

Socialism ... *Giving or Taking?*

The roots of Socialism are based on the importance of giving. Most of us would agree it is worthy to give. When we give with love, it opens our heart. We tap into a feeling that we're serving the greater good and a higher purpose. We become a better person. When the giving involves taking, what do we lose personally and as a society? Are those losses worth it?

To help a class of high school students understand how Socialism works, a teacher conducted an experiment. Students are rewarded for their work with marks rather than money, so

he used their marks to illustrate the principle of Socialism. After an exam, the students who scored the highest marks had some of their marks taken from them. These marks were then given to the students who scored the lowest marks. This exchange of marks resulted in all students scoring closer to an average of 70 percent. After marks from the next exam had been redistributed, the average mark was now much lower—just above 50 percent. The top students, realizing some of their hard-earned marks would be taken from them, had no reason to excel on examinations. The students

with lower marks, realizing they would receive a better mark from the redistribution, had no reason to make an effort to improve their marks themselves.

If Socialism inspired us to serve a greater good and a higher purpose then why did the top students not aspire to achieve the highest marks in order to be able to give even more? And why did the students with lower marks not make a greater effort to improve their marks themselves? Is it possible that when we force others to give, we rob them of the satisfaction of finding their own ways to give? Is it possible that when giving is mandated, we rob those who receive of finding their own ways to improve their life?



Are you ready to allow others to follow their hearts in deciding how to give? Are you ready to give to others by allowing them the freedom of choice?

Freedom of Choice

"I believe that desirable social and economic objectives are better achieved by voluntary action than by coercion of law.

"I believe that social tranquility and brotherhood are better achieved by tolerance, persuasion, and the power of good example than by coercion of law.

"I believe that those in need are better served by charity, which is the giving of one's own money, than by welfare, which is the giving of other people's money through coercion of law."

G. Edward Griffin

From Freedom Force International

"Creed of Freedom"

Read Creed

Roots of Socialism

The roots of Socialism on North American soil go back to the pilgrims who settled the Plymouth Colony in 1620. They decided their land would be communal and at harvest time all crops would be stored in a common storehouse. Members of the colony would work the land equally and at harvest time would take from the warehouse according to their need. There would be no 'haves' and 'have-nots.' No rich and no poor. The wealth would be shared. After the harvest, they had a Thanksgiving celebration. Over the winter, however, there was not enough food in the storehouse to feed everyone. Many of the colonists starved to death.

What happened? Everyone wasn't contributing. Knowing their needs would be looked after regardless of their contribution, some had worked very little to put food in the storehouse. After three winters of starvation, Governor William Bradford called the surviving members of the

Colony together. They reached a new agreement. Each farmer was deeded a plot of land. Each would work their land and store their bounty individually. Each farmer would have full control of the results of his labor. One year later, in 1624, the Colony had food in abundance with enough to export. When individuals were given the opportunity to reap according to their efforts, the Colony prospered. Prosperity also meant families could choose to share with those who were experiencing misfortune. In 1624 the Colony was able to have a true Thanksgiving feast.¹

What lesson can we learn from these pilgrims? The pilgrims developed a prosperous colony when all were allowed to earn according to their labors and give according to their hearts. Knowing their supply of food depended on their own labor, those who contributed less were put in the position of having to provide for themselves and their families. Some needed their survival to be threatened in order to produce. Some were self-motivated to do the best they could. Does Socialism penalize those who are self-motivated to do the best they can and reward those who need hardship to provide for themselves?

Are you ready to give to others by allowing them to have life's hard experiences so they may learn how to survive and to give? Are you ready to give to others by allowing them this experience?

Helping or Hurting

In our efforts to give, can we also be taking from or harming those to whom we give? The story of the struggle of the Emperor Moth gives us food for thought. The cocoon from which an emperor moth must emerge is a bottle shape with a wide bottom and very narrow neck. This neck is made of a hard concrete-like substance. While observing a cocoon in his lab, a biologist watched the struggle of the moth to emerge.

He couldn't see how the moth could possibly get through the hardened, narrow neck of the cocoon so he decided to help. He cut off the top enabling the moth to pop out. The biologist waited in anticipation for the moth to spread its wings and reveal the beauty of the intricate wing pattern. The moth, however, was terribly misshapen. Before his eyes it died. Its normally sleek body was bloated and huge. The wings that should have carried it aloft in all their glory were tiny and undeveloped.

The biologist looked for answers. He discovered that the struggle of the emperor moth to emerge from the cocoon is essential to its survival. The struggle through the hard, narrow neck forces fluids from the body into the wings. This process is essential to the moth's survival and to its amazing grace and beauty. The biologist wanted to help and make life easier for the moth. Instead, in trying to alleviate its suffering, he robbed it of its beauty and took its life.²

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The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in times of comfort, but where he stands in moments of challenge and controversy.

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Martin Luther King

Most of us have a sincere desire to alleviate suffering and help those experiencing life's lessons through hardships. Is it possible we harm others by expecting government to take from those who earn more to give to those who earn less? In doing this, do we keep people from learning the lessons life is teaching them? Do we keep them in a state of need and poverty rather than helping by allowing them to learn how to survive and thrive?

Davy Crockett, the Politician

“Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier ... killed him a bear when he was only three...” The Ballad of Davy Crockett, became a popular song in the 1950s as a result of the Walt Disney television series. Today Davy Crockett is best remembered as a frontiersman. It is not as well known that he was also an outspoken member of the US Congress. In 1833, a bill was put before Congress to give a sum as charity to the widow of a prominent officer who had fought

in the war of 1812. After many eloquent speeches in favor of the bill, it seemed certain to pass. Davy Crockett rose to speak. He spoke of a neighbor of his who was a war widow. She was working to earn a living and she, like many others he knew, would have to help pay for the charity extended to this widow. He concluded his remarks by saying: "I am the poorest man on this floor. I cannot vote for this bill, but I will give one weeks pay to the object, and if every member of Congress will do the same, it will amount to more than the bill asks." Crockett's speech turned the tide and the bill did not pass.

While working in his office the next day, Crockett was confronted by an angry newspaper reporter. He demanded to know why Crockett spoke against the bill. "Thereby hangs a tale," said Crockett. He told about meeting a farmer while seeking votes before the recent election. The farm was isolated but the farmer kept himself well informed by reading the Washington newspapers and Congressional records. The farmer asked Crockett about his support for a bill that gave \$20,000 to the survivors of a massive Georgetown fire. Crockett proudly affirmed his actions saying, "That's the last vote for which anyone would find fault."

The farmer pointed out the government was taking funds from some who were poorer and giving to people who were better off despite the fact they had lost their homes. He then asked, "Where does it end?" He pointed out that different individuals in government have personal preferences as to who should receive money. This allocation of government funds for charity was also an invitation for fraud and corruption in deciding who should or should not get money. The farmer ended by emphasizing we are each, including government representatives, free to give as much of our own money to charity as we want. He added that we do not have the right to use government to take from all in order that we may give to some.

*If you want happiness ...
For an hour, take a nap.
For a year, inherit a fortune.
For a lifetime, help someone else.*
Chinese Proverb

After recounting the experience that changed his thoughts about government charity, Crockett reminded the reporter that not one of the members of Congress had come forward to match his personal offer to give one weeks pay to help the widow.³

Davy Crockett changed his views from a belief in socialism to a belief in the individual's right to choose. He changed from a belief in the right to take from all in order to share the wealth, to the right of the individual to decide when to give. He personally decided to give rather than take. He recognized that it is easy to be generous with the labor or money of others.

Is this one of life's tests? Davy Crockett realized the easy way is to use government resources and tax payers' money in order to help others. Maybe the test for each of us is:

What are we willing to do personally, with our actions and money, to help others? Are we willing to help without expecting government or others to help? Are we willing to give with love, to open our heart, to tap into that feeling that we're serving the greater good and a higher purpose?

A Helping Hand Multiplies

Bonnie Silver had no idea what a simple prayer would lead to. Living on a farm in Michigan, she knelt to pray briefly before going to work. "Before I could finish," she said, "three words burst into my mind: hay...drought...south." When she entered the kitchen, she asked her husband what the words meant to him. He said there was a severe drought in the south and cattle were starving and dying as there wasn't enough hay. Bonnie had no idea what to do: "I was just a farmwife and a part-time cashier." Over the next few days the three words wouldn't leave her mind.

She knew she and her husband could spare some hay. Finally she called around to other farmers and they said they'd be willing to donate hay as well. None of them, however, had a way to transport the hay down south. Since the government hadn't organized anything, Bonnie didn't see how she could possibly be expected to do something! The three words, however, would not leave her. Then she recalled, "On the highway I'd often seen trucks from Steelcase, a huge office furniture manufacturer in Grand Rapids." She called their office but did not expect to be taken seriously. To her surprise, within minutes, she was talking to the CEO. When he asked how many trucks she needed, without thinking she said twenty.



Before long, trucks loaded with hay were rolling south. When the media heard the story, farmers from throughout the state called to donate hay. Then, the railroad got involved. "High-school football teams, youth-corps volunteers, prisoners on work detail, all kinds of people were taking the hay from trucks and putting it into railcars." Bonnie reports, "We were delivering hay into seven states—over 10.5 million pounds—and not one dollar had exchanged hands. All the labor, fuel, transportation, and feed were donated." The lives of hundreds of cattle and the livelihoods of many farmers were saved.⁴

Developing Spiritual Qualities

Are we here to learn from our experiences in order that we develop spiritual qualities and learn to fly in all our glory like the Emperor Moth and Bonnie? Are we here to learn to make choices for ourselves, to learn to give to life, and to learn to love ourselves and others? When we ask government to provide for others, are we also taking away opportunities for others to learn spiritual lessons? Are we not only taking away opportunities for spiritual growth but also a turning point that will be a catalyst for a person to build a better life and earn greater material comforts?

If giving means we may be limiting another's spiritual growth, how do we know when it is appropriate to give? From a spiritual viewpoint, anything we do with love, from our hearts, is appropriate. When we give from love, we give with no expectation of anything in return. When we ask the government to take in order to give, are we not missing out on an opportunity to serve the greater good and a higher purpose? When we give from love, we change the world—one step at a time. Giving from the heart creates a better world for all. We can start with ourselves rather than government to improve the world. Socialism limits our ability to be the best we can be. The freedom to give from our hearts allows us to be the best we can be.

When the giving involves taking, what do we lose personally and as a society? Are those losses worth it?

References

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