

Economics Key Passages

Transcript from David Hamilton's Video project for
the SourceView Reader

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Note for transcript use:

The blue text was used for editing purposes, and should all be gone, but if it is there, compare with video.

The use of red text is to draw attention to scriptures used. While checked for use in the video project, it would be best to confirm when used for the written projects coming. The spoken may have altered a word or added a comment ...and sometimes only selections were used out of a large passage.

The use of green text is to highlight the need to take extra care to find exact spelling or wording, especially quotes used and words in Hebrew. Also any questions on correct wording.

Economics Sphere Key Passages

God and the Sphere of Economics

1	God Created Everything	Isa 42:5-7
2	God Continues to Do New Things	Isa 43:19
3	God Provides for All of Creation	Psa 147:8-9
4	God Provided in the Desert	Deu 29:5-6
5	God's Extravagant Generosity	Rom 8:31-32
6	God Is Our Healer	Exo 15:23-26

Innovative Science and Technology

7	Given a Scientific Research Task	Gen 2:19-20
8	Twelve Spies Research Agricultural Potential	Num 13:17-20a
9	Nehemiah Researches Architectural Needs	Neh 2:12-18
10	Jacob's Sheep Breeding	Gen 30:27-43
11	The Value of Safe Transportation Systems	Jdg 5:6,10
12	Hezekiah's Engineering Wonder	2Ki 20:20
13	Uzziah's Inventive War Machines	2Ch 26:14-15a

Biblical Principles for Business

14	A God-Given Job	Gen 2:8-9a,15
15	Covenantal Blessings and Curses	Deu 28:1-6,15-19
16	The Sabbath Instituted	Gen 2:2-3
17	Respect Private Property	Deu 19:14
18	Jubilee Laws Established	Lev 25:8-34
19	Integrity in the Marketplace	Lev 19:35-36
20	Laws Against Overcharging	Lev 25:35-37
21	Jesus Cleanses the Temple of Merchants	Mar 11:15-17
22	God Gives the Farmer Wisdom	Isa 28:24-29
23	Worship When There Is Abundant Provision	Joe 2:23b-26a
24	Worship When There Is No Provision	Hab 3:17-18a
25	Provision for Widows, Orphans and Refugees	Deu 24:17-22
26	Let My People Go	Exo 2:23b-25
27	Paul Appeals for Onesimus' Freedom	Phm 1:10-19
28	Jehoshaphat's Ungodly Partnership	2Ch 20:35-37

Economic Do's and Don'ts

29	Do Not Steal	Deu 5:19
30	Work or Don't Eat	2Th 3:6-12
31	Work So You Can Be a Giver	Eph 4:28
32	Tithe Plus	Mat 23:23-24
33	Be Diligent	Pro 6:6-11
34	Be Generous	Pro 11:24-25
35	Don't Oppress the Poor	Pro 21:13
36	Put God to the Test	Mal 3:10-11
37	Idolatrous Efforts to Prosper	2Ki 21:7-9
38	No Favoritism Based on Economic Status	Jam 2:1-9
39	Wealth Does Not Equal True Happiness	Ecc 5:10-15
40	Economic Righteousness	Amo 8:4-6
41	Prayer Impacts Economic Activity	2Ch 7:13-14
42	Build ... Plant ... Pray ...	Jer 29:4-7
43	Peter's Miraculous Catch	Luk 5:2-7

Economics & Healthcare

44	When Physicians aren't Enough	2Ch 16:12-13
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Economic Sphere Introduction

We're ready to look at the sphere of economics. Economics involves both science and technology and also business. God's purpose for this sphere is to release provision and model stewardship. Science is the motor of this sphere. It produces the research and makes possible the creation of wealth by inventing new products and services. The sphere moves forward by the distributive capacity of the business enterprise, which produces and sells those inventions. When stewarded well, this process of creating and distributing wealth should enhance the life of people and glorify the Creator who inspires innovation.

We will begin in this sphere like in all the spheres, looking at God's role. So God in this sphere of economics. We're going to look at six different passages and see that God is very concerned and very involved in this area. We should be too.

Number 1: God Created Everything.

We read in **Isaiah 42:5-7** the following: **God, the Lord created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath to everyone, life to everyone who walks the earth. And it is he who says, "I, the Lord have called you to demonstrate my righteousness. I will take you by hand and guard you, and I will give you to my people, Israel, as a symbol of my covenant with them. And you will be a light to guide the nations. You will open the eyes of the blind. You'll free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons.**

The first thing we need to note is that God is the Creator. This is how he first introduces himself in Genesis. And this is how he in this messianic passage that is often spoken as one of the servant songs of Isaiah, how the Father is speaking to Jesus the coming Messiah. And he emphasizes his role as Creator.

If we go back to Genesis and begin looking through the Original Testament, we see that there are four different words that God uses over and over again in the scriptures to talk about his creativity. One is the word **bara'**. God is the one who does this. Very rarely is this word used for human beings. About 89% of the times it's found in the scriptures it's God doing the action. It means to bring something out of nothing. This is remarkable creativity.

Also, the word 'stretched out' **Nawtaw**, and God does this he's he takes something and he amplifies it increases. It does something new with it. There's also the word **Raca'**, which is likewise translated 'created' and very interestingly, the word **nathan**, which is about being generous, about giving. And what God gives is life. He is the life giver. That is the main thing that he is noted for in all the things that happens.

Economics therefore, should be about giving life too. It should be about enhancing life. It begins with generosity. As God gave of himself, we are to give ourselves to others. Life is within God and he shares it with us. Breathing life into Adam from within himself and we in the economics sphere should take what God has placed within us and generously share it to the benefit of all.

Number 2: God Continues to Do New Things.

Isaiah 43:19: For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

Economics doesn't happen without innovation. Innovation brings forth life, and God is the innovator par excellence. This passage talks about newness, and we might get that from our own understanding. But when the Jews heard this, the Israelites for this passage, it was especially significant because of the greatest story in their history was the story of the Exodus. This story occupies four books of the Old Testament. And is referred to hundreds of times in the remaining part of the Original Testament, as well as the New Testament. It is the story of God's redemption.

And it changed the economic, the reality of the people of God forever. They had been slaves, oppressed economically, and they became a free people with great opportunities economically. But in that story, what God did was he led them through the Red Sea. He turned a watery place into a dry place. He made a path through the ocean to liberate them from Egypt and bring them into the promised land.

But now centuries later through Isaiah he says, God is going to do something new. And when you think - something new, of course! He's gonna do a miracle again, like he did in the past. And the greatest miracle is taking a watery place - an ocean - and making it a highway through it.

But God does something different. Here He says, I'm going to make a pathway in the wilderness. I'm going to create rivers in the dry land. Instead of making a wet place dry, he's gonna make a dry place wet. You see, it's really hard to box God in. He's always doing something new. When you think you've got him figured out, he's got another surprise for you. He's so innovative. And if we will learn from him, we can co-create with him and see fabulous things happen in the economics sphere.

Number 3: God Provides for All Creation.

Psalm 147:8-9 says this. He covers the heavens with clouds, provides rain for the earth and makes the grass grow in mountain pastures. He gives food to the wild animals and feeds the young ravens when they cry.

God gives us the stuff that is necessary for life. He provides us with things that enable us to grow and mature and develop and increase. We read here that he gives food to the animals. This, this thought that God gives food is found in at least 13 other Old Testament passages. God is generous and his economics is rooted in generosity. He cares for others. He provides for them.

I know my story of my father-in-law who formed a business and grew it and had dozens of families working for him. His attitude was always this: I have to do well because what I am doing is I'm providing finances and security for all these families. If I make a mistake, their children will suffer. They need this to prosper so they can prosper. And their children and their households can do well. He was always thinking about how he could do his work to help provide food for those who worked with him. This is very much reflects the heart of God who loves to give food to all of his creation.

Number 4: God Provided in the Desert.

Deuteronomy 29:5- 6, says the following: For 40 years I led you through the wilderness, yet your clothes and sandals did not wear out. You ate no bread and drank no wine or other alcoholic drink, but he provided for you food so you would know that he is the Lord your God.

God's provision is purposeful. He provides for us. He cares for us. He meets our physical and economic needs so that you would know your God. It is to call us into place of intimacy, into place of relationship. Life and relational intimacy are God's purposes for generosity.

God's care for people is matchless. He gives food in the desert, a place that is known for not having food. He provides in the most unexpected places. God is caring. He's capable, he's compassionate, he's competent, he's committed. And he's creative. This is our God. This is how he engages with us in ways that shape our economies and this is foundational to the way that scriptures see this very important sphere that touches all of our lives. These are the qualities that we should seek to emulate. As we seek to be his people in this sphere of economics.

Number 5: God's Extravagant Generosity.

We read from **Romans 8:31-32**. What then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him, graciously, give us all things.

God's love is without compare. He's a self-sacrificing, need-meeting, grace-extending, over the top generous God. He meets our needs and then more and more and more. He didn't withhold the greatest treasure, his own life, the life of his Son, that which was most precious to him. Certainly he will give us all that is needed.

His attitude counters the greed that fuels and drives much of our world's economic system. But it's his generosity that fuels the true economics of the world. We need to learn how to be motivated by this dynamic of generosity, rather than by the need for greed.

The kingdom operates on giving and receiving. It's not about what I can get or how I can maximize my return on investment. What, what does look like an economic system of buying and selling in our world? How do we, how do we model giving and receiving in the midst of that system? True entrepreneurship is rooted in discovering how we can generally meet other people's needs. That's when business flourishes. We see people's need, and create products and services and tools that genuinely serve them. And we're giving of ourselves our energy, our time, our talents, our resources, to provide those things in order to enhance their lives. Those things cause people to flourish and will cause your business to flourish as well.

Number 6: God is our Healer.

Exodus 15:23-26 says this: When they came to the oasis of Marah, the water was too bitter to drink... So Moses cried out to the Lord for help. And the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water and this made the water good to drink. It was there at Marah that the Lord set before them the following decree as a standard to test a faithfulness to him. He said, if you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord, your God and do what is right in his sight, obey his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I set on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you."

As you go through these spheres, you'll quickly discover that healthcare is an area that is in which multiple spheres are engaged. Why? Because everyone is concerned about the life and wellbeing of individuals.

It begins with family. Family, parents care for the newborn child and nurture, protect their young ones. And when they get too old to take care of themselves, the children take care of them. But it's not just family that is concerned about healthcare. It's also religion. The Levites of old were

charged with health issues to take care of people, to help observe and oversee the care. And Jesus doing his ministry and earth frequently healed.

Not just family and religion, but also business. The scientific technologies and discoveries of medicines and vaccinations and different antibiotics and things that can enhance healthcare, how to do operations and all of the technology that has been developed over the generations to be able to make sure that health is maintained and we are able to thrive. And life is extended. It's important to all of us. Even government whose goal is to protect and serve and save the people, to keep them safe. Healthcare is important.

Healthcare is a shared concern. But this area of economics involving science and business is really central because it is always discovering new ways to assist in this process. God gives life and God preserves life as our Healer. And he's the one who reveals the technologies that we are discovering, as was in the case of Moses at Marah.

Now this might be interesting to you as they drank this water and was producing illness. We don't know the exact specifics of it. God says, there's this branch and cut it off and throw it into the water and whatever it was, it was either a change of the pH in the water or some catalytic impact because of the chemistry combinations - that water, which previously had been undrinkable and unsafe for that health was now made good to drink. It was made potable. And the key thing is that he was learning from God, God gave Moses a key and he acted accordingly.

We may not know all the details of exactly what the science or the technology or why it worked as it did, but partnership with God in discovery for solutions to find health and preserve life - This is one of the things that we need to be involved with in the area of economics, to engage with God's world in a way that benefits the community. God's instructors to Moses enabled him to act in such a way that the environment was changed and health was restored. And this is something we should all seek for in this sphere.

Section introduction

This next section is about innovative science and technology. We'll look at seven different passages that highlight the place of science and technology in the scriptures and how it fuels the economic machine, how it undergirds business and allows financial wellbeing to be established for all people.

Number 7: Given a Scientific Research Task.

Wow. Who was given that task? Well, we read about it in [Genesis 2:19- 20](#). And at that time there was only one person alive whose name was Adam. [So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky and all the wild animals. But there was no helper just right for him.](#)

Now we're gonna look at this passage again when we get to passage 14, because there are two distinct jobs that God gives Adam in the garden. One is a production job. That's the one we're gonna look at later where he becomes a gardener and helps produce food and cultivate plants. But the other one is a research job and that's what we're looking at right now. It has to do with science and technology.

The exact title of the job was chief animal namer. And there are two main ideas in this. First of all, this command that God gave involved a wonderful offer of partnership. Up to this point in

everything that God created, days one through five, God created something then he looked at it and analyzed what he had done. He evaluated and he named it. He gave nomenclature, understanding. He called this darkness, he called 'night'. And light he called 'day'. And every day he creates, he analyzes, he evaluates and he names.

And today God invites human beings to join him. After all, he's made us in his likeness and image so that we can participate with him. He at an infinite level, we at a finite level in the things that he's doing on earth. And so this is a wonderful invitation to intimacy. So we must, as we think about this area of science and research and the role it plays in economics, we must understand that the call is primarily the first instance, one of intimacy. To be in fellowship with the Creator who wants to reveal his ways to us so that we can work with him.

But the other thing, the second thing that is involved in this is that he charges Adam to create a taxonomy. That's a big word to mean a structure of ordering things, to research and understand and organize the world around us. We need to make sense of the world in which we live and be able to describe it in meaningful ways. And God named things after analyzing classifying them. He created taxonomies in the first five days, and that is a, that was important, but scientists are still working on creating a comprehensive taxonomy of living creatures. Do you realize that not every species has been identified and named? We understand that it's a very complex process.

Now for the Hebrews, in Genesis one, they had a very simple taxonomy. It was based on, on where the creatures lived. If they were in the sky or lived on the land or lived in the water. So there were three kinds of creatures and you can see two of them were made in day five and then others are day six. But we look at animals in different ways.

First of all, we divide the created order into flora and a fauna. And the animal kingdom is comprised of 10 phylum as it's called. And, uh, and the, the, one of the phylum is the chordata. That means the vertebrae animals. Okay? And there are five basic classes among vertebrae animals. And one of those classes is called the mammals. Okay? And there are 21 orders of mammals. And within those 21 orders, one of them is called the carnivores or the meat-eaters. And, this is a family within the order, within the class. And among the meat-eaters, all the, the **felidae**, or all the cats, big cats and small cats and lions and tigers and cheetahs and Puma, and, and even your little house cat - and there are 14 different genres of cats. And one of the genres is the **panthera** genus. It's the great cats. And there are five species of that. There's the Jaguar, the leopard, the lion, the snow leopard, and the tiger.

Why am I telling you all of this? Well, in order to understand who a lion is, you've gotta have like his first name and his second and third and fourth name all the way to his last name. A lion is an animal, who's a vertebrate, who's a mammal, who's a meat-eater, who's a cat, who's a great cat, and specifically a lion.

And when, when Adam was naming animals, he wasn't just going Mr. Kangaroo, Mrs. Kangaroo, Mr. Hippopotamus, Mrs. Hippopotamus. He was organizing life. He was saying, these things are like one another. They fit together. They belong together. And these other things are different. They have a different name, they belong together. And, and that was just incredible process of discovery. Using our God -given gifts, our mind, to understand the reality of the world around us and as followers of Jesus, we need to be people who research and understand very concrete and very realistically the world around us. That's the value of this scientific task.

Number 8: Twelve Spies Research Agricultural Potential.

This is **Numbers 13:17-20**. Moses gave them the instructions as he sent them out to explore the land: ... See what the land is like, is it good or bad? Is the soil fertile or poor? Are there many trees? Do your best to bring back samples of the crop you see.

Sometimes we think of the spies and we think about, that they're doing military research, they're trying to size up - Are we gonna be able to conquer the land? And certainly there was a military engagement and concern that they were looking at. But one of the key aspects of their assignment was the exploration and discovery to understand what was the land like? God had promised the land flowing with milk and honey, that sounded like a really good land. Did this land that they were considering entering into, did it match their expectations?

You see, research is rooted in experimental physical reality. You have a hypothesis and you go and test it. Is this gonna be a good land? Let's check it out. Here! Check out the land. Is it good or bad? Is the soil fertile or poor? I want to see some samples. That requires analysis and evaluation leading to the possibility of good choices. Good choices that result in beneficial consequences for humanity. That's what this is all about. And God is teaching us through his word that this is how we should approach life. If we listen to him and obey him, go where he asks us to go, we'll discover that his promises are true. That what he said is good, is good. And if we obey him, it'll be beneficial for all of us.

Number 9: Nehemiah Researches Architectural Needs.

Nehemiah 2:12-18. I'm gonna read you some portions of this passage. Nehemiah has heard about the destruction of Jerusalem. He's living in exile, and he wants to, feels called of God to go and help restore Jerusalem once again. So he is just arrived back in the city. And he says this: **I slipped out during the night taking only a few others with me... After dark I went out through the Valley gate, past the Jackel's Well, and over to the Dung gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates. Then I went to the Fountain gate into the King's pool. I went up to Kidron valley instead inspecting the walls before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate. ...The city officials did not know I'd been out there or what I was doing... But now I said to them, ...Let us rebuild the wall in Jerusalem and end this disgrace!" ...They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work.**

When he heard the news of Jerusalem's destruction that the walls had broken down, and enemies could come in and out of the city at will, his heart was broken. And back in the place of Exile, he began in prayer. He began an intercession and confession, and cried out to God. He got permission from the king to return to his native land. And the first thing he did was to check out - was the report that had been given him. Was it true? Again, he had heard of the problem, but confirmed reality through intentional personal research. He was teachable. He wasn't dogmatic. He wasn't saying, well, this is the way it is, I know. He went to check it out. Was it really so? He was open to discovery. He adopted the attitude of a learner and what he discovered gave him a framework to propose a solution that would address the needs of the community. So after he'd gathered that data and talked to the leaders, they said, yes, let's rebuild. And they began a good work.

If we will do research and science and technology, that's birthed in prayer, following God's ways, it will result in good work.

Number 10: Jacob's Sheep Breeding.

I'm gonna read some selections from **Genesis 30:27-43**. ...What wages do you want? Laban [Jacob's father-in-law] asked again. Jacob replied, "Don't give me anything. Just do this one thing... remove all the sheep and goats that are speckled and spotted along with all, all the black sheep. Give these to me as my wages... All right, Laban replied... Then Jacob took some fresh branches and he placed these peeled branches in the watering troughs where the flock came to drink, for that was where they mated... And they gave birth to young who were streaked, speckled and spotted... This is how he built his own flock instead of increasing Laban's. As a result, Jacob became very wealthy with large flocks and sheep and goats, female, and male servants and many camels and donkeys.

This is a very interesting story. Laban and Jacob were both tricksters. They were all both trying to beat each other out. It was a very unhappy kind of family relationship. What was going on? Laban had changed Jacob's salary 10 times. And so had to cheat him at time and time again. And so he said, okay, I don't want a salary, just let me keep the sheep that aren't white. You know, the wool that was all white was the ideal for making cloth, because you could die it and it would be evenly colored, because there was not any mutation of color. But he said, I don't think the black ones and the speckle ones and the striped ones and all the ones that are still valuable sheep, but they're not quite as valuable for the world production as you're like, I'll take the lesser. That's sounded like a great deal to Laban. And besides most of the sheep were all white.

But he developed a very interesting peculiar methodology. We don't even know exactly how it all worked, but the key is, is this that he discovered a way to breed sheep that were speckled. The majority were coming out, not white, but these variants of colors and the wool was not as suitable for the normal dying and production of clothing. See, he had studied their mating rituals and understood how to produce desired results in an innovative way. He was thoughtful. He was intentional. He was purposeful. His science was the basis of becoming very wealthy.

After several generations and seasons of the flocks producing streaked and spotted and black sheep, they were the majority of the herd. Almost those white sheep were born. So the link between technological innovation and wealth creation is established.

Today you know, we don't stick branches stripped of the bark in water when sheep are mating, that that's a strange combination of things that don't seem to make sense to go together. But we do other things. We take movies and to-do lists and calendars and phones and games, things that 20-30 years ago, would've been considered very diverse topics and we put them all together and we make an iPhone. And you do things that are new combinations, new ways - sticks and water and mating sheep. Movies and internet and phones -and you put them all together. And these seemingly disparate things combined in unique new ways, all of a sudden creates a new activity and new product and wealth is created. Opportunities for myriads of jobs and billions of dollars to be created because of this kind of innovation. So we see in the Bible in their days doing things that can be a model for us today in our economic spheres.

Number 11: The Value of Safe Transportation Systems.

What? The Bible talks about safe transportation systems? You betcha. **Judges 5:6,10**. In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, and in the days of Jael, people avoided the main roads, and travelers stayed on winding pathways... Consider this, you who ride on fine donkeys, you who sit on fancy saddle blankets, and you who walk along the road.

See if you don't have good road systems- safe - that are easy to travel on and are protected from marauders, then the whole economic system is impacted. The creation of safe

transportation systems enhance economic development. And this is what the Bible's talking about. We have to create structures and mechanisms within our societies that enable us to get our products and services to the people who need them most. If roadways are not safe, all suffer. This would've involved good engineering and good governance together resulting in something that would benefit the whole of society. That's what economics, together with others spheres of society need to do as they collaborate together for the good of all.

You know, we have to keep reminding ourselves that these spheres are not about dominating or controlling. They're about serving. They collaborate together. They work together because that's how everything that is good happens in the kingdom of God. When you lay down your pride, you lay down your own agenda, you serve and care for others. People who build roads today, they're thinking about how does this benefit people who they may never even meet, but it makes a difference. All of us are better when people serve one another well.

Numbers 12: Hezekiah's Engineering Wonder.

This is from **2 Kings 20:20**. **The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign** [king of Judah, the Southern kingdom] **including the extent of his power and how he built a pool and dug a tunnel to bring water into the city, are recorded in The book of the History of the Kings of Judah.**

What is this verse referring to? Well, when the Assyrians threatened Judah, they had already conquered the kingdom of the north and taken them into captivity and they had invaded Judah. They had surround Jerusalem, were approaching Jerusalem and wanted to choke, choke it and just get it to capitulate and surrender. Hezekiah knew that he needed to protect the city by making sure it had water when it was under siege. The main source of the water for Jerusalem was the Gihon Spring. And he closed that off so that the invading Assyrian troops would not be able to use it. And he dug a tunnel underground through rock that was 533 meters, 1,750 feet long, And siphoned all that water that was from outside the city wall, into the city. The enemies could not access the water and the residents of the city could. This was a phenomenal engineering feat.

It was only in this past generation that the tunnel was rediscovered. And at the entrance, it describes those plaques that describe how it was done. There were actually two teams, one starting at the spring and one within the city that began digging and they dug underground and they met in the middle. This 3000 years ago was a phenomenal, was a phenomenal breakthrough. Almost 3000 years ago from the eight, because this was in year 701 BC. It took two years to build and it saved Jerusalem. Phenomenal engineering.

Today, its only in the recent times that when, after it's been discovered, you can go and you can take a walk through Hezekiah's tunnel in the city of Jerusalem. You'll kind of have to duck in some places and you'll get your feet wet because the water will come to your ankles. And sometimes up to your chest level, there's still water there that flows through it. But it's, you, when you do that and you go to Jerusalem, you're walking through an engineering feat 2,800 plus years old. It's just really remarkable. When we use science for the good of the people. It has a lasting value.

Number 13: Uzziah's Inventive War Machines

Uzziah's, [or Isaiah, goes by both names], Inventive War Machines. **2 Chronicles 26:14-15**. It says this: **Uzziah provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows and sling stones. And he built structures on the walls of Jerusalem, designed by experts to protect those who shot arrows and hurled large stones from the towers and corners of the wall.**

Structures designed by experts to protect. He designed walls and ways that had not been done before that gave an advantage to the defenders of the city and allowed them to be able to protect the city from invaders without putting their own life at risk. This engineering was key to Uzziah's success. As a governmental leader he knew how to bring these experts, these researchers, these technologists, these construction experts and involve them as these spheres collaborated together. We read later on in 2 Chronicles, that king Uzziah became strong and his fame spread far. Science, technology, research leads to the protection of people when done in the godly way.

Section Introduction

Uh, this next section is about biblical principles for business. We'll look at 15 passages that address a wide range of economic issues. Financial realities touch almost every aspect of our lives from basic subsistence among the poor to societal thriving when economic systems are healthy. God takes a keen interest in how we do businesses, not just what we do, but how we do it. These principles give us a framework for how we're to steward the Earth's resources. How we are to provide for our families with diligence, integrity, and compassion. How we live this aspect of our life can result in either blessings or curses for us individually, for our families and for society at large. Let's learn together.

Number 14: A God-Given Job.

Genesis 2:8-9,15. Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground - trees that were beautiful, and that produced delicious fruit... The Lord God placed the man in the garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

We already looked in passage number seven, that God gave Adam a scientific job, research job, naming the animals. This is this other job he gives him. It's about tending the garden. It was about being economically productive in nature, making sure that those trees that produce delicious fruit stayed healthy and the fruit was being produced for the inhabitants of the garden. He was invited again to participate with God in his work.

God had created all living things, but after he created all things, he planted a garden. A garden is different than 'the woods'. In the woods, in the wild, trees and plants of diverse kinds grow. And, and there's, there's an organic structure. You plant a garden, there's a special design. You, you put the rose beds here and you put the daffodils there and you put the trees in this place. Can you imagine what it was like when God designed a garden - planted it, how beautiful it must have been? And having planted the garden, He now invites man, Adam, to be a co-laborer with him to join him in the process of tending that garden. God started it and invited us to join him and to collaborate with him in perpetuating it. We are to watch over the garden. To tend and watch over is the words they said. To watch over the physical world, to cultivate it, to steward it in a beneficial manner. To produce those things which are delicious and nutritious, like the fruit of those trees.

Number 15: Covenantal Blessings and Curses.

I'm gonna read selections from Deuteronomy 28:1-6,15-19. If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully obey all his commands, you'll experience all these blessings, your towns and your fields will be blessed. Your children and your crops will be blessed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be blessed. Your fruit baskets and bread baskets will be blessed. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you'll be blessed... But if you refuse to listen to the Lord your God and do not obey all these curses will come and overwhelm you. Your towns and your fields will be cursed. Your fruit baskets and breadboards will be cursed. Your children and your crops will

be cursed. The offspring of your herds and flocks will be cursed. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you will be cursed.

This makes it really clear that how we experience life is in great measure impacted by the degree to which we adhere to God's ways. When we follow him when we listen to him, when we obey him. Living God's ways results in beneficial results. It results in blessings for society, including economic wellbeing. But disobedience to God's words results in economic disaster.

Notice all the parallels between these two passages. For every blessing, there's a parallel curse. It's all about - Do we hear and obey? The Hebrew word for that is **Shema** and it can be translated by both hearing and obeying. Its both listening, but also the action, the application that follows the listening. Perhaps the best word in English to describe that is the rarely used word to 'heed'. When you heed, you're not only hearing, you're paying attention because you're expecting to have to do what you're listening to. We need to hear God and we need to study the scriptures to learn his principles so that we can apply them to every area of life, including the economic area.

God's laws are designed for a multifaceted benefit. They impact fields and towns and fruit baskets and herds and flocks and children. It impacts all areas of life. Let's learn to hear and obey God in economics and in every area.

Number 16: The Sabbath Instituted.

Genesis 2:2-3. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared Holy because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

God didn't rest because he was tired. He wasn't exhausted. He wasn't like, that's so hard, much hard work. I don't have any energy left. No, God rested because he is modeling for us how to have rhythms of productivity and rest, seasons of restoration and renewal and in a regular ongoing way so that we don't burn out, that we can be productive without being burdened. Work is not to be toilsome. There's supposed to be rhythms of work and rest that are modeled by God and imitated by us. The world is not designed by God to be a harsh place that requires tireless labor.

One of the things of the Wesleyan revival that happened in England was that child labor laws were changed. Children were protected. They shouldn't have to go to work when they're eight or nine years old and work 12 hour days. The amount of hours that you work and the conditions in which you work, all of those things were addressed as a result of a great awakening. When we understand God's ways and character, that he cares for people, he doesn't just see us as machines to produce, to produce produce. Oh no, we are valuable. And so he watches out for us.

God affirms our finiteness, understands that unlike him, who, as Isaiah 40 says, never gets tired. We do get tired, but we renew our strength as we wait in his presence. And so he authorizes us to, gives us permission, to pause working and to celebrate rest within the framework of life. As society embraces God's rhythm of rest, life does not become a never ending treadmill of relentless work, where you feel like you're just running and running non-stop, and you can never get ahead. Imagine if we took this more seriously, how would it affect the labor laws in your country? How would it change the disciplines in your own family and your own way you do life? Is there something we need to learn more about how to rest and work productively?

Number 17: Respect Private Property.

We read **Deuteronomy 19:14**. When you arrive in the land, the Lord your God has given you as your special possession you must never steal anyone's land by moving the boundary markers your ancestors set up to mark their property.

In the book of Genesis, the main verb that we hear in God's mouth when he's speaking and he's describing his own action is the verb "to give". Of all the things that God does, this is the thing that he highlights the most. He gives again and again and again. And the thing that God gives most frequently in the book of Genesis and throughout the rest of the Original Testament is land. If You obey him and you please him, he kinda says, oh, I'm gonna give you children, and descendants, and I'm gonna, I'm gonna give you land. From the beginning the story of the Bible of the scriptures affirms the concept of private property. God gives us land. Why does he give it to us? Because it's his land. He made it, he owns it, but he entrusts to us as stewards. This trains us to be responsible and caring for an environment, caring for the world around us. The recognition and protection of private property, land ownership, and by extension of all other private property is a foundational building block of biblical thinking and about healthy society.

Number 18: Jubilee Laws Established.

Leviticus 25:8-34. You should read the whole section, but I'm just gonna read a few highlights. ...The 50th year, God says, will be a Jubilee for you, and you must keep it holy. In the year of Jubilee each of you may return to the land that belong to your ancestors. When you make an agreement with your neighbor to buy or sell property, you must not take advantage of each other. The more years until the next Jubilee, the higher the price, the fewer years, the lower price. After all, the person selling the land is actually selling you a certain number of harvests. The land must never be sold on a permanent basis for the land belongs to me, you are only foreigners and tenant farmers working for me. With every purchase of land. You must grant the seller the right to buy it back. But if the original owner cannot afford to buy back the land, it will remain with a new owner until the next year of Jubilee. In the year of Jubilee, the land must be returned to the original owners so they can return to their family land. It is their permanent possession.

Well, this is an amazing law that God instituted that we don't know if it was ever fully applied in any generation. The idea was this, that every 50 years the land that had been distributed to every tribe and clan and family, people would be able go back to their inheritance. This, this happens like every second generation. It was to, a way to correct periodically multi-generational economic inequities, often created by unwise financial decisions. Say, your grandfather had made some unwise decisions and lost the property. 50 years later, or when that Jubilee came, there would be an opportunity to re-acquire that land. The goal was to level the playing field in such a way that those who were most vulnerable financially could have an opportunity to get a fresh start in economic life.

God is such a creative realist. He understands that given the passage of time and choices that people make some more diligent and some less diligent, some that maybe suffer an accident or illness that impede them from working to their maximum capacity. So many different circumstances that could happen, that some would prosper more than others. And if that was not had a way of being evaluated and checked to some degree, there would be an endless cycle of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poor. So it was recognized that though private property was affirmed, land ownership was not absolute because really only God is

ultimately the owner of all. And we're to live as his stewards, serving as responsible leaseholders. And so we own land for a season.

For this reason, land ownership needs to be periodically visited so that the, those who do not own land on which to build a home can be given a fresh start. This is both a way of affirming private property, blessing those who have done well, but also a compassion for those who sometimes through decisions made by ancestors, parents or grandparents are finding life more challenging, economically.

An important thought here is on home ownership. Because that's what this is about. Having a place where you can build a home or cultivate the ground where you have a productive life. And home ownership has multiple end benefits. When a person owns a home, their economic, educational health, even spiritual and worldview benefits, it changes your cultural thinking. You can read more about this in **Sean Lambert's book, the Homes of Hope story. In the economic area alone, he writes that the gift of a basic home as a dramatic effect, helping leverage families out of their current economic situation, a solid sufficient home, both provides both direct and indirect economic benefits. These include the opportunity to use the home for income generating purposes, small businesses serving the needs of the community. The periodic opportunity to start afresh economically gave Israel's society a way to address extreme poverty and help not only the poor, but the whole community to prosper.**

I think it's really important as we read these biblical stories to remind ourselves that much of the economy was built on agrarian functions - the farmers and the sheep herders, goat herders and those who were involved in animal husbandry. And it was out of the family-based businesses that society was developed. In fact, as we come into the New Testament, the word for a household was the **XXXX** and the manager of the household, the steward that he is multiple parables about stewards or household managers is called the **XXXX**. The, the household steward, **XXXXX** is the Greek word from which we get the English word economist. Because, see, businesses began at the household level. What the Jubilee law was about was not about huge corporations, but making sure that every family had an opportunity to have land, have a home and have a foundational means for production. It wasn't a guarantee that they would stay, that they developed that to the maximum, but gave them an opportunity if they were wise in diligent that they could develop a financial foundation for themselves and for future generations and move towards economic stability. God really cares about this area.

Number 19. Integrity in The Marketplace.

This is based on **Leviticus 19:35-36. Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or volume. Your scales and weights must be accurate. Your containers for measuring dry materials, all liquids must be accurate. I am the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt.**

One way to acknowledge God's redemption in our lives is to live with economic integrity. If you are a Jesus follower, there is no room for lying or cheating or stealing. None of these things are appropriate for those who have been brought out of slavery, slavery to sin by the hand of God. See, it's so interesting that these instructions about integrity in economic activity are have punctuated at the end, by God saying, remember, I'm the guy who saved you. You were slaves, you had no economic good. And the fact that you have opportunities for economic activities is because of my doing, and so do it right. Do it right. And you'll see those who feel oppressed by the system are often tempted to lie and cheat and steal because all the system is stacked against them. If we're gonna follow God, we recognize that these actions are characteristic of unredeemed slaves. And so we need to act like a redeemed free persons who have been

trained by God. Think of the applications: false advertising, cutting corners, deceptive practices are all kinds of things that need to be shunned by Christians who are involved in business.

Sometimes people are harsher and have a different standard, a lower standard for what is acceptable in business than what they would do in a relationship with a friend. They say, oh well that's just business. Like it's okay to try to, you know, cheat and get as much out of it outta this relationship. I can use this relationship as much as I can because that's just business. That's not just kingdom business. Kingdom business is filled with integrity.

Number 20: Laws Against Overcharging.

This is taken from **Leviticus 25:35-37**. If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and cannot support himself, support him as you would a foreigner or a temporary resident and allow him to live with you. Do not charge interest or make a profit at his expense. Instead, show your fear of God by letting him live with you as your relative. Remember, do not charge interest on money you lend him or make a profit on food you sell him.

Usury or price gouging or unrestrained profiteering and circumstantial extortion are to be absolutely avoided by those who seek to follow Jesus in the realm of economics. There are limits to the law of supply and demand. They'll say, well, if the law supply and demand, if I can charge this much, why not charge this much?

I remember as a young adult, when the refugees were fleeing Vietnam... Today, this generation we talking about that millions have had to flee Ukraine because of Russian invasion. And it seems at different points of time there are wars or natural disasters that cause a great of upheaval in people's lives and they need to flee. They become foreigners or temporary residents in another part of the world. Exactly like this passage is talking about. And it's always appear that in those circumstances, there are people who try to profit unmercifully off them.

I remember the story of these dear Boat People who were fleeing Vietnam and were risking their lives, many were dying and they'd come to shore and there were people selling them water for just horrific amounts, a hundred dollars for a couple liters of water. It was just, people were desperate. They had been at sea for days and they would give anything and everything, but it was just so unjust. This is what it's talking about.

We should not overcharge. When people are in need, you don't follow the law of supply and demand. You follow the, the war Royal law of love. And you think, how would I like to be treated in this situation? If I was uprooted, if I was cast out of my home and how would I show compassion?

When we think about the setting the price for our goods and services, maximizing your profit is not the only absolute bottom line. Not if you're a follower of Jesus. There's a social responsibility. There's relational context that you must take into account.

Again consider war refugees, those in economic disasters. Don't profit from another's misfortune. Don't take advantage of another person's hard luck story. Let compassion guide you. It says this - so amazing - says allow him to live with you - let him live with you as your relative. This is the scripture. In other words, when to treat the disadvantaged and the economically vulnerable as if they were family members.

You know, the first time the word refugee was coined was in Geneva. As people were fleeing religious persecution in France, they crossed the border, came into Switzerland. If you go to Geneva today, the top floor of many of the old houses in the center of town here, the houses

were three or four stories tall, and then there's a fourth or a fifth story and you look at it and you can see house after house, that that top floor is a different architecture. It's a different color of stone. It's a different style. And what, why are those? Why is that top floor different? When the refugees flooded into Geneva at that time, people built an additional floor on top of that house. So they could welcome the foreigner. They could take them into their home. They were, there was this time of this great revival, this great awakening during the time of the reformation. And they listened to Leviticus 25 and they actually did it. They treated the foreigner like family members. And that's why, even to this day, Geneva is the center of the international Red Cross, a place that symbolizes, an organization that symbolizes compassion for those who are at going through really tough times. It was birthed there. As people try to follow the law of God and apply economic principles to care for the disadvantaged.

Number 21: Jesus Cleanses the Temple of Merchants.

Mark 11:15-17. When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves. And he stopped everyone from using the temple as a marketplace. He said to them, the scriptures declare my temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have turned it into a den of thieves.

Wow. This is a strong passage. And here's the bottom line takeaway. We are not to profit financially from religious activities. Religion should never be a money making enterprise.

What had happened at the temple, people needed to have the sacrifices, but they had, these merchants had been in cahoots with the religious leaders and the only animals that were acceptable to be sacrificed were ones that you bought on the temple ground. You could be sure that those were right animals that did not have the defect, that they met all the standards. But to buy a dove or sheep in the temple grounds cost way more than buying that same animal outside of the temple grounds. And everyone was taking a cut. People who are wanting to get right with God and make sacrifices were being overcharged. And Jesus said that should not be.

Though religious workers worthy of his wages - we read this in Luke 10:7, and 1 Timothy 5:18 - it is most inappropriate to profit from religion. This is exemplified in the story of Micah and the Levite whose religious services were available to the highest bidder. You can read about the this in Judges 17 and 18. He sold his religious services to Micah for 10 shekles and a shirt initially. But when the Danites came and offered him a bigger title and a higher pay, he just shifted his loyalty from Micah to the Danites. He was doing religion, not to please God or serve people, but just to advance his economic wellbeing. And that was deplorable. And the scriptures say, as a result, everyone was doing right in their own eyes. This was not God's ways.

You can also read the story of Gehazi, Elijah's servant who, when Elijah God used Elijah to do a wonderful miracle in the life of the foreign general Naman and heal him of leprosy. Naman wanted to give him a present, wanted to give him an offering? Elisha said, no, I'm not going profit from God's miracle. I didn't do it. It was God, you're not paying me. It's it's God. So serve God.

And Naman went away and Gehazi thought we've just missed an opportunity to make a buck. And he ran after him and lied and said, actually, you know, the prophet sent me to and we could, he give some money and he took a whole bunch of money and you can read about this story in 2 King's chapter five, it was disastrous. Gehazi ends up with Naman's leprosy. You don't want to do this.

Gehazai's greedy dishonesty stood in contrast to Elisha's generous integrity. Financial gain is never the motive of true religion. In fact, Paul warns Timothy to be aware of people of corrupt mind who've been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. Or as another translation says who see godliness as just a way to become wealthy. 1 Timothy 6:5. We're not in the religion for the money we can make from it. If you are, you are likely to be categorized with those people of a corrupt mind and are not really people of faith.

There's an interesting book by Jerry Bower called the Maker versus The Takers. And he notes that Jesus never has a single confrontation about wealth while in Galilee. Every one of his confrontations, like the one with the money changers that we began this segment with over wealth occurs in or near Judea. And they grow in intensity as he becomes closer to, and finally enters the Jerusalem, the seat of political and religious power. Jesus consistently critiques the centralized politicized crony economy He encounters in the capital city and not the decentralized entrepreneurial economy of Gallilee. We can't do economic activity that requires of people things that are not just. And that was what was happening in Jerusalem and the temple and Jesus would not stand for it. We need to be people of truth and integrity and financial compassion.

Number 22: God Gives the Farmer Wisdom.

This is taken from **Isaiah 28:24-29**. Does a farmer always plow and never sow? Is he forever cultivating the soil and never planting? Does he not finally plant his seeds - Black cumin, cumin, wheat, barley, and emmer wheat each in its proper way, and each in its proper place? The farmer knows just what to do, for God has given him understanding.

For God, has given him understanding.

A heavy sledge is never used the thresh black cumin; rather, it is beaten with a light stick. A threshing wheel is never rolled on cumin; instead, it is beaten lightly with a flail. Grain for bread is easily crushed, so he doesn't keep on pounding it. He threshes it under the wheels of a cart, but he doesn't pulverize it. The Lord of Heavens Armies is a wonderful teacher and he gives the farmer great wisdom.

Don't you love this? This passage teaches us that agricultural knowledge and skill is considered great wisdom given by God, who in this regard is considered a wonderful teacher. God has given him understanding. God's teaching is not limited or restricted to the religious arenas of life. It's not just about what happens on Sundays, but what happens in the church village, what happens on the farm every day of the week as the farmer goes about his business. His teaching in this instance has to do with art and science of farming resulting in economic wellbeing. How to do each crop differently, how to know when to plant and when to reap. Wow. God is amazing. And the knowledge that human beings have acquired from understanding God's creation is amazing as well. We should honor these economic activities.

Number 23: Worship When There is Abundant Provision

This passage and the next one, Number 24, deal with two related issues. This one is about Worship when There is Abundant Provision. **Joel 2:23-26: ...Rejoice in the Lord your God! For the rain he sends demonstrates his faithfulness. Once more the autumn rains will come, as well as the rains of spring. The threshing floors will [be] again be piled high with grain, and the presses will overflow with new wine and olive oil. The Lord says, "I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts and the cutting locusts.**

It was I who sent this great destroying army against you. Once again, you'll have all the food you want and you will praise the Lord your God who does these miracles for you.

So in this passage, there's a call to worship and praise because of God's great provision. And the next passage is going to be a call to praise and worship when there is no provision. So we are to be able to be grateful to God and acknowledge him in any and every economic circumstance. So when things are going well, remember he's the one who sends the rain. He's the one who makes it possible. Worship him.

Number 24: Worship When There is No Provision

And now for Number 24: Worship When There is No Provision. The exact opposite of 23. Habakkuk 3:17-18. Even though the fig trees have no blossom and there are no grapes on the vines, even though the olive crop fails and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

See our worship of God and our relationship with him is not dependent upon how well we are doing financially. He doesn't love us more when things are going well, and doesn't love us less when things are going poorly. There are different circumstances that come and go in everyone's life as individuals or societies. Praise God when you are thriving economically and praise him in the midst of economic scarcity.

Acknowledge God's flawless character, even when circumstances are difficult. He's not the source of those difficulties. He's the provider of life and good things. And when those are hard to come by, just keep trusting him. He is for you.

Number 25: Provision for Widows, Orphans and Refugees.

This is from Deuteronomy 24:17-22. True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to orphans, and you must never accept a widow's garment as a security for her debt... When you are harvesting your crops and forget to bring in a bundle of grain from your field, don't go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigners, orphans and widows... Leave the remaining olives for the foreigners, orphans and widows... Leave the remaining grapes for the foreigners, orphans, and widows. Remember that you were slaves of the land of Egypt. That is why I'm giving you this command.

The bottom line of business, whether it is a small enterprise of self-employment, your own little shop or activity or large corporation. The bottom line goes far beyond making a profit.

Michael Schluter and David Lee of the Jubilee Centre at Oxford have written a book called The R factor. It develops a whole thinking about a foundations for economics is really related in relationship. Relationship is the foundational reality of the universe. God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit lived in a flawless community of fellowship and an intimate, loving relationship before the world was created. So the very foundation of the universe is not the atom or the molecule, or it's not matter. The foundation of the universe is relationship. And so if we are going to do economics, right, it needs to be a relationship centered economy. That's the R factor- recognizing that God is a relational being and created us for relationship with himself and with one another.

So this sphere of economics and every sphere must seek to advance relational wellbeing within our society. A commitment to relational, social responsibility is essential in a God-inspired economy Caring for the least advantage and those living on the economic margins of society

must be everyone's concern. Foreigners, refugees, displaced persons, orphans, and widows people without the security of family structures are symbolic of those who are economically more vulnerable than the rest. These deserve special care. Why? God reminds the Israelites why. Because once that was what they were.

If we go back in our family lines, all of us at some points - whether it's been recent or more distant times, all of us have been slaves or all of us have been in some economic oppressed, disadvantaged situation. And because of that story, that all of us share individually or culturally, we must be compassionate toward those who currently are disadvantaged. So now that you are better off, God is saying, don't forget where you came from. Many dream the dream of going from rags to riches. Wherever you are along that journey between rags and riches, remember those who still are in rags and give them a helping hand.

For this reason, this passage and the laws of gleaning are so powerful. You're not trying to maximize every penny. You're not trying to get every little head of grain into your barn. You leave a portion of the field for others to glean. That means they can come and harvest after your main harvest is done. You're not looking to capture a hundred percent of the profit. If you get 90%, that's fine enough. Leave 10% for others. And, this is a wonderful way of giving a helping hand, because it's not just a handout. It's an opportunity for a dignified, dignity- giving labor. People who had need could come and harvest and be productive and cultivate for themselves and have a sense of self worth. It was not just a governmental handout, but it was something that every landowner, every businessman, every entrepreneur who was growing food and grains and fruit could assist in. This was a neighbor to neighbor, a community-wide way of really adjusting and impacting the economic realities of a society. This is caring where it really counts.

Number 26: Let My People Go.

Exodus 2:23-25. ...But the Israelites continue to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and he knew it was time to act.

People often misread and misinterpret the scriptures. Though slavery is often mentioned in the Bible, it is never expressed as something which is God's will. When we read the scriptures, we need to always remind ourselves that it contains both descriptive and prescriptive material. Descriptive material are those passages which describe how things were. And for most of history, many things happened that were not according to God's will, just like it is today. They were describing the reality of a broken world that needed the touch of God's redeeming work.

The other passages that are prescriptive, in which God tells us what he wants us to do, in which commands and instructions are given. And in those passages, God describes a world of what it could be. It's not what it is. And it's not what it ought to be, the original design, but it's what it can be. And if we set our hearts, we can will to make it be.

So these are very important concepts. And when we read the scriptures carefully, we see that God never endorses slavery. He wants freedom for everyone - Every kind of freedom, economic freedom, spiritual freedom, educational freedom, governmental political civic, freedom, all different kinds of freedoms. People sometimes in the New Testament, read passages in a cursory or quick, uh, reading without giving some thought or implicational thinking, could lead you to think that they were endorsing slavery.

When you read thoughtfully, Paul uses language that leads to the abolishing of slavery. Let me read to you from Ephesians chapter six. It says slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep

respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ... When you read that verse, you think my goodness, he's just perpetuating slavery. He's condemning them to lifelong servanthood. How could he possibly do that? But wait, just a minute, he doesn't stop there. You have got to read it in context. And after speaking to the slaves and how they should relate to the masters, then he says, masters, treat your slaves in the same way. What? The slaves are supposed to obey their earthly masters with deep respect and fear, and masters are to treat their slaves in the same way. If you treat the slave the way you expect the slave to treat you, he's no longer a slave, he's a brother. You're family, you're equals, you're peers. Paul takes what is expected language, because that was, that was the attitude in the Roman world and the Greek world, among the Jewish people that slaves were inferior and they had responsibility toward the masters, but masters could do whatever they wanted to.

And he goes, he starts off with what is the known or expected cultural norms and then turns the table. That they kept going and masters need to treat the slaves the same way slaves are supposed to treat their masters. That changes the worldview. He doesn't throw a revolution. He doesn't charge in the streets and burn buildings. What he does is he changes thinking. He changes the pre- suppositions and undermines the institution of slavery once and for all time.

Just in case you didn't get it, he goes on in that same passage to say, remember you both - that's slaves and free - have the same master in heaven. And he has no favorites. God doesn't prefer masters over slaves or slaves over masters. They're equal in his eyes. So you must be equal in one another's eyes and you must treat each other as peers who have all made in the image of God, all who have sinned and fallen short and all who can be redeemed by the grace of God and enter into fellowship with him. What a tremendous word we have.

When we talk about how we engage in economic activities - and there are people at all different levels of advantage and disadvantage across our societies and the various nations all around the world - Do we have this attitude that all are equal? All are valuable, all are God's image?. And we should treat all the exactly the same way? If we do, we're starting to learn God's principles for economic integrity.

Number 27: Paul Appeals for Onesimus' Freedom.

You find this book in **Philemon verses 10-19**. There's only one chapter. Philemon was known to Paul and was a wealthy person, one of the leaders of the church in Colossi to which the letter of Colossians was written. And he was a slave owner as most wealthy people were in the Roman world. Onesimus had been his slave, and Onesimus had run away. And that was a crime that punishable by death within the Roman system. But when Onesimus ran away, he came to faith. Apparently, Paul preached to him. And he came to love Jesus. And he served Paul and Paul actually sends Onesimus back with _____ who carries the letter to Colossi and this letter to Philemon at the same time, And, who's an elder in the church and appeals for Philemon to free Onesimus, not to execute him. This is what he says.

I appeal to you to show kindness to my child. Paul writes as if he was a family member, which he is because of what Jesus has done. **I appeal to you to show kindness to my child, Onesimus...** It seems you lost Onesimus for a little while so that you could have him back forever. He is no longer like a slave to you. He is more than a slave, for he is a beloved brother, especially to me. Now he'll mean much more to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge it to me.

When Paul writes this, he's aware that Onesimus' running away had produced financial loss for Philemon. He wants to bring them to reconciliation. He wants Onesimus to be free, but he doesn't want Philemon to suffer as a result of it. So he's willing to share the cost. He says,

charge it to me. I'll pay you whatever money you lost as a result of his inappropriate departure. He is now coming back to you as a fellow believer, like you and I are. So we see him as a brother. Paul loves Onesimus and wants his freedom, but he also loves Philemon and does not want him to be harmed economically.

You know, when there's social injustice, it's really easy to take one side and hate the other side. You defend the oppressor and accuse the oppressed, or you defend the oppressed and accuse the oppressor. And societal change is costly. Systems are disrupted and lives are involved. And Paul is willing to advocate for change, but he loves people on both sides of the story and is willing to personally help cover the cost to make that change work.

That is just a absolutely wonderful example for all of us. He doesn't pit one person against another or one group against another. He advocates for all and promotes a gospel in which, and I am going to quote from Colossians 3:11. Remember this is the church that of which Philemon was a leader. I can imagine that when they walked into the church service **t** and Onesimus. **T** comes out and reads this letter, Colossians, first and afterwards, hands Philemon the private letter about Onesimus. And so what does he say to the whole church and what is still buzzing in Philemon's ears? He said the gospel and the gospel. It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric and civilized, slave or free, Christ is all that matters. And he lives in all of us. He lives in all of us. So we have to treat one another with the same equal respect and dignity and value. There is no foundation for hierarchies or distinctions or divisions that say some are better and some are worse. All are valuable, all need to be served as the gospel effects change and our pre-gospel societal arrangements. What a wonderful way he does this. It's radical, it's earth changing, but it's gentle and caring for all involved in this process of change.

Number 28: Jehoshaphat's Ungodly Partnership.

We read this in 2 Chronicles 20: 35-37. Sometime later King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an alliance with King Ahaziah of Israel, who was very wicked. Together they built a fleet of trading ships in the port of Ezion-geber. Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat. He said, "Because you have allied yourself with King Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy your work." So the ships met with disaster and never put out to sea.

God cares about whom you do business with. Sometimes people say, well, it's just business, that's just the way it is - as a way of discounting certain ethical considerations. But there is nothing we do on earth that is not of interest to God. Like King Ahaziah of Israel was evil. God is interested if we are compromising our morals, our ethical standards to partner with ungodly people.

Jehoshaphat was for the most part, a really good king. He did a lot of things right. He pleased the Lord. But he made a really bad business decision. And God would not allow these ships to achieve what they intended to do. When you read the parallel passage in Kings it says they were met with the storm in the sea and all the ships and the gold that they had intended to bring back were, were sunk and all the investment and all the business hopes were destroyed because God could not support this partnership where they were unequally yoked, a righteous king and a wicked king. So if we don't have the right partners, our business endeavors will not experience the blessing of God.

In a similar way John, the apostle warns against partnering with false teachers by supporting them again financially, or offering them hospitality, help covering their housing costs. He warns them 3 John 10-11 don't invite that person into your home. (This is the false teacher, the

wicked teacher) or give any kind of encouragement. Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.

When you contribute financially to someone else, you become a partner with them. Whether it's Jehoshaphat with another king, from king to king, or if it's as a church person and supporting a false teacher, financial partnerships with an economic support of evil people make us accomplices in their evil work and wrong doing. So the principle here is - choose your partners carefully. Make sure that you share a common worldview, that they have a kingdom mentality, and they're willing to walk in the ways of God if you're going to do business together with them.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Okay, this next section we're gonna be looking at contains 15 different passages, and it's entitled Economics Do's and Don'ts. It's gonna be a really fun section because we're getting very, very practical. This is when God's truth and his principles become to - down to the point of application of life transforming changes, practices that make a difference in person's individual lives, in their families, and in society.

Number 29: Do Not Steal

our title is Do Not Steal, and the reference is [Deuteronomy 5:19](#). And it says, [You must not steal](#). Very short verse. And there's a lot of content. This is the eighth commandment of the 10 Commandments, and it's found both here in [Deuteronomy five](#) and in [Exodus 20](#). And what's interesting in both of these passages, the Hebrew word is— the command imperative - is in the singular. This is something that you as an individual, I as an individual, anyone who's watching this as an individual must understand and apply. But later on in [Leviticus 19:11](#), there's also the command- You must not steal -but it's in the plural. So as you look through the whole of the scriptures, it has applications, both individual and corporate, both private and communal. And so this is something at every level we need to understand.

Now, there's some things that are implicit in this that are important to get, but it's important to understand it's not just a passage in the Original Testament. Jesus quotes this, and in [Matthew 19 and Mark 10 and Luke 18](#), he quotes this command and Paul picks it up in [Roman 13:9](#). This is a very important thing for us to grasp. There's lots that is implied. When you say you must not steal, it indicates that there is separate domains, domains of authority. There's private personal property, and I must respect your property and steward well my property. This is all implied.

When you listen to a little child learning to speak, one of the first words that you hear are two-year-olds say, is mine, mine, mine! But you have to understand as we mature, we need to understand not only what is mine, but that which is not mine. And how we respect other people and their ownership of not only things but ideas, concepts, strategies, practices, frameworks. There are lots of different ways that ownership is expressed, both in tangible and intangible realities. And we as individuals need to respect the ownership that others have. It's important to understand how this works.

This is part of the, as I said, the 10 Commandments. And the 10 Commandments is not just a hodgepodge of dos and don'ts. The word "Torah" in Hebrew, which is translated "law", can rightly be translated, also "teaching". In fact, it has more to do with a classroom than it does with the courtroom. It's more about instruction than it is about judicial procedures and instruction for life. And so as you go through these commandments, they speak of an increasingly more abstract ways. The horizontal Commandments, the last six ones talk about, first of all, honoring your father and mother. That's because they, whatever else they do in their

life, they've given you the most important thing that you ever have. They give you life. They might be idolators, they might be wicked people, they might be abusive people, but just the fact that they've given you life makes them honor worthy. Life is the ultimate good.

So if you understand that, then the next foundation is don't - do not kill. Don't take be a life-taker. Honor life-givers. Don't be a life-taker. Then it talks about do not commit adultery. Don't take that which is the most precious in someone's life, the relationship with their spouse, by violating the trust of intimacy.

So from those points, we get to this eighth command: Do not steal. Well, what does stealing have to do with life? If I steal you a television, it's not a living thing. Why? Why is that important to understand? Well, actually, when you steal a television, you're stealing more than just the object. You're stealing the hours that a person worked to earn the money in order to be able to buy that television. You're not taking all of their life, like you do in murder, or the most precious part of their life when you take their wife. But you're taking a segment of their life and that is destroying, that's diminishing the quality of life. And that is very significant. So because things are, and ideas and elements that are products of human life are valuable because they come from human beings. And God has made us in his image and his likeness. Because of that, we have an intrinsic value. And so we respect people's belongings because in doing so, we respect them.

See, God is a life giver. And if we're to be his followers, we are to be life-givers too, not life-takers. Sometimes in the area of economics, we think of something has value because of the laws of supplying demand. And certainly if there's a glut of product and little interest, the cost will go down. But there's something more fundamental than the law of Supply and Demand.

Some things are more valuable than other things because more life has been invested in it. So for example, a Boeing jumbo jet is more valuable than this cup that I have with coffee in it. Okay? Why? Well, a lot more life goes into building a plane, hundreds and hundreds of people. And before you start the actual construction- engineers and construction and design and architecture and science and research, all the elements of economics that go into it, the science and technology, not just the business side. There's just myriads, myriads of hours that have gone into creating this.

A cup doesn't take nearly as much time to make. It might take a few people a few minutes. And so the value of one is greater because more life has been invested into it. So this is why, why it is so important that we understand the value of things because they represent the life of those who made those things. And this is very important for us to understand in the economic sphere.

This phrase "Do not steal" is also at times used in the Hebrew as the same phrase as to not kidnap. If you steal, you can steal someone away from their family. You might not be taking all of their life because they've already lived part of their life, but you've kidnapped them and enslaved them. And again, the idea is that you are, you are violating a portion of their life just as if you are also taking their television.

So these are important things for us to understand. They're foundational for society to work. We respect other people's things, their ideas, their products, because we respect their life. Life is valuable and we're life-givers, not life-takers.

When we remind ourselves that this command is not only for the individual for but also for the corporate, it helps us understand its application for the economic sphere. We need to make sure that in business, everything we do in the business place, in the workplace is adding to life,

not reducing life. We're not robbing anyone in the whole - from the production process sequence to the marketing sales - We're not taking from people, but we're enhancing their lives. That's what true biblical business is about. It's not taking life, but enhancing life, creating products and services that add to life, not that subtract from life.

Number 30: Work or Don't Eat.

I want to read from 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12...Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us. For you know that you ought to imitate us. We were not idle when we were with you. We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night, so we would not be a burden to any of you. We certainly had the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow. Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: Those who unwilling to work will not get to eat. Yet we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work... We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their... living.

In the scriptures work is a constructive, positive, good thing. It is part of God's design. It's his purpose. We're designed to be productive and fruitful. Now there's work that is tedious and humdrum that is, that is not part of God's original design, but he's designed us to really give ourselves, to discover our gifts and give ourselves wholeheartedly towards an employment that would make a difference in the world. He designed us to be steward of our environment and to facilitate the provision for our families and contribute to our communities. We need to cultivate a biblical work ethic. Diligence and hard work are to be highly valued. It is not un-spiritual working nine to five, if you're doing what you are gifted to do and doing it in obedience to God is not unscriptural. It is in fact very spiritual is what God designed us to be able to do. And we need to do everything that we do to bring glory to him.

Let's go back to the 10 Commandments for just a minute. The fourth commandment we often think of the commandment of the Sabbath rest. And it is true that in that fourth commandment, it does end with saying "On the seventh day you shall rest." But actually there are two commands in that fourth commandment. And the first one is this: work for six days. And we kind of forget that. We often have theological debates and you know, how do we do sabbath? How strict are we? What day is it? What what is allowable? What is not allowable? The point is we're to work six days. We're to be productive contributors to our society and providing for our families. And then we are to take a break. It's not all about work, but it's certainly not all about leisure either.

We're to cultivate a work ethic that honors sacrifice, diligence, effort, and that produces stuff that benefits the many in our community. God wants us to be diligent, hardworking, productive contributors to society. So if you are employed or you're an employer, you're doing something significant. Keep at it. Do it for the glory of God.

Number 31: Work So You Can Be A Giver.

This comes from Ephesians 4:28. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

This is a great passage. It begins by talking about those who once lived a life of thievery where they dedicate themselves to taking things from others and to follow Jesus means to learn how to be productive so that you can give things to others. It's a total reversal, 180 degree change. And when people live like this, everyone in the society benefits. We're not to live life as takers. We're to live life as givers, not trying to rob others of what's rightfully theirs, but being able to

earn something and to give what is rightfully ours to them. That is transformative, that is in keeping with God's character.

See, when you look through the scriptures and you look at all the verbs that are associated with God, the second most frequently used verb, if you look at both the Hebrew in the Original Testament and the Greek in the New Testament that describes God's actions is the word 'give'. God is a giver. The first thing is that he's a communicator, he speaks. And then the second thing is he's a giver. And this is, he's the most generous being in the universe. And as we learn to become his sons and daughters in every sphere of society, we must be the most generous people on earth. He's a giver. We need to be givers too.

Well over a thousand times, the Bible speaks of God giving. We need to make this just a daily practice. And if we're going to be imitators of God, we have to then be diligent in producing goods that we have a means whereby we can give. And the more we are able to work and be diligent, the more we can give. We can meet our own needs, but also those of others.

Let's think how we do this both individually and in our families, but also in our businesses. If you are running a business and you want to reflect the kingdom principles, it's not just about making money for yourself and your stockholders or your employees, but it's also how you can make enough money to be able to invest back into the community where you are living or communities across the face of the globe in order to be able to see the kingdom of God extended. We're talking about increasing and multiplying and distributing wealth to the glory of God to make sure that not only our needs but the needs of all those around us are fully met and satisfied.

Number 32: Tithe Plus.

That may shock you because just giving the tithe for many may seem like an impossible thing to do, but that is just the lowest entry level form of giving. Let's read **Matthew 23:23-24**. It says this, Jesus is talking to the religious leaders of his day. **What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law - justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Blind guides! You strain your water so that you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but instead you swallow a whole camel!**

In this passage and its parallel in **Luke chapter 11** are the only two places in the New Testament where Jesus speaks about the tithe. And he doesn't discard it. He recognized that they're tithing even the mint in their garden. So out of every 10 mint leaves, one mint leaf goes to God. Nine mint leaves are for my tea. I mean this is like very precise tithing. But sometimes they got so lost of the particular, the logistics of tithing they forgot the really important things. So he is not discounting tithing, but he wants us to think of the fullest impact. He affirms it, he says it's right, but there's a lot more that is needed.

Tithe - 10% - is the bottom line, entry level, minimal standard of giving. And it's actually not just 10% because in the Original Testament there are three tithes that are required. Two are given annually. So that's 20%, 10% plus 10%. And the third was given every third year, for the poor needy. It was a tithe for compassion for mercy ministries for the widow, the stranger, the poor, the needy, the refugees.

So at that tithe was what is spoken about in **Malachi** when God says, bring your your tithes into the storehouse to care for the poor and needy. And so if you distribute that third tithe over those three years, people are expect to give 23.33%. Almost one fourth of their income was for God ordained purposes, God established purposes. And then, only then, did you start giving

gifts. Free will offerings happen after 23%. So God models generosity in his own life, but it sets a standard for his people to be unlike other people were to be more radically generous than anyone else on earth.

What things, what areas can you give in? It's not just about financial giving, but are there things that you can do that contribute to your community, address issues of injustice that display mercy or compassion or other social engagements? Is it, what can you do as an individual, as a company, as a business in this area so that you are investing in others and not just hoarding for yourself?

When we think about tithe, we should think about it as an obligation. In our financial dealings, we often think about obligations, needs and wants, and it's a hierarchy of priority of, in which we spend our money. We don't buy things to supply our ones before we meet our financial obligations. We meet our obligations first and then when we've done that, obligations are things that you've contracted for. If you have a monthly payment to, for a rental of a house or a mortgage or for paying your electricity or your phone bill, those are obligations that you took on. And so you pay for those things first. And then when there's, after you've done that, you have needs, you need food and you need some transportation money and you need some clothing and some of these things, then you can take care of those needs. And then when your needs are covered, then there's time to take care of your wants - to watch a movie or do something else like that.

But we get things out of balance, either as individuals or families or as companies when we put our wants ahead of our obligations. And the first obligation of all is the obligation to give financially to the things that God has told us to give - these tithes and our offerings. So we always begin there.

Sometimes people say, well, I don't have enough to be able to give to God first. Well, that's exactly the problem. If we've taken care of other things first, we will never have enough to give to God. But if we start with a tithe, we start with giving, 23.3% or/and beyond -it's tithe plus.

Then that point of generosity is a point of transformation. That's how we can do business. That's how we can do economics. That's how we can do our finances at any level of society in a transformative way that is in contrast to the society around us. How can you in your place of employment, do more for the kingdom of God, exhibiting the generosity, the justice, the mercy and faith that you want to see demonstrated through your life and through your company.

Number 33: Be Diligent.

We're gonna read from **Proverbs 6:6-11**. Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones! Learn from **blue** ways and become wise! Though they have no prince or governor or ruler to make them work, they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter. But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up? A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest- then poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

Well the author of this proverbs is addressing himself to lazybones. And I hope that's not you. The scripture calls them people of action, people of diligence, people who are productive and faithful and fruitful, who are self-starting, initiative taking regardless of the circumstances, diligence should be a part of our life, discipline and thoughtful engagement in the affairs of life.

You don't wait until winter is upon you to start thinking about the food that you need to store for the lean times. That's the imagery of the ants here. You work during the summer with this is easygoing. It's just be lovely to hang out in the grass, and go swim in the pool, but that's when

you work hard and you set up provision to have a storehouse full of food and for days of necessity. So diligence is more than just working on hours. It's about being a self-starter. It's about taking initiative, being consistent and disciplined, no matter the circumstances so that you prepare for every eventuality. That's what God calls us to do.

Number 34: Be Generous.

We're gonna read from Proverbs 11:24-25. And you know, as we listen to this, we've already talked multiple times about generosity and we should not tire of this because this is a central theme of the scriptures and one of the distinctive marks of those who are truly the people of God, it sets them apart for the rest of society. It's not only in the sphere of economics, but in every sphere. Generosity is one of the thing that characterizes the kingdom of God. This scripture says, **Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed,**

Generosity is God's pathway towards enduring wealth and creating more capacity. To live Godlike is to live generously, to give of yourself to others in time and talents and resources in every way possible. Finances, encouragement, in hope, in acts of service - generosity is the hallmark of the follower of Jesus. And generosity always produces and invokes and multiplies more generosity.

We don't live in a limited circle. If I give something of mine away, it does not mean I'm gonna have less. It just means I have an opportunity to receive more. And for the cycle of virtue, the cycle of generosity to increase more and more.

You know in the Bible we read about the Dead Sea. You know why the Dead Sea is called dead? Because fish and plants can't live in it. You know why fish and plants can't live in it? Because it is below sea level and all the rivers run into it and no river flows out of it. So all the salts and minerals and chemicals picked up by those rivers are deposited and it's so mineral rich, it chokes life because it just receives and receives and receives and never gives. If you live like that, you're a Dead Sea. If you are all about receiving and getting and taking, but you're not about giving, life will not flourish in you or around you.

And so it's not only in terms of geographical things like the sea, this is a little more delicate, but think about when you get sick or you get constipated and you're eating and food comes in, but nothing comes out. You feel miserable. We're designed to receive - live - giving and receiving. And if we only do the one without doing the other, then we find ourselves very soon in an unhealthy situation. Death sets in. Generosity produces life. Generosity produces more generosity. Generosity is the way we need to live in every aspect of our lives, including this area of economics.

Number 35: Don't oppress the Poor.

We're gonna read from Proverbs 21:13, which says this, **Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.**

As we go about our business, as we go about life, as we do the things that we do day to day, nine to five on the job around our communities, we need to live attentive to the needs of others. We can't be so absorbed with meeting our own needs that we overlook those around us who have perhaps greater need.

When you drive through a new community, you often notice the homeless on the street, but in your own hometown, you become accustomed to seeing this homeless man or that homeless woman on a street corner. And pretty soon you drive by almost don't even notice their

existence. We cannot allow ourselves to be desensitized to need. When we stop caring about the most destitute, the most needy, the most marginalized in our community our life suffers, our business suffers, our family suffers. Society suffers.

The scriptures here tell us that caring for people, caring for them in times of need, caring for them in their distress, caring them for them in the times of brokenness and hopelessness is a, is something that is essential. And if we will do that, God will make sure that in our times of need we do will be cared for. There's a reciprocity that happens within our communities if we cultivate a spirit of generosity within the places where we live.

We need to think about this in our businesses. It's not just about what we can get from our communities, but what can we give to our communities, our employees, our fellow workers and beyond? And the bigger - how we see the world around us, the more we can give, the more blessings we're able to bestow and the more blessings we may in turn receive.

So let's ask ourselves some of these questions. Is there anything I can do to make a difference? What's the greatest need? How can we help? How can we be involved? We're part of a bigger family. It's not just about protecting our own, but how can we care for others around us? Let's not shut our ears to those who are in need.

Number 36: Put God to the Test.

Wow, that sounds like a strange title. You may be thinking of **Deuteronomy 6:16** which says, **you must never put God to the test**. And you might remember when Satan tempted Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, he challenged Jesus to do certain things. And Jesus quoted **Deuteronomy 6:16** said, do not put God to the test. So what are we doing with the title says, put God to the test? Well, it's because the passage we're looking at is **Malachi 3:10-11**, which says this, bring all the tithes - God is speaking to his people. **Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there'll be enough food in my Temple. If you do, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, I will open the windows of heaven to you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.**

So again and again throughout the scriptures God says don't put him to a test. Don't test him. Trust him. Don't, don't do this. Until we get to this last book of the Original Testament and God says here now in this one area, I want you to test me. And basically what he's done is he's throwing down the gauntlet and challenging you to a generosity test. He's saying, just try to out-give me. Try it. Go on, see if you can. And he says, you will fulfill the giving that I required of you, asked of you, then you'll see that you'll be, you'll have no need.

Remember in our passage number 32, we talked about tithe plus, we mentioned this passage in Malachi and how the tithing among the Original Testament was 23 and a and a third percent when you added it all together. It seems like an awful lot to us. But God says, if you will just be generous and give to me and trust me, I guarantee that I -you will not be able to out-give me.

So I challenge you. Think about God's challenge. You want to pick up the challenge? You want to run a generosity contest with God? Do this as an individual. Do this as a family. Do this as a church, as a community, as a business. Do this and see how God will give.

Number 37: Idolatrous Efforts to Prosper.

And we're gonna read from **2 Kings 21:7-9**. The scripture says this, Manasseh and Manasseh is the king that served the longest time in the history of Judah, the southern kingdom- 51 years

and is reported as the most evil, the most wicked of all of the kings of Judah. Manasseh, who was king of Judah, even made a carved image of Asherah and set it up in the Temple, the very place where the Lord had told David and his son Solomon: My name will be honored forever in the Temple and in Jerusalem - the city I've chosen from among all the tribes of Israel. If the Israelites will be careful to obey my commands — all the laws My servant Moses gave them — I will not send them into exile from this land that I gave their ancestors. But the people refused to listen, and Manasseh led them to do even more evil than the pagan nations that the Lord had destroyed when he brought the people of Israel into the land.

Again, Manasseh was the worst king of the southern kingdom. I mean, he didn't only stray from God, he just brazenly went against God. So when it says that he brought Asherah poles in, these, this was a fertility goddess. So her statuary was like, ancient world pornography. Okay? It was designed to evoke lustful thoughts and immoral acts among the worshipers. And this was placed in the Temple of God, not in some other place that other kings did that (they went to high places) but it was brought in right into the very Temple. And the reason they involved in these cultic sexual rituals in those days was they felt like this was the way they could induce the gods, the pagan gods that they were worshiping to bless them in their crops, that they'd have a greater fertility and greater prosperity. It was about making a sacrifice and about giving themselves to sexuality and lust in the hopes for prosperity and financial gain. It was a, it was a wicked combination of serving the flesh and giving yourself to materialism.

So they thought as they do this, then their cows would have, bear more calves and they'd be healthier. The lambs would be born to the ewes and kids would be born to the goats and, the harvest would be well. And so the whole agricultural world was centered around these fertility-sexualized fertility rituals.

We don't do that today, but in today in our cultures, we have similar things. We have sexuality on display everywhere, enticing young and old elect to lustful actions and thoughts. There's always an urging to- for more materialism, more wealth. The American dream where more is always better. And this is be around us at all times. And have we in our culture put some of these goals of pleasure, of materialism, of wealth in the place of God? Have we devoted ourselves to them in a place where we should be worshiping God?

See, this was right in the Temple where these substitutes idols were replacing true worship. This passage takes some heart searching. Of course, we are not following Asherah poles in the same way Manasseh did. But let's look at our hearts.

Now when we read on a little bit further in 2Chronicles verse 33, a chapter 33:23, it tells us that the very end of his life Manasseh repented and wrote a prayer of repentance. And, it's a wonderful story of hope that even a very corrupt king can change before his death.

And his prayer is recorded in a book that is considered, part of the Bible by several of the Christian traditions, what's called a XXXXXX book. It's called, his Prayer is called The Prayer of Manasseh. Let me read you a few words from this book. So let me read a few words from this book:

I have no relief for I provoked your wrath and I've done what is evil in your sight, setting up abominations and multiplying offenses. And now I bend the knee of my heart imploring you for your kindness. I have sinned O Lord, I have sinned and I acknowledge my transgressions. I earnestly implore you. Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me. Do not destroy me with my transgressions. Do not be angry with me forever or stir up evil for me. Do not condemn me to the depths of the earth for you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent.

What a beautiful prayer. So sincere, I have sinned O Lord, I've sinned and I bend the knee of my heart. You know all of us have lusted after things that we shouldn't have. All of us have tried to find our identity and wealth and possessions in ways that bring distress to God's heart. All of us, like Manasseh, need to bend the knees of our heart so that we return to God and see ourselves as he sees us, created in his image, invited to be sons and daughters, loved by him who walk in his ways with integrity, purity. Instead of a life of lust, a life of purity. Instead of a life of materialism, a life of generosity, and instead of a life of authority -a life of servanthood. These are the things that God calls you and me to do. And this is what should characterize all our actions in the sphere of economics and every other sphere as well.

Number 38: No Favoritism Based on Economic Status.

We're going to read a few selections from **James 2:1-9**. **My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?... If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, you can stand over there or sit on the floor — well, doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?... It is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you favor some people over others, you are committing sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.**

See if we have a double standard, it is always rooted in sin. It never is motivated by love. The royal law of love, as James talks about it, always opposes discrimination, preferring some and despising others. And why do we do that in the economic area? We tend to give all kind of attention and favor towards the wealthy and overlook the poor and the needy. Why? Because we are hoping that if we build relationships with the wealthy, we might benefit, we might become their friends, we might have some of the overflow, it might spill out onto us. And so we're tempted to give some people special treatment because of selfishness, because we're hoping that we get a benefit and others who we don't see that they could possibly contribute anything to our life, they're insignificant. And that friends, is not God's way of seeing the world. He sees each person as valuable.

One of the parables that I love of Jesus, we know as a parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus was the homeless guy who went to be with Him in heaven. We know Lazarus by his name. The rich man - we don't know his name in the parable. Jesus purposely does the opposite of the normal double standard. We all know the names of the rich and the famous. We read about them on the internet. We see them on the news. We, we are, they're the famous and the wealthy and we can say all their names, but we drive by the homeless guy on the street corner and we don't know his name or her name. But in Jesus' parable it is the homeless one that's named and the wealthy that goes unknown. So he's trying to level the playing field. And we need to care for all people in a similar way, not to treat some better because we might get something from them, but to treat all with dignity and respect. This is the way of the kingdom of God.

Number 39: Wealth Does Not Equal True Happiness.

We're gonna read from **Ecc 5:10-15**. The scripture says, **Those who love money will never have enough.** Do you have enough? Do you feel like you don't? Well if you feel like you don't, you might be loving money too much. Maybe there's time for a little heart check right there. But let's keep reading this passage. **How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth — except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers! People who work hard sleep well, whether they eat little or much. But the rich seldom get a good night's sleep... We all come to the end of our lives as naked and empty-handed as on the day we are born. We can't take our riches with us.**

We often hear that statement. Did you realize that it comes from the Bible? There's a lot of truth that is incorporated into our culture that is rooted in the scriptures. And basically what's saying is this, if you're trying to find your contentment, your satisfaction, your value, your worth, in things that you own and material things that you possess, then you are, you're really mixed up. You're have a wrong foundation for values and significance and contentment.

Really the things, things don't give us value. Things don't give us happiness. What gives us value in happiness is relationships - relationship with God, relationships with one another, with people - knowing who you are, made in the image of God and that you're loved and that you're doing the things that God has called you to do. That's what's significant, that's what's valuable.

And so in the world, people love things and use people, but in the kingdom of God we love people and use things. We keep things in the right perspective. Things are delightful to have when they serve us. But relationships are what is really the most meaningful thing. So let's pursue that which is truly valuable relationship with God and neighbor and love as we ought to love.

Number 40: Economic Righteousness.

We're going to read from Amos 8:4-6. **Listen to this, you who rob the poor and trample down the needy! You can't wait for the Sabbath day to be over and the religious festivals to end so you can get back to cheating the helpless. You measure out grain with dishonest measures and cheat the buyer with dishonest scales. And you mix the grain and sell - you sell with chaff swept from the floor. Then you enslave poor people for one piece of silver or a pair of sandals.**

The prophet Amos has a scathing rebuke for those who are religious one day of the week and vile the rest of the week. Going to synagogue on Saturday or church on Sunday doesn't give you license to treat others in an economically unjust way the other days of the week. You can't be corrupt economically, taking advantage of people, using them, cheating them, being dishonest with the products that you're selling to them and and just harming them. You can't do that and then show up at a religious service and come off as being good. It doesn't cover it up. True religion, true godliness is expressed in economic integrity and justice and caring for people who are poor and needy. Integrity in business and valuing people is of paramount importance. It is good to go to church, good to go to the synagogue. It's good to seek God's face, but not at the expense of people, not as a substitute for being transformed in the way you do business.

Number 41: Prayer Impacts Economic Activity.

We're gonna be looking at 2 Chronicle 7:13-14. God is speaking. He says the following, **At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls or command grasshoppers to devour your crops or send plagues among you. Then if my people who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sins and I will restore their land.**

There are lots of different reasons why you might have economic hardship. In this passage God says one of the reasons might be that there's a divine judgment, that the people have done that which they ought not to have done. And so God is the one who stays the rain, who sends the locusts or the plague. And to get people to think again of what they're doing and turn back to God. And so the God who loves to bless, loves to extend mercy and compassion at times, finds it necessary to exercise judgment in order to call his children to attention. And as he does so, if we are aware of that and we turn back to God in humility and repentance, prayer will

change things. When things are going poorly, it's time to ask the question, have we forgotten God? Have we strayed from the ways of God? What do we need to do to make things right with God? And turn in humility and pray.

You know, things can be rough in business for many, many reasons. Don't always just think, well, sales are down. We need a new media strategy. We need a new advertising firm. We gotta get more salesmen. We gotta do this, we gotta do that. Maybe you need to do some of those things, but maybe, just maybe you need to say, have we lost sight of God and his ways? Do we need to turn back to him? Do we need to pray? Maybe prayer is the place to begin? And then the advertising agency might need to be changed as well.

But Seek God's face first. There may be something he wants to correct or adjust. He may be using this time of difficulty to get your attention, to draw you into a greater place of intimacy so that you can listen to him, align yourself with him, work with him, and go forward with him. God will lead you as you seek his face. He's a kind God. He's a generous God. He executes judgment only when absolutely necessary. He loves to bless. He loves to extend mercy and compassion. He wants to be on your side, but you must decide, will you be on his side? Will you align yourself with his ways? And that's what this passage is all about. We must make sure that our businesses are centered on the ways of the kingdom of God. And then we'll have God's blessing follow us.

God loves answering prayers that are sincere. He loves coming to your aid and bringing change and assistance, give you wisdom and strategies if we listen to him. So seek God, find out if there's something he wants to say to you. And repent. Embrace humility. Admit you've gone done it wrong. And set yourself on the right path. God loves to bring blessing and help.

Number 42: Build. Plant. Pray.

Jeremiah 29: 4-7. This is a letter that Jeremiah who was in Jerusalem wrote to the exiles who have -are in Babylon that had been deported there under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. As refugees, as conquered people, obviously they were longing to return home and abandon Babylon and go back to Jerusalem. But this letter, he tells them to do something that was unexpected for them. He says, **this is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem. Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. Marry and have children. Then find spouses for those so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. And that is Babylon!. You know, pray for the peace and prosperity of that city. Pray to the Lord for it, for in, its welfare will determine your own welfare.**

Wow, what a counterintuitive, revolutionary, transformational idea this is. Let me review with you just some of the words that he said in this passage. He tells 'em to build, plan, plant, eat, marry, multiply, work, pray. In other words, do life. Put down your roots. Be normal. Embrace this situation and make the most of it. Even though you've thought of the Babylonians as your enemies, invest where's planted you.

If you are always looking for, I could be a real success if I just had a better circumstance. It's never going to happen. You know, it's - whatever you are, there's always adversity around us. There are always an less than ideal situation, but God calls us to care for the community wherever you are. To bloom where you're planted, to use a more contemporary term, to do the normal things of life. Build homes, plant gardens, eat your food, get married, have children, multiply, work. These things, these basic things of life are good. This is what we're supposed to

do as human beings. These are good things. They're important things. This is God, what God expects people to do. God approves of these things and he encourages them.

Sometimes we think, oh, I just wanna do spiritual things. You know, all of these things are spiritual. These are the things that the Spirit of God is asking people to do. There's value in all of these normal day-to-day activities that fill most people's life, most of the time. These, the area of economics, the areas of the different spheres of society. So give yourself to the wellbeing of the city where you live. Seek the common good. If you do, you'll become what the original testament Hebrews calls a **XXXXX or the plural, XXXXX**. That means the righteous one or the godly ones.

There's a wonderful passage in **Proverbs 11:10**. It says, **the whole city celebrates when the godly, that's the XXXX, succeed**. Now, you know, that's very unusual. Usually we only rejoice when we succeed or our team succeeds. Rarely do I rejoice when you or somebody else's team succeeds. What is it about the **XXXXX**? This Hebrew concept of the righteous that is different from the world's way of thinking? When they succeed the whole city rejoices. Why? Because the **XXXX** don't only live for themselves. They live for the wellbeing of their community. They give of themselves for the wellbeing of the common good. And so when they're successful at that, everyone benefits. So everyone rejoices. If we are truly being God's people in the communities, the towns, the neighborhoods, the cities, the nations where we live, we succeed. The whole of our community succeeds with us. And there will be great rejoicing.

This is - will happen as we do that in the area of business or in any of the other spheres of society. We need to display the righteousness of God in such a way that everyone can see the goodness of God and rejoice, even if you're living in Babylon. Even if you're living in the most adverse, difficult, unfriendly of situations. Even if you're in the land of your enemies with great opposition. You can do good and you can bring transformation. This is God's way to see the kingdom advance.

Number 43: Peter's Miraculous Catch.

I'm gonna be reading from Luke 5:2-7...**When [Jesus] had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Now go out where it is deeper and let down the net to catch some fish. Master! Simon replied. We worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets one more time. And this time the nets were so full of fish, they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners [to the] in the other boats, and soon both boats were filled with fish on the verge of sinking.**

You know, obedience to Jesus is the key to windfall success. Just consider for a moment, Peter was a professional fisherman. He grew up in that trade. His father was a fisherman, his brother was a fisherman. His whole family were fishermen. His cousins, his uncles were fishermen. The scriptures,- they had probably a corner on the market of the fishing industry in Northern Galilee. And they were the best. They knew their business inside and out. They knew where the fish were most likely to be caught, at what time of day, what kind of nets to use, what kind of things to lure them into the nets. They knew every detail about the fishing industry. They were professionals. They knew their stuff. They were not casual, summer weekend aficionados, they were pros. But even as pros, they were not being successful. They'd fished all night and they caught nothing.

And what was key for them was not to rely just on their professionalism, but on intentional listening to the word of Jesus and obedience to that word. When they heard and obeyed Jesus, everything changed. They caught the biggest catch they'd ever caught. It was amazing. It was so many fish that the boat began to sink and they had to call in other boats. And all of the boats were filled to the brim. In just one catch! It's extraordinary.

Friends, in every area of life, success is not measured by our skill or our competence. Those are important things to cultivate. But ultimately success is measured by obedience to God and to his word. And that's not just in your personal lives or your personal affairs, but in your societal responsibilities, in your business roles. And as we do that, we'll see God do extraordinary things in your business and in other businesses that seek to listen and obey God in full detail.

You know what else I find amazing about this story is Jesus knew how important fishing was to Peter. Jesus wasn't just interested in Peter to call him and so he could become a disciple and preach on his behalf in future times. He knew that Peter loved fishing. And Jesus wanted to bless him. God cares about the work you do. And if we will listen to him, he will speak. If we obey him, he will bless, and - that will happen even in our vocational professional lives. And Jesus loved doing that, showing Peter, I can make you the best fisherman that you've ever imagined being. And I can also call you to do other things as well. Just keep listening, just keep obeying and that's what we all need to do.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

This section is about economics and healthcare. And we talk about healthcare not only in the economic sphere, but also in the family sphere and in the religion sphere and in the government sphere. In each of these four spheres, there are three passages that are related to healthcare. Because the wellbeing, the health of an individual is important to everyone in every sphere. It's important to government, it's important to family, it's important to religion, it's important to business. If people aren't healthy, everything suffers. Not only the individual but all their societal interactions. So healthcare is not the role of just one sphere, but it's the collaborative effort of all the spheres together, coordinating to make sure that everything is done for the wellbeing of the individual. Because the life of the individual is at the heart of the life, the wellbeing of the community. Because without people thriving in health, being well, there is no economics, there is no family, there is no religion, there is no government.

All the spheres are involved in healthcare because it protects the life. Life is of greatest value. Everyone is involved in preserving, maintaining and enhancing life. That's how it should be. That's not always how it is, but that's God's original design and that's what we want to see. reestablished. Healthcare should be a shared concern for all of us, for all these fears and every domain of authority and society.

Number 44: When Physicians Aren't Enough

This passage comes from **2 Chronicles 16:12-13**. In the 39th year of his reign, Asa developed a serious foot disease. (Asa was the king of Judah at the time). Yet even with the severity of his disease, he did not seek the Lord's help, but turned only to his physicians. So he died in the 41st year of his reign.

Now the scriptures often speak very positively about physicians. They speak in honoring, respectful ways. Physicians, medical professionals have a vital role in our communities. It is a significant profession involving both science and technology and the business side of caring and showing compassion for people who are ill. But when Asa got sick, he went straight to the physicians and did not seek God. This is where he was wrong. It's not that physicians were wrong, but physicians are health facilitators. God is the healer. Physicians can help give you medications or intervene with different procedures that create an environment for health to be restored. But health is only restored when God acts. And sometimes through the natural means

of the design that he's built into the body that have been there from the time of creation or through his supernatural touch in different instances. So we honor the medical profession as health facilitators, but we always, honor God as the healer. We give space for the medical profession, but we never exclude God from the process of healing. So we work with both of those in coordinated way. There's great humility for the professionals in this area who are greatly skilled, who've studied the amazing ways of God's creation and know how to help facilitate that process of restoration of health. But recognizing that ultimately life, its maintenance and its continuity is dependent upon God, who's the giver of life and the one who heals us.

Number 45: The Cost of Medical Care.

So I'm gonna read to you from **Mark 5:25-34**, not the whole thing, some selections, but it's an encounter that Jesus had with a woman who had been sick for a very long time. We read in Mark's gospel: **A woman in the crowd had suffered for 12 years with constant bleeding. She had suffered a great deal [for] many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse. She had heard about Jesus, so she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his robe... Immediately the bleeding stopped... and Jesus realized at once that healing power had gone out from him, so he ...asked, who touched my robe?... Then the frightened woman... came and fell to her knees in front of him and told him what she had done. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.**

Now, this story is told not only in Mark's gospel, but also in Matthew and Luke, almost verbatim. Mark and Matthew are almost identical word for word, but Luke is different. Luke leaves out something very important and what he leaves out is Mark's commentary on doctors. Remember, in Mark it says that she had gone to lots of doctors and spent all her money on the doctors and hadn't got any better. Luke follows the storyline for everything except for that part, which he conveniently leaves out because Luke was a doctor himself. And he didn't want to bad mouth his profession, and throw his colleagues under the bus as it were.

So this is where it's lovely reading the scriptures. You get to know the authors, you can see their humanity and their personality, and even humor. I imagine Mark and Luke would've known each other and they probably talked about this situation from time to time. You could imagine the teasing that would've gone between them.

What's important to note is that in the experience of this woman, it had cost her everything she had financially, and she wasn't any better. Sometimes medical costs are too high for the results they produce. And we need to consider that in the economics of medicine, in the business of medicine. Sometimes the charges of seeing the doctor or of buying your prescription drugs from your pharmaceutical companies are exorbitant. And ones like Mark would comment, make a commentary and said, this is not as it should be.

We must remember that the medical profession must first of all be a profession of compassion and only secondarily a business. It is right for the professionals to make a living, but is not appropriate for that living to be at the expense of the wellbeing of the people they're seeking to serve. The wonderful thing is that Jesus stepped in and healed her at no cost.

And, this is a transforming act. It not only healed her body, but it improved her bank account. It improved her financial situation. This was amazing. She exercised faith and he released power and she was healed miraculously, instantaneously. Wow, that is so amazing. We must value the medical profession. So grateful for them. But we must remember that God, Jesus - is the ultimate healer. We need to be careful to set up systems in our various cultures, our various societies, where those who are at greatest need, those who are suffering from disease, are not

also suffering from economic hardship because of the cost of medicine. So we must find ways to care for people in both physical and financial ways in their times of need.

Number 46: The Good Samaritan's Health Plan.

I'm gonna be reading this from **Luke 10:30-35**. This is the concluding statements of the famous Parable of the Good Samaritan. And remember the one who's writing this, recording this parable is, only recorded by Luke, who's the physician, the doctor. And he finishes the parable with these words from Jesus. ...**Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going to him, this Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day, he handed the innkeeper two silver coins, telling him, Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here.**

Wow, there's so much to be learned from this parable of the good Samaritan. Not only did a person who would normally be seen as an enemy show transforming compassion, caring compassionate,— involvement. I mean, he cleaned the wounds, he bandaged them, put him on his own animal. But he also displayed incredible generosity. He covered his cost for medical care and for lodging and committed to do even more should that be necessary. This is what we need to take away from this passage. Compassion and generosity are the things that need to drive our healthcare systems.

What we learned from the Good Samaritan is that he gave all that he had to give and he modeled for us the very nature of what our medical enterprises should look like. He said, if there's more, I'll take care of it. The person who is suffering should not have the pain of financial pressure placed up upon them as well. We need systems that, where individuals and people can contribute and care for one another. We are always to be generous in the healthcare system that we put in place to care for the compassionate needs of others.

CROSSOVER INTRODUCTION

In this final section of the economic sphere, we're going to look at the crossover passages where economics connects with each of the other six spheres. In each example some of them show how economics in that sphere work together collaboratively in a positive way and at times where they did not work together well and there was destructive consequences. So it's important to realize that no sphere by itself can accomplish all that is needed in society. The religion sphere is not sufficient by itself. The government sphere is not sufficient by itself. And certainly the economic sphere is not sufficient by itself. We all need to do things together with other spheres in order to see the fullness of God's good design for a society fulfilled.

Number 47: Economics and Family

1Kings 5:14. Solomon **sent them** his laborers **to Lebanon in shifts, 10,000 every month, so that each man would be one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of this labor force.**

So when he needed to send people to go to Lebanon to cut trees and bring wood and help in all the building projects he had, he had a couple things that were really key for us in thinking about how he was thoughtful about family, while he was trying to advance a business proposal.

First thing. And it's important to remember that Solomon is known for his wisdom, one of the wisest, if not the wisest man who ever lived. He had that they would never have gone for more than a month at a time. So he had 30,000 people that they hired and every only 10,000 were

employed at a time. 20,000 were at home. And so, they would be gone for a month and come home for two months, gone for a month and come home for two months, never longer than a month. And that's really important.

If your business requires you to go on a trip that's longer than a month, 6, 8, 10 or more weeks, family will begin to suffer. It will be too hard for everyone. And at that point, all kinds of difficulties and temptations set in. So they were never gone from the family more than one month at a time. Now that increased the costs. If they were gone a month away or or two months gone, and then two months home, two months gone, two months home, they could have been less cost because there would be less travel that Solomon would've had to pay to incur his business venture. But he realized that part of- he needed to do business in such a way that would be healthy for families, because if families suffer, the business will ultimately suffer as well. They need to collaborate and think together. So first rule was not more than a month away at a time.

The second rule is not more than a third of the time in a year away. So the idea wasn't, they were gone a month and then home for just two weeks and then gone another month. They'd be gone a month and come back for two months. So two thirds of their time was at home. And so it may be that on some occasion you would have a shorter time at home. But over a years program, you should be two thirds of your time with your family. Especially when your children are young and growing, developing. They need mom or they need dad at home. They need both of them there the majority of the time. This is very important. So your business should never crowd out family responsibilities, but business patterns, business rhythms should be designed in such a way as to enhance and facilitate family health and strength and continuity. That's wise, that's what Solomon thinks. I don't think you can do any better than that.

Number 48: Economics and Government

The crossover passage between Economics and Government We're going to read selections from **1Kings 21:1-19**. Just a few selections from this longer passage. **Now, there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. One day Ahab said to Naboth... I would like to buy it... but Naboth replied, the Lord forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors.**

So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer... What's the matter? His wife Jezebel asked him... I asked Naboth to sell me his vineyard or to trade it, but he refused! Ahab told her.

Are you the king of Israel or not? Jezebel to demand. I'll get you Naboth's vineyard. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name ...to the elders of the town ...where Naboth lived. In her letter, she commanded... stone him to death.

So he... was stoned to death. The town leaders then sent word to Jezebel. Naboth has been stoned to death. When Jezebel heard the news, she said to Ahab, you know the vineyard Naboth wouldn't sell you? Well, you can have it now! He's dead! So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it.

Wow. Everything in this story, everything about it is wrong. Ahab and Jezebel use governmental position, governmental power, authority, to advance personal economic prospects. That is wrong. That is not why they have been given the role of rulership.

It's a story of corruption. Whenever we collude with economics in some inappropriate way with any other sphere, in this case it's government, it could also be with education or religion or media - when there's this collusion that between the spheres -to use the position of power to

enrich yourself, to benefit yourself, to enhance your prospects in an individual manner? That is criminal. It is wrong, it should never be allowed. So let's learn from this. The warning is a very sad tale — when people use their power in one sphere to take advantage in another sphere. Let's learn how to respect the domain of each sphere and live within the legal and appropriate parameters that is given to each one of us.

Number 49: Economics and Religion.

This is taken from **2 Kings 5:20-27**. We've made a brief mention of this in an earlier passage is good to read this whole thing again. **But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, the man of God, said to himself, My master should not have let this Aramean get away without accepting of his gifts... So Gehazi set off after Namaan... Gehazi said, my master sent me to tell you that two young prophets from the hill country of Ephraim have just arrived. He would like 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothing to give to them.**

(The course was a lie.). Namaan responds **"By all means, take twice as much silver, Namaan insisted... Gehazi took the gifts... then he went and hid the gifts inside the house. When he went into his master, Elijah asked him, where have you been Gehazi?... Is this the time to receive money and clothing...? Because you have done this, you and your descendants will suffer from Namaan's leprosy forever. When Gehazi left the room, he was covered with leprosy. His skin was quite as snow.**

Just like you should not use governmental power, as we looked in the last passage, to advance a personal financial benefit, so also religion should never be viewed as a profit making enterprise. We do not do the things of God in order to get wealthy or to benefit personally.

Number 50: Economics and Education.

Galatians 6:6. Those who are taught the Word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them.

So in the previous passage, number 49, we looked at - you should not profit from religious activity. And yet at the same time, a religious worker is worthy of his wages. If he teaches — is a good teacher, gives an educational benefit, then certainly it's worthy to recompense them financially, not exorbitantly, but appropriately. We read about this in Luke 10:7, and 1 Timothy 5:18.

Number 51: Economics and Media Communication.

We're gonna read from **Leviticus 6:1-5. Then the Lord said to Moses, Suppose one of you sins against your associate and is unfaithful to the Lord. Suppose you cheat in a deal involve a security deposit, or you steal or commit fraud, or you find lost property and lie about it, or you lie about swearing to tell the truth, or you commit any other such sin. If you have sinned in any of these ways, you are guilty. You must give back whatever you stole, or the money you took in extortion, or the security deposit, or the lost property you found, or anything obtained by swearing falsely...**

Unjust communication cannot be a foundation for economic advance. If you committed fraud, that means you've portrayed yourself in a way that is not true. It's dishonest, it's an act of lie. Or if you lie about it. Or lie about swearing to tell the truth - I will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth — and you're intent on lying. Then any gain financially that you have through those lies, you need to make right. Anything obtained by swearing falsely is not rightfully yours. It's economic defrauding, and you need to make it right.

Number 52: Economics and Celebration.

We're going to look at some verses out of [Leviticus 23](#).

You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a sabbath day of complete rest, an official day for holy assembly, all the people must stop their ordinary work and observe an official day for holy assembly. The people must again stop all their ordinary work to observe an official date for holy assembly. That same day will be proclaimed an official date for holy assembly, a day which you do no ordinary work. You must do no ordinary work on that day. You must proclaim an official day for holy assembly when you do no ordinary work. Another holy day, no ordinary work must be done that day.

You can see, I've just taken out these phrases that occur throughout these chapters, and it lists seven different festivals, feasts that were supposed to be honored in the Jewish calendar.

Three of the seven festivals were called pilgrimage festivals, which require the people to travel to Jerusalem where the Temple was. Each of those festivals were a week long celebration. It was a wonderful gathering, seeing friends and family from upcountry all around the place we would gather at the same time. Great reunions. Lots of joy, times of worship, times of eating times of friendship, times of reflection on the ways of God.

But it, it not only took those seven days, but the days traveling there, maybe one or two or three days going to Jerusalem one or two or three days returning home. And so very quickly, you can see that all these festivals quickly came to represent 10% or more of the potential workdays in a year. And that was a big chunk.

And God is saying It's important to stop working, come together and celebrate. Because the purpose is to build community, to know that you belong, to be able to have a common identity to refresh together the story of God, what he's done in your midst, where you came from, how he brought you out of Egypt, what he has done and how he has redeemed you. And this story, and what holds you together is so important. You need, need to stop some other things that are really important. You need to stop work. That is really vital in order to have these rhythms of celebration.

Something to think about. Do we try to minimize the holiday time, the vacation time? How do we, how do we build that time where it's not just time off work, but time that really builds community. These are thoughts for us to consider, as we seek to implement the spheres in our generations and our culture and as society in a way that advances the kingdom of God.