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The Life of the Steward

*This article is excerpted
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ard, Design Group
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Ownership, however it has been established, is the cornerstone of our capitalistic economic system. And this presents one of the greatest challenges for those of us who have been raised as capitalists to grasp and embrace our role as stewards in God's Kingdom.

Please do not misunderstand me here. I am not trying to say that capitalism is inherently evil. I am and intend to remain a capitalist. Capitalism is without a doubt the most powerful economic force that has ever been unleashed on the face of the earth—much for good, some for ill.

The inherent problem is not with capitalism itself, but with the degree to which we have embraced this economic system as

the foundation of our lives. Our thought processes, our expectations, our value systems, and our world views are generally much more influenced by our capitalistic instincts that by our Christian faith. It is in this context that I often say of American Christians, "We are capitalists before we are Christians."

The fundamental premise of the capitalistic economic system is that you are rewarded in proportion to your contribution. The wonderfully powerful aspect of this is the notion that hard work pays off! This has been the catalyst for countless highly successful entrepreneurs and has led to the rich economic diversity we enjoy today.

But the "reward based on contribution" principle also has a more sinister side. As

capitalists, we live in a society which generally measures our worth as people by what we possess. So if I have a big house and an obviously expensive car and a bunch of the other stuff that goes with them, then those things are evidence that I am making a big contribution to our society. Therefore, I am worthy of respect. You will largely form your initial opinion of me based upon what I "own."

If capitalism has this kind of power in our lives and it is all predicated on us owning stuff, how do we get our capitalistic minds to comprehend the idea that our human "ownership" is really just a convenient way of organizing our economic activity and that God really does own everything?

-Ned J. Kiser

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