

Biblical Economics Key to Real Reformation

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi had a simple, but compelling way to stress the fundamentals of the game. He gathered his players, held up a football, and said, “Men, this is a football.”

Similarly, Christian author and teacher R.C. Sproul Jr. told CBN News Anchor Lee Webb that he believes it’s time to return to the basics when it comes to economics.

“When we’re left arguing about whether or not we should have a marginal tax rate of 45 percent or 48 percent, and the conservative is stuck arguing for the 45 percent we’ve had an insufficient reformation in our thinking,” Sproul said.

In the Beginning

Sproul believes that reformation will happen only when we return to scripture to see what God has to say about economics. That’s why he produced a video series called “Economics for Everybody.” It’s a compelling, even entertaining approach to a topic many find boring.

Sproul admits the Bible is not an economics textbook. But it does say plenty. He begins with the beginning.

“The first and most basic economic principle that we really need to grasp is simply this: God owns everything,” Sproul said.

That’s because He created everything and He gave man the responsibility to take care of it, much like a foreman does for a landowner.

Even after the fall, the “Creation Mandate” remains in effect: to be fruitful, multiply, and take dominion of the earth.

"Who God is determines all of economics," Sproul said.

Darwinian vs. Christian Economics

In the series, Sproul examines two competing worldviews: Christianity and the atheistic worldview expressed in Darwin's theory of evolution.

Both views have a profound influence on economics.

"In the Darwinian perspective stuff just happens. It just appears. And if stuff just appears, then that means wealth just appears," he explained. "And if it does, it certainly makes a whole lot more sense to say, well, let's just divide it. Let's just make it equal."

"If, however, if how much is produced is related to how much I work, then all of a sudden, property rights become clear," he said. "And they're central to so much of what God has to say about economics."

A culture that embraces a Christian worldview also embraces God's law. Sproul maintains each of the Ten Commandments contain fundamental economic principles, not just the one on stealing.

"How about 'Honor thy father and mother.' How is that an economic principle?" Webb asked.

"God says about this commandment, if you keep this commandment, it will go well for you in the land," he explained. "It recognizes that wealth is cumulative in a family. It builds on the principle of consuming less than we produce."

"I hate to sound like the president, but we didn't build this. Our fathers did and our grandfathers did and our great grandfathers did," he continued. "And we need to be grateful to them, we need to honor them by protecting those things."

Most Prosperous Nations

Sproul provides historical evidence that nations most influenced by biblical Christianity are nations that, by and large, have prospered. They are nations marked by decentralized governments and free markets.

But nations that reject God are marked by centralized power, tyranny, and no free markets. Unfortunately, he said he has observed some of those troubling trends in America now.

"The United States is not a free market. It's an interventionist economy that's been moving closer to socialism for over a century now," he said. "I am not optimistic about our nation's future economically."

"We live in a country in which the state forbids me to hire a man unless I promise to pay him X number of dollars," Sproul explained. "We now live in a country where I can't hire 50 men unless I promise to buy them all health insurance, including access to abortion."

"This is not economic liberty. This is not free markets," he said. "We're missing the fact that we're the frog and the water is boiling."

Biblical Thinking

That's why Sproul believes it's not enough to think conservatively. We must think biblically and train our children biblically.

"It's my conviction that education is always and everywhere religious," he said.

"And it's not a surprise that when 80 percent of evangelical parents have their children in the government's schools that they're going to embrace the religion of the government which is the worship of the state," he said.

Sproul cautioned Christians to avoid despair. One way to do that is by returning to the beginning, to the Creation Mandate

and begin to see that our work is part of worship.

“Our work will last. When we’re warned that which is wood, hay, and stubble will be burned away, but that which we do to the glory of God for manifestation of the reign of Christ; what we do here and now with that motivation I am fully persuaded will last into the new heavens and the new earth,” he said, “whether we’re digging ditches or whether we’re the president of a multi-national corporation or an athlete.”

“Whatever it is we’re doing if we can have the perspective that we’re working for the kingdom and we’re working for Jesus and that our work is a sacrifice to Him,” he said, “we end up richly rewarded.”