

# The influence of Christianity on civilization. Capitalism

How the teachings of Jesus changed the world in which we live by the spiritual message impacting our daily lives.

The greatest failure in an American man's life is the loss of a job. Why?

A man's job is said to define a American man's life. Why?

When Jesus came to the earth, manual labor was thought to be suitable for slaves and to be demeaning for philosophers, gentlemen and freemen.

The Roman Cicero said that “working daily was unbecoming to a gentleman.” “Vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workman whom we pay for mere manual labor”

Athens had “five times as many slaves as citizens” One-third of the freemen sat daily in the court of the Comitia discussing the affairs of the state, while slaves performed all the manual labor that was loathed by the freemen”

In the catalog of mortal and venial sins, one of the “seven deadly sins” was sloth.

The Scriptures value individual effort and regard work as honorable.

1Th 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

What value does the attitude of belittling honest labor bring to society?

2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." 11 We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

One of the most notable facts about the dignity and honor of work was that it undermined slavery!

Christians saw that all work, whether of high or low status, was done for God.

Eph 6: 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

# The Scriptures teach that laborers are worthy of their wages.

Lk 10:7 ... for the worker deserves his wages.

The use of and payment of free men, receiving a wage sufficient for their livelihood is rooted in Christianity. Slavery invariably provided neither dignity nor wages sufficient for anything other than maintenance.



“The presence of a valued working class has been credited with reduced poverty, disease and increased political and economic freedom. Such values were not derived from Roman, Greek, Hindu, Pagan or Islamic teachings. Even in Japan the Meiji (19<sup>th</sup> century) philosophy adapted Western economic and cultural values without regard to their origin.”

Christianity abolished “class” in society.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

One man might have more abilities  
and so be more useful to the Lord  
(and the world), but no man is  
forbidden to strive to stand out to  
the maximum ability given him.

Mat 25:14 "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. (15) "And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 20 "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' (21) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.'

Jesus chose his parables to illustrate the value of a man's labor, both in this life and that life which is to come.

Mat 25:26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. (27) 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. (28) 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

Jesus tempered his words with the value of cooperation, where the church (and society) grow better where both high capacity and low capacity individuals each carry out their labor.

1Co 12:18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (19) And if they were all one member, where would the body be? (20) But now there are many members, but one body. (21) And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (22) On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;



Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, (20) having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, (21) in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

# Consider Property Rights

“The Communist Manifesto” states, “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.” In 1917, Lenin “ordered the destruction of all legal documents showing property ownership.”

Rom 13:9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

From the parable of the workers in the vineyard  
Matt 20: 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

Does Jesus teach that one should not have personal property? -- NO!

Some think socialism was commanded.

Acts 4:34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Was communal property commanded here? NO!  
Charity was demonstrated!

## **An incredible detour - Catholicism**

1Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The Roman Catholic church departed from the Scriptures and taught that “money is a root of all kinds of evil”. Encouraging people to be poor and dress poorly.

Catholics taught that interest could not be charged and thus set the stage for centuries of violence against those who dealt in money, mainly the Jews.

Calvin, realized forbidding usury was an Old Testament command, and “meant that only the poor were not to be charged interest” Thus, it was not sinful for Christians to receive interest income from loans.

Lev 25:35 "If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. 36 Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear your God, so that your countryman may continue to live among you. 37 You must not lend him money at interest or sell him food at a profit.

There is no spiritual or moral value in being poor nor does Jesus teach that the poor are more righteous than those who are wealthy.

Joh 12:8 "For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me."

Mat 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Lk 6.20 Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God belongs to the humble!

## Communism and Christianity

Karl Marx believed that the abuses in capitalism would inevitably destroy it. As an atheist, he could not envision that the humanitarian spirit of Christianity internalized by countless leaders in the West would correct the economic abuses. ... the free market has not only survived, but it has given to a greater proportion of the people more prosperity and freedom than any other economic system in the history of mankind.



A free market economy features Christian values as it coerces not man to buy or sell their product(s) unless they so desire. Individuals are not compelled to produce a product(s) against their will, the norm in socialist or “planned economy” countries.”

“It’s no accident that a capital market has never arisen indigenously in any non-Christian country.”

In the parable of the talents, Matt 25, the profit motive is held to be honorable and the inaction of the one talent man is condemned as evil.

Socialism failed in both Jamestown (1607) and Plymouth (1620) because there were “laggards and idle-bodies” who thought others would do the work and they would reap the rewards.

Joh 9:4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me, as long as it is day; night is coming, when no man can work.

Work, for the night is coming, Work through the sunny noon; Fill brightest hours with labor, Rest comes sure and soon. Give every flying minute, Something to keep in store; Work, for the night is coming, When man works no more. - Annie Coghill

A two-fold message. 1. Work the works of God  
2. Implicit in this is working to provide.

Is it merely accidental that the greatest amount of freedom and the accompanying economic prosperity happen to exist in countries where Christianity has had, and continues to have, a dominant presence and influence?

The teachings of Jesus Christ raises man to the very highest level in both this life and that which is to come.