

# Christianity

Vs

# Occupy



OCCUPY

The Bible addresses two key errors of the Occupy movement:

1. The Method
2. The Ideology

## The Method of Occupy

The English statesman Edmund Burke once declared, “The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” But the question remains: what is the thing that must be done? Occupy, obstruct, and protest? Or do good, labor, and bless? Simply put, should we stop evil by repaying evil with evil or by repaying evil with good?

Not only does the Bible give us a moral code, but it also provides specific instruction as to how to confront injustice in the world. If evil is repaid with evil, then all you get is more evil. If evil is repaid with good, the good conquers the evil.

## The Apostle Paul

Living under the oppressive Roman Empire, the Apostle Paul instructed believers to confront the evils of that system with charity.

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:18-21)*

## The Apostle Peter

The Apostle Peter taught the remedy for injustice is good works. Even Roman slavery could be overthrown by a gentle and submissive response.

*For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. (1 Peter 2:15)*

*Not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead. (1 Peter 3:9)*

## The Jews in Babylon

When Nebuchadnezzar invaded Israel in 605 BC, the skilled craftsmen and professionals were taken captive to Babylon. The natural response was to resist or even sabotage the corrupt Babylonian economy. God’s answer was to bless Babylon with productive labor. God’s people were to change society by being actively involved in wealth creation – not by laziness, protest or obstruction.

*Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters,... seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare. (Jeremiah 29:4-7)*

## The Zealots

In Jesus’ day, the Jews terrorized the Roman Empire with a resistance movement called the “Zealots.” They believed God would have them secure freedom by intimidation and terror. In the end they brought only more suffering, poverty, and death upon their own people. Jesus taught a much better way for dealing with injustice.

*Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. (Matthew 26:52)*

*But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. (Luke 6:35)*

Revolutionaries make a lot of noise and are cited in history books as the catalyst for change, but in reality they never really change the world for good. The protestors and obstructionists only make matters worse. No child is ever fed, housed, or educated through demonstration. The real agents of change are those who diligently create goods and services for others.

## God’s Philosophy of Life: Ecclesiastes

The book of Ecclesiastes addresses the question of injustice in the world. Rather than being alarmed by inequality, God assures the persecuted that the rich and powerful have oppressors over them to keep them in check.

*If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them. (Ecclesiastes 5:8)*

Competitors always bring down the guy on top. Nobody can get away with a monopoly for long. God even allows greedy people to destroy other greedy people – gangs kill gangs, mobsters kill mobsters, the cheaters are cheated.

*Woe to you, O destroyer, While you were not destroyed; and he who is treacherous, while others did not deal treacherously with him. As soon as you finish destroying, you will be destroyed; as soon as you cease to deal treacherously, others will deal treacherously with you. (Isaiah 33:1)*

Even though it is the plan of God to use evil to stop evil, Jesus made it clear that His people should never be involved in doing evil to stop evil.

*Woe to the world because of its offenses! For it is inevitable that offenses come; but woe to that man through whom the offenses come! (Matthew 18:7)*

The Christian philosophy for changing society is no small thing. America has become a successful nation because the Christian ethic has saved our nation from the violence of the mob – the Reign of Terror. Rather than confronting injustice with violence and hatred, good citizens have responded with more good works, more business, and more wealth creation. The honest wealth producers soon take control, and those who have made their wealth unjustly are marginalized. Any segment of society that tries to solve economic injustice by obstructionism, dropping out, or by adopting a victim mentality, will soon become an impoverished, third-world group.

Christianity works because it understands that greed is a spiritual problem. To change society one must change hearts, and this is never accomplished by intimidating people through violence or obstructionism. By intimidation there may be an outward appearance of compliance; but since the heart is not changed, the prejudice and greed remain. These vices will resurface in another venue even worse than before.

God’s method of repaying evil with good applies to private individuals. However, the role of government is to punish evil (Romans 12:17-13:8). Nevertheless, what God asks of the individual is counterintuitive to our natural thinking. The common objection is that responding with good would mean empowering and compromising with evil. We would all become door mats for greedy people. On the contrary, those who

respond to injustice by involving themselves in wealth creation not only set a good example, but they eventually become more empowered than their oppressors. “The hand of the diligent will rule (Proverbs 12:24).” “A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully (Proverbs 17:2).”

It may feel good to fight against injustice with obstructionism, but it results in only more evil. The wrong methods of obstructionism must be corrected by the Word of God.

## The Ideology of Occupy

There is a false assumption in the Occupy movement – success and quality of life are based on money. Jesus taught the opposite.

***He (Jesus) said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)***

Your spiritual well-being and your character constitute far more wealth than your bank account. In fact, the working middle-class often has a better quality of life than those distracted by wealth.

***He who loves money will not be satisfied with money...The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:10-12)***

The Bible has much to say about the liabilities and troubles of wealth. For this reason, the Bolshevik communists despised the Christian community, for they could never entice believers to revolt out of class envy.

Christians are very happy for those who are providentially given great wealth. God gives some men the burden of being rich. The wealthy work to build our roads, factories, banks, schools, etc. While they have the headaches, we enjoy the fruit of their labor. Our time is freed up to pursue more important things. If the rich have a few more zeros in their bank account, it is actually meaningless in the grand scheme of eternity.

## What is wealth?

The claim that the top 1% own 40% of the wealth is a subjective figure. Business owners must hold more assets even as farmers must own more land, but the bulk of these assets are necessary for work, not for luxurious living. Wealth is a relative concept that cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The poor farmer in Kansas, with a forty-acre plot, has more real assets than the millionaire living in a 1000 sq. ft. apartment on Fifth Avenue. Moreover, the person who has God is wealthier than them all. If wealth is judged correctly, the top 1% actually hold only 1% of the real wealth, maybe much less; “for it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven (Luke 18:25).”

Social unrest over income inequality began when Americans abandoned Christianity for pagan materialism. A materialistic society judges the quality of life by how much stuff is owned, and this creates all sorts of unhealthy class envy. This new passion for economic equality is driven by crass materialism. In the anti-greed message of the Occupy movement, who is actually fixated on money and materialism? The Christian is truly “anti-greed” for he does not believe that the rich have a better life, nor does he consider himself cheated. Only societies that have made money their god are fooled by the false promises of Socialism and Communism.

## The Limited Pie Argument

One of the ideological errors of the Occupy movement is viewing wealth as a fixed quantity, whereas, the Biblical view is that there is an endless source of wealth and opportunity (Job 42:12; Deuteronomy 8:18). The truth is that the wealthy 1% do not reduce or hinder the wealth of the 99%. But the Occupiers view the wealth of the world as a limited pie. If 1% has 40% of the pie, then the 99% is left with only 60% of the pie.

A more correct economic analogy is the ocean – the 1% holds 40 gallons of the ocean; the 99% hold 60 gallons. There remains an ocean of wealth for the taking. Statistics show that there is great income mobility. Over a 10-year period, 58% of those in the

top 1% were replaced by people from below. The wealthy do not keep others from being wealthy. Even in the face of economic injustice, the non-wealthy can always work to become wealthy, especially in the free-market American economy.

In Genesis God pronounced that man shall work by the sweat of his brow. But ever since, there have been bitter people who have hated God’s system of merit – for example, the lazy student who thinks he deserves the same “A” as the studious student. The “merit haters” like to believe that the wealthy are lucky winners in the lottery of life. Yet studies have shown that upper-income families work more jobs and have longer hours than lower-income families. “Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich (Proverbs 10:4).” Given the idleness of the Occupiers, maybe what they subconsciously want is to have wealth given to them without having to work.

## Social Injustice

Is there economic corruption in America? Yes; but we have plenty of laws on the books along with judges and elected leaders who are doing a fair job of combating injustices. The rich are carrying more than their fair share. The top 1% earned 16.9% of the nation’s income, but they pay 37% of all taxes. The top 5% pay 50% of all taxes. If the government were to confiscate all the income of the top 1%, it would amount to only 1.3 trillion dollars. The Federal Budget Deficit would still be unbalanced.

Then what does the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement really want? And why doesn’t OWS protest the most corrupting influence – big government? The greedy and wasteful non-working class bureaucrats are far more dangerous than the threat of big business. In the free market the individual can stop patronizing corrupt business, but history has shown that the tyranny of Big Brother government is almost unstoppable.

Although this brochure has addressed the Occupy Movement as if it is a sincere campaign to address social ills, we should not be so naïve. There may be something more insidious going on. Much of the

movement is organized and funded by Communist ideologues who know how to exploit discontented individuals. The goal is to use the economic downturn to engender dissatisfaction with the free enterprise system in order to slowly move the system toward Communism/Socialism. It is a well-orchestrated following of “Rules for Radicals”.

In every society there is always a small percentage of the population that craves authoritarian government (1 Samuel 8). Such individuals are either filled with class envy, or they are well-meaning people who have a naïve view of human nature and government power. The underlying motive is money and control, but these authoritarians bring the working class into their ranks through words of equity and justice. Both the Soviet Communists and the German National Socialists (NAZIs) paraded under the banner of Social justice. Only a population that has abandoned Biblical truth falls prey to their lies. And this becomes a self-imposed judgment upon a Biblically illiterate people.

Because of the rise of Biblical illiteracy, too many citizens are naively sympathetic toward the Occupy movement. Some politicians and media personalities are legitimizing a movement that the Bible severely warns against. The only recourse is a revival of Christian truth. Only then will the public see the phony moral claim of the Occupy movement. This obstructionist movement can then be replaced with a new generation of entrepreneurial wealth creators who will change the world for good.

***Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)***

B.E. Winship

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