is a scientific discipline.
- Economics is primarily a study of man's ____.
 - reason
 - nature
 - choices**
 - money
- A steward is one who, under the authority of the owner, manages his property for ____.
 - personal gain
 - the welfare of others
 - the best use of his family
 - the owner's benefit and good**
- Because economics deals with ____, it is always going to be related to ethical issues.
 - human action**
 - monetary function
 - fiscal management
 - resource allocation
- Why study economics?
 - We must be obedient to the cultural mandate as children of Adam and Eve.
 - We can grow in our prosperity if we follow the economic principles God created for our benefit.
 - God expects us to use that prosperity for the growth of His Kingdom both locally and abroad.
 - All of the above.**

SHORT ANSWER**1. Explain the relationship between stewardship and economics.**

Economics is the primary tool of our stewardship. God desires all men and women to fulfill the cultural mandate that He gave to Adam in the garden. That mandate is take care of and cultivate the creation under God's direction. In order to steward creation, one must make choices as to how to best use the limited resources of creation to build up a godly civilization.

2. Name some ways that the cultural mandate is related to economics in your own life.

As a student, you are making choices as to how to best use your limited time to learn more about God's creation and your role in it. You might have listed the subjects you are studying; note that you have made choices to study some things and not others. You might have listed your hobbies or jobs you work. What this question may have made you think about is how much you are spending your time in worthy pursuits that provide something lasting (such as creating something or working a job) versus pursuits that may be nothing more than just passing time (such as TV, surfing the Internet, or video games).

3. Why do you think economics is often divorced from morality in the modern world?

The modern world has rejected Christian categories of thinking and so has tried to build various worldviews on secular philosophical foundations. In economics, this means that it has embraced a generally mathematical (or quantitative), non-moral view of economics. If men are not made in God's image, then there is no moral law that their choices must conform to.

4. How might economics enable us to fulfill the Great Commission beyond just providing missionaries with financial support?

There are countless ways economics does this, but here are a few examples: the division of labor and free trade ensures that we are not having to work all the time just to survive, so can instead spend time discipling others, learning more, and worshipping God; by working different jobs throughout society, we are salt and light to unbelievers in all sorts of places; we all use our money to build churches, schools, hospitals, and other things necessary for a healthy, Godly society.

DISCUSSION

1. Almost everyone today agrees that economics is important. But many will say they are confused by it. Why do you think that is? If understanding economics is important to men and women being faithful stewards, what might be the reasons it is not widely taught either in society or the church?

Economics uses a lot of terms that may be hard to understand unless defined. Economics is overly mathematical and can be divorced from reality when based on a non-Christian worldview. Prior generations of the church has not been taught good economics in school or the church, so adults don't know it to teach others.

2. What are some of the ways that economics is related to morality?

Economic choices are made by individuals, and individuals must conform to God's laws. This includes honesty in one's word and contracts; it includes working hard at one's job; it includes being fair to people in paying them; it includes helping out the poor in a wise way; as well as many other areas.

3. If economics is "man making choices as to how to best use his limited resources in order to be a good steward before God," what are some specific ways you act economically in your particular calling?

If you are a student, then you may have limited money for curriculum and you have to make choices as to what you can use; you have limited time and you have to choose some subjects to study instead of other subjects; and you have unique gifting that draws you toward some work and repels you from other things.

Lesson 2: The Economic Problem of Sin

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ____ is the problem of a cursed ground that will not naturally provide for man's needs.
 - a. Death
 - b. Food
 - c. Scarcity
 - d. Dust

2. The cultural mandate and God's call to stewardship remain, but ____ prevent us from being able to fulfill them without God's grace.
 - a. **our sinful natures**
 - b. natural laws
 - c. our tendencies to exploit others
 - d. our premature deaths
3. The Ten Commandments provide the ____ necessary for a people to create a community in which they can be stewards under God.
 - a. personal ethical standards
 - b. **cultural and legal framework**
 - c. elementary rules
 - d. economic laws
4. Civil government is an agency of ____.
 - a. taxation
 - b. welfare
 - c. provision
 - d. **force**
5. Our ____ ultimately influences our economics.
 - a. ontology
 - b. teleology
 - c. **theology**
 - d. eschatology

SHORT ANSWER

1. **Explain why some economic systems tend toward increasing poverty while other systems tend toward decreasing it.**

Economic systems that do not recognize the way God has created the world to work as well as the impact of sin on the world, will inevitably end in poverty. Those systems that do seek to build on Biblical truth will lessen poverty.

2. **Why is the law important for economics? For personal liberty?**

The law provides boundaries within which economic growth can occur. For instance, laws against murder, stealing, and lying are all necessary to have a functioning society that protects life and property. The law also is the basis of Biblical civil government which limits the powers of government to control people.

3. What are some economic roles the civil government has undertaken in the modern world? What does the Bible say (or not say) about those roles?

It seems today that the civil government has taken on limitless roles in regard to economics. These include excessive redistribution of wealth through taxation, which is a form of stealing; it includes many regulations put in place to limit some people's abilities to steward their own property; it includes printing more paper money and inflating the money supply, thereby stealing from future savings; it includes giving people money through welfare instead of through work; there are many other ways, as well.

DISCUSSION

1. Some people have referred to the "grace of law." How is law a grace in terms of our economic lives?

God's grace takes care of us in our need. As sinners, we need protection from others and even from ourselves, so God's law gives us the rules by which we can live and prosper.

2. How does sin exacerbate a nation's economic problems, especially those of countries that reject God?

In countries that reject God, a majority of people in a country, including those who lead it and make its laws, will make sinful choices to better themselves at the expense of others. This always leads to the gradual or quick enslavement of some people by others in order to steal their wealth or labor. This oppression means that large parts of a nation are not working as effectively as they could if they were completely free, thereby making their economic problems worse.

3. What are some specific ways the Ten Commandments are necessary for a healthy economic life?

The Ten Commandments outlines what is necessary for a healthy society. The first is the freedom of a people to worship God. Others include protections for authority, for marriage, for life, for property, and for honesty.

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