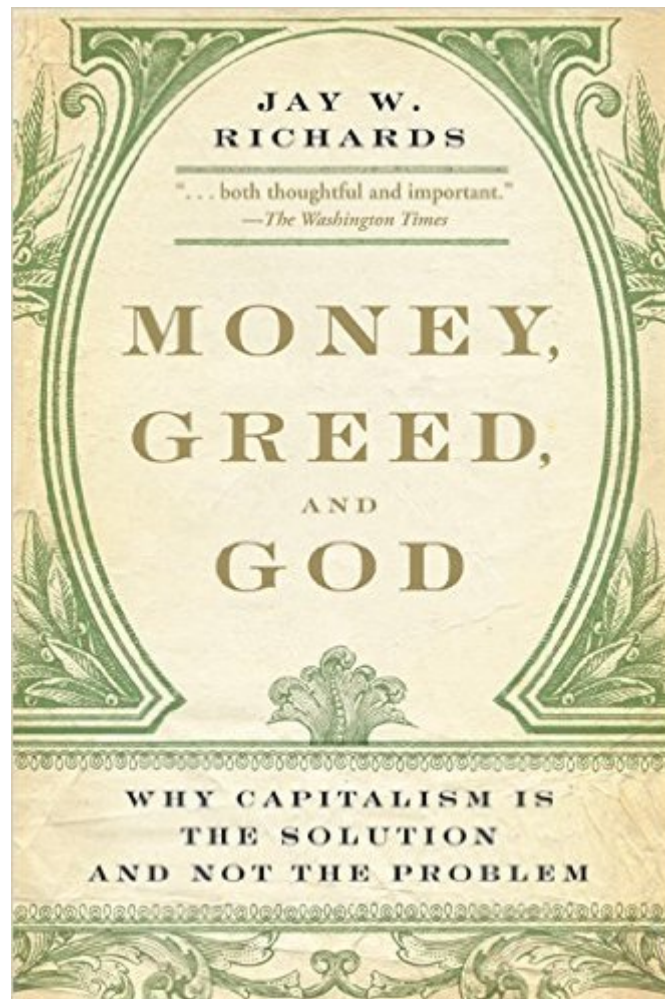


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Money, Greed, And God: Why Capitalism Is The Solution And Not The Problem



Synopsis

In *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and Not the Problem*, Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute Jay W. Richards and bestselling author of *Indivisible: Restoring Faith, Family, and Freedom Before It's Too Late* and *Infiltrated: How to Stop the Insiders and Activists Who Are Exploiting the Financial Crisis to Control Our Lives and Our Fortunes*, defends capitalism within the context of the Christian faith, revealing how entrepreneurial enterprise, based on hard work, honesty, and trust, actually fosters creativity and growth. In doing so, *Money, Greed, and God* exposes eight myths about capitalism, and demonstrates that a good Christian can be a good capitalist.

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Customer Reviews

I will cut to the chase - this is going to be a very, very positive book review. This is an excellent book, and I will explain why I am so fond of it in just a moment. But since I write a lot of book reviews, and the one negative thing I have to say about this book is something I have never said before, I will just get it out of the way up front so I can move on to the real review: I wish I had written this book. Quite literally, Jay Richards took the need for me to do something I was very serious about doing (some day) right off of my "to-do" list. A book for laymen of faith that provides a Biblical defense of free market capitalism is in tremendous need. John Schneider's *The Good of Affluence* is a fantastic contribution [...] but its focus is exegetical and theological. Dinesh D'Souza's *The Virtue of Prosperity* is delightful, but it is specifically contextualized to an era that was

practically gone by the time the book was published (the dot com techno-affluence world). A slew of treatises exist that provide an underlying defense of capitalism, but the sad reality is that most books defending the morality of a free market ideology were not written by people of faith, or at least not people publicly identifying their faith-based presuppositions. The book concept I have been so excited to see is one that was (a) Written for an audience of laymen, (b) Written for an audience of professing believers, (c) Written with an underlying theological credibility and understanding, and (d) Written with a very specific economic expertise. Perhaps I was fooling myself to think I was the person to tackle such an endeavor, but I am happy (and sad) to report that my vision has now been fulfilled.

Richards is not a Randian, but he notes several positive things about Rand, not surprising from an author who explains that he was positively influenced by Rand. To clarify his position on Rand, Richards does not argue in this book that Rand defends misers. Quite the contrary. He discusses the fact that she makes pioneering entrepreneurs the heroes of her novels. Richards' complaints are that: (1) She defends selfishness; (2) she attacks the sacrificial ideal (common to the Judeo-Christian and broadly Western tradition); and (3) she argues that Christianity and capitalism are incompatible. Richards does say that readers might expect her to defend misers because of her praise of selfishness. He never says she did so. Here's what he says in the chapter on greed: "Despite Rand's official praise of selfishness, however, John Galt doesn't look anything like Ebenezer Scrooge or that fat, cigar-smoking, tuxedo-clad guy in Monopoly. On the contrary, Galt is a pioneer, a brave creator of wealth who pursues his vision despite powerful obstacles, including a malevolent state bent on destroying him. In fact, although Rand despised Christian self-sacrifice, Galt is suspiciously Christ-like. He preaches a message of salvation, founds a community, challenges the status quo and official powers-that-be, who hunt him down, torture him, but ultimately fail to conquer him." To be sure, there are dissonant notes. His symbol is not a cross, but the dollar sign. The book ends with Galt and his lover tracing the sign of the dollar across a dry valley. But insofar as Galt's character works, it's because he contradicts the miserly stereotype that Rand's philosophy leads the reader to expect. In fact, none of Rand's best fictional characters fits her philosophy very well.

(This review was written by Ray Nothstine and originally published on the Acton Institute Powerblog) The belief that the essence of capitalism is greed is perhaps the biggest myth Jay W. Richards tackles in his new book, *Money, Greed, and God: Why Capitalism is the Solution and not*

the Problem. One reason for confronting this challenge is that many free market advocates subscribe to the thought that capitalism produces greed, and for them that's not necessarily a negative. But for those with a faith perspective, greed and covetousness are of course serious moral flaws. It's also the kind of myth that less articulate writers would rather not challenge, especially in this troubling economic climate. Richards does however have a skill for tightly honed logical arguments, and he not only is able to defend free markets but tear lethal holes into many of the economic ramblings of the religious left. He even takes on holy of holies like fair trade and Third World debt relief. Richards argues that the free market is moral, something that may come as a surprise to many people of faith. This book provides a crushing blow to those involved in the ministry of class warfare or those who wish to usher in the Kingdom of God through "nanny state" policies. The book divides into eight chapters, with each chapter discussing a common held economic myth like the "piety myth" or "nirvana myth." Richards says the piety myth pertains to "focusing on our good intentions rather than on the unintended consequences of our actions." The nirvana myth characterizes the act of "contrasting capitalism with an unrealizable ideal rather than with its live alternatives." Richards himself states, "The question isn't whether capitalism measures up to the kingdom of God.

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