

A Biblical View of **SOCIALISM**

“Socialism is a great idea until you run out of other people’s money.”

- Margaret Thatcher

Watch **A Biblical View of Socialism** by Pastor Todd Wagner of Watermark Community Church in Dallas, TX, read through the outline, and discuss the questions below.

What is Socialism?

Socialism takes from some and gives to others by force, based on the rulings and opinions of a governing elite. Explained another way, socialism is the belief that we should collectively pull our resources together so that everybody can mutually benefit.

It’s good to be concerned for one another, but the question is not IF we should be concerned, but instead, where should that concern come from and who should legislate how to best help other people?

A Biblical View on Socialism

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart.” - Acts 2:42-46

Some people believe if you love God you ought to be a socialist because of what we read in Acts 2 about the early church. The people of Acts were diligent in their work and used all of their gifts and human ingenuity to benefit others. However, if some of them were not able to do that, then others came alongside them.

How is this different from socialism? In Acts, it was never someone telling them what to do. Instead, helping others flowed out of the heart of a cheerful giver, someone choosing to help. Put another way, it was not a ruling elite imposing the idea on other people.

The people in Acts were living in a community that was informed by the sacrificial example of a loving leader, like Jesus was.

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." - 2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus did not incentivize godless, foolish, or irresponsible behavior. Jesus identified with our sin but still called us to personal responsibility.

"For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat." - 2 Thessalonians 3:10

We are not to encourage irresponsible living, but we are to encourage cheerful giving.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." - Proverbs 14:12

What About Caring for Those in Need?

There are some people who because of disability or life circumstances, aren't able to provide for themselves. One of the reasons governments have to step up and care for other people is because so many people are choosing not to help. The way to compel people to care for one another is not by force, but through a loving example.

The reason we have government is to punish evil doers and praise those who do right.

"For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." Romans 13:4

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27

One of the problems that we see often is individuals who aren't living disciplined ordered lives expect others to care for them. When this happens, it is not loving and instead enables irresponsible living.

"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death." Proverbs 14:12

"And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone." - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

As a Christian, we should care for others, not because our government tells us to do that, but because our God does.

A government that can provide for you can also take from you everything. But a limited government that punishes evil and praises those who do right, encourages churches who care for other people.

The Takeaway

Share your faith and your hope. Explain why you want to care for other people and invite others to join with you. Model what it means to care for others. Live a righteous, good and holy life before other people (Luke 1:75).

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” Isaiah 1:17

Socialism takes away human dignity and human freedoms.

God and His way will not only increase human flourishing, not just humans that are free to flourish themselves, but free to live in a way that gives them dignity and purpose in a way they can care and love and provide for others.

When we follow Christ’s way, it’s the best way. Perverted capitalism and greed is not God’s way. Socialism and forced imposed giving is not God’s way. God calls us to humility, seeking to do good, and cultivate faithfulness in the land.

Discussion Questions

1. As a society, how do you think we define socialism? How is it similar or different from biblical teaching and what’s found in Act 2?
2. What is the Church’s role and the government’s role when it comes to caring for those in need?
3. How might God be calling you to better love and care for those in need?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Real Truth Real Quick: “Does Acts 2:42-47 Teach Socialism?”](#)