

Life is Like a Game of Monopoly

Antonius Torode

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Imagine a world. Imagine a world where one percent of the planet's population owned forty seven percent of the planet's wealth (Credit Suisse Research Institute Global Wealth Report - Oct 2018). Imagine a world where twenty nine thousand children under the age of five die every single day from poverty and preventable diseases (<https://www.unicef.org/mdg/childmortality.html>). Imagine a world where polluting the environment will equate to higher profits (Joseph H. Bragdon, Is Pollution Profitable? – April 1972). Imagine a world where a democracy essentially means you are voting between two people.

It's not just imagination. This is the world we live in, A world of greed and corruption. A world of pain and suffering. Now we may not notice all these things, because they don't directly affect us. However, they are all happening all around the world every single day. What do all these things have in common? They are all biproducts of money. Now one could say money has always existed and so what am I talking about. But what I mean by money is not gold or silver, or trading commodities. But rather, a fictional currency that us humans created and decided to give value to. The lifeblood of all our establishments. The most needed thing on the planet that can't be used for anything practical. You can't build a house with it. You can't eat it. You can't drink it. One could argue, in its modern form, that it's one of the devil's greatest inventions.

In 1965, Paul Harvey said in one of his famous speeches "if I were the devil, I'd just keep right on doing what he's doing." I'd like to take a brief look at the modern money system we have and hopefully leave you with a new perspective to think about. I want to show you how and why it causes so much suffering. To do so, I'm going to use an analogy.

Life can be compared to the game of monopoly. Now my older sister is a wonderful person. She taught me how to play the game monopoly. She knew the name of the game was to acquire. She was ruthless, I couldn't beat her at the game. One summer I decided I wanted to be the best at this game, I played it over and over until I could figure out how to be the best. I realized the only way to win was through a total commitment to acquisition, money and wealth. Consider I Timothy 6:10 – "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." One day I sat down with my sister to play. I was ready to bend the rules to win if I had to. I destroyed her financially and psychologically. I watched her give her last dollar and quit in utter defeat. It felt great!

The love of money leads to a craving of more and more. One who loves money is never satisfied until they have it all. Now how does this analogy affect us today? Why can we not love money? We need money for rent, we need money for food, we need money to tithe. What's so bad about it? If we have money, we can give it to the poor. If we have money, we can feed the hungry. Doesn't it seem like we should love money? Let's take a brief look at history and how the love of money affects us.

In 1689, John Locke published "Two Treatises of Government." In these documents he argued that all men are created equal in the state of nature by God. In this document, he outlined how private property should be distributed among people. He concluded that three provisos need to be considered when dealing with private property. First, you must leave enough (and as good) for others. There was an

inherent consideration for others. A love for neighbors. Second, you must mix your labor with the property. This implied you were using it and making it your own. Lastly, you can only take so much as you can use before it spoils, for "nothing was made by God for a man to spoil or destroy." He states that every man should own as much land as he could make use of and this would not inconvenience anyone because "there is land enough in the world to suffice twice as many people as there are". Back in these times, 'money' was considered something with value you could trade, generally gold or silver. Gold and silver cannot rot, nor can any other precious metal or gem. Trading it for food can transfer the food around before it rots. Therefore, society can be dedicated to the protection of property. John Locke based his principles on that of protection and eliminating waste and destruction. Back then they considered that God was the one who provides our resources.

However, after detailing this system that would support everyone equally, he surprises everyone and states "the 'one thing' that blocks this is the invention of money, and men's tacit agreement to put a value on it." With modern money, there's no longer consideration for if there's enough left over for others. Money buys labor, and money buys property whether it goes to waste or not. With money there is no consideration of whether land spoils.

In 1776, Adam Smith published "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," which is one of the world's fundamental works in classical economics. This talks about supply and demand coming into equilibrium which is done by the 'invisible hand of the market.' As Dr. John McMurtry puts it, a professor of philosophy who analyzed this text, this takes the argument of private property from God giving natural rights to everyone to instead being the system itself as God. In this document, Mr. Smith states "among inferior ranks of people, the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it can do so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children." This is essentially saying that inferior people (which would be those in or born into poverty or not wealthy) will have their children destroyed due to the lack of supporting themselves. In other words, it is their own fault, and this is all caused by the invisible hand of the market.

These men who created the system knew exactly the ramifications of the system. They also knew how it could make them rich, which was the real purpose of the system. For why else would a system based on preservation and life be replaced? They were drowning in greed and they figured out a great way to exploit others. An enlightening quote on the topic, from a documentary by Peter Joseph is this; "physical slavery requires you to feed and house people, but economic slavery requires people to feed and house themselves."

As Dr. McMurtry (the philosopher I mentioned earlier) puts it, "you can see there was inherent racism built in here. There was an inherent acceptance, life blindness to kill innumerable children." This is due to the invisible hand and since in this case the invisible hand is seen as God, one can see how wise God is as this shifts all the blame onto him unrightfully so. And thus, built into the economic system we use today causes destruction and suffering among people all due to the greed of the individuals that created it, and the love of money.

There's a better way. The wisdom of God is much greater than any of us can comprehend. To me, it's clear he saw all this coming. God knew what man would do to each other and how we would twist our economics. In fact, he left us a warning to not be the ones doing it ourselves. Look at 1 Timothy 6:9 – "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and

harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.” This says, desiring to be rich, perhaps for example by creating fictional currency with no real value, will drown men in destruction and perdition and create wrong morals and values. Not only does this apply to the self, but could this have a dual meaning applying to others as well? The Greek word for “men” here is anthropous, which in other verses is translated as others. I think we can see how true this is that the love for money can drown others in destruction, and how wise God is.

I hope you all can see how when I beat my sister in Monopoly, I wasn’t just drowning myself in destruction by falling to greed, but this was also me drowning her in destruction and perdition. Now of course I didn’t physically harm her but rather destroyed her in the game. And after that game, she had one more lesson to teach me. After I beat her, she said “Now it all goes back in the box.” All those houses and cars. All those utilities and railroads. All those titles and clothes. None of it is really yours. The truth is, after we clutch and consume and hoard, we’re going to lose it all. And so, you have to ask yourself, when you’ve made the ultimate purchase, when you’ve climbed the ladder of success, when you’ve made it to the ultimate promotion, then what?

Consider I Timothy 6:6-8 – “Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” What does this say? It all goes back in the box. And so, we must ask ourselves, what really matters?

Isn’t it better to imagine a world where there is no suffering from poverty? Imagine a world where no one is without food. Imagine a world where nothing spoils because we don’t let it. This could be the world if everyone chose to avoid the love of money, and greed for power. Make the choice. Choose to not let yourselves fall prey to lusting after money but instead imagine the things that truly matter. My brethren, imagine The Kingdom of God. No, don’t imagine it, but make it a reality.