

The Free Market-Antidote to the Greed Motive

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“Such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain; it takes away the life of its possessors.”
Proverbs 1:19

What is the most likely word to be filled in the blank, “those greedy _____?” It’s businessmen of course. We hear it all the time in TV programs, in movies, in the newspaper. It is almost a given in America that almost all, if not all, entrepreneurs, businessmen or businesswomen, or wealthy people are greedy, and guilty of many other sins as well.

Does the person hurling the accusation of “being greedy” actually know the person that he is demonizing, and therefore have some basis for the “greedy” label? No, he doesn’t. He assumes that the successful person is greedy. Why? The Bible is clear that all men are sinners, and therefore, poor, middle class, and wealthy are susceptible to the sin of greed. And yet you almost never hear the phrase, “those greedy welfare recipients.” If someone is capable of working, and deliberately chooses not to, but instead lives off of the productivity of those who do work, by the means of taxation and wealth redistribution, would this not be considered greed?

So, why is the successful business owner automatically greedy? I believe the root is jealousy or envy. We hate the successful individual because he or she has more than we do. I Timothy 6:10 declares, “For the **love of money** is the root **of** all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Many assume that this verse is a warning to the wealthy. Certainly so, but it is equally a warning to those who are not wealthy but desire riches. These must not covet the money and goods of those who are wealthy.

Are there some greedy businessmen? Undoubtedly. But remember that to be successful the entrepreneur had to see a need of his fellow human beings, devise a plan to meet that need, produce a quality good or service at a competitive price, sacrifice to invest to produce this good or service, work very diligently often for many years before seeing the fruit of his work. To the businessman/businesswoman or entrepreneur we owe our amazing lifestyles filled with tens of thousands of tools, and conveniences. Each of our lives is tremendously enriched because of them.

Instead of labeling these amazing and productive individuals “greedy” or even “super greedy” we should thank God that they get out of the bed in the morning, and essentially say, “What can I do today” to make life easier, happier, or more fulfilling for my fellow man?”