

Economics: A Christian Worldview – Is Capitalism “Selfish”?

(TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY)

Purpose

Students see practical examples of Henry Hazlitt’s observation that government planners often only look at the effects of their economic policies on one group, and only for the short term.

Time

10-15 minutes

Instructions

- Play the following two videos for students:

“Capitalism = Selfishness, According to Adam Smith & Milton Friedman’s Logic” (3:15)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba5rL-jaX8I>

“Is Capitalism Moral?”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJr2RO7g7jI> (5:22)

- Ask for volunteers or go around the room asking students their thoughts on the videos.
- Ask students: “What does the Bible say are the primary purposes of government?”
To be a “terror” to “evil” (Romans 13:3) and to “remove violence and spoil [theft]” (Ezekiel 45:9).
- Ask students: “The narrator of the ‘Capitalism Is Selfishness’ video obviously claims that...capitalism is selfishness. But how should the government deal with ‘selfishness’? Does supposed ‘selfishness’ rise to the level of an issue that the government should punish?”
The government has no legitimate claim to combat or punish “selfishness.” If someone is selfish, that’s a fault or a sin, not a crime—no violence or theft has occurred, so it’s not a government matter. And how is a judge or police officer supposed to know for sure if somebody does something out of “selfishness” or another reason? Are they mind readers?