



Envy is Evil, not the Desire for Wealth

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The desire for money is often viewed with disdain by those who believe in a more altruistic approach. They believe themselves to be noble in their morals, and while that may be so, they usually believe in using more government controls to enforce their altruism. They intend to enforce desired actions to reach certain end goals, either with tighter controls of small fines, regulations on how something is made, or with the complete seizure of the means of production. These end goals usually look to end or reduce inequality of income and distribution of resources, and their morals are seen as enough reason for action.

When talking about capitalism, one must see how greediness for money energizes most of the system in an efficient way. The greedy strive for profits push businesses to create and distribute products where it is demanded by their customers. While there are some organizations whose main goals are to give back rather than making money, the desire for wealth ultimately allows scarce resources to be allocated appropriately with very little to no waste. This approach, while rooted in individual self-interest proves far better at not only distributing the resources where necessary but helps create jobs, raise wages and increase the standard of living.

But why is such a system of economic freedom and prosperity, as well as its drive to make profits seen as horrific to one group, but not the other? Perhaps it is that many libertarians, anarcho-capitalists, and objectivists do not see the desire for money as the issue. Rather they see the desire for someone else's earnings as the true face of evil: envy.

Before we begin talking about envy, we must first define what envy is, as well as any misconceptions that may create confusion. Envy can be defined as the "painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. However, many in the libertarian camp see this approach as an issue when the government is used as a force to obtain the fruits of other's labor.

One could make the argument that envy is what drives entrepreneurs to maximize profits in a free market system, those who use voluntary exchange are not only supplying market demand but also working hard to create wealth.

While we may consider ourselves in a free market where hard work can create profits, we have many controls in our government that stifle economic growth for many people. The most prevalent of which is the war on drugs, which perpetuates a cycle of poverty towards the victims of those policies of mass incarceration. Any government controls that prevent profitable innovations should be removed.

A paper from the Cato Institute's Brink Lindsey recognizes 4 areas of interest: copyright and patents, occupational licensing, land use restrictions, and restrictions on immigration, as being subjected to "regressive regulations" and government controls that hinder income equality, as well as the free market. These deregulations can help the US to continue to be a melting pot of ideas and innovations that create jobs, raise wages, increase the standard of living, but also reduce inequality and combat the envious urges to take from hard-working Americans.