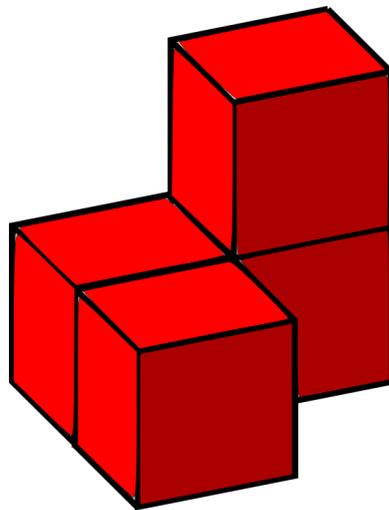


# **Building on the Rock**

Biblical foundations for a stable economy



Small Group Studies  
on a subject  
that the Bible has a great deal to tell us about.

**F**  **OCUS BIBLE STUDIES**

**Rev. Philip Lyes**

## Why do Bible Studies on Economics?

Economics is the study of how human society allocates resources. Economic Studies cover the big picture of how economic systems work in nations and across the world, as well as the relationship with the financial decisions of individuals. Economics is global and personal, and everything in-between. Every day, every individual is both influenced by, and influences, the economic systems that we are part of.

For Christians, our faith in Jesus Christ impacts on every part of our life, including the economic and financial decisions that we make. God created humanity and God is vitally interested in the way human society operates; including the way human beings allocate resources.

In very many ways Christians appear to operate within our economy, make personal financial decisions, and relate to material things, with little obvious differences to the non-Christians around us. That suggests that, either, the economic system, priorities and values in our society are already closely aligned to God's will for human society, or that Christians are so immersed in the economic system that we live in that we do not seriously question or challenge it. Perhaps there is some truth in both those possibilities; Christian influence over hundreds of years has made a mark on economic values (even if that may be waning); yet it can also be difficult, even as Christians, to see past what we know and to imagine a lifestyle and value system that is different to what we live in.

So, what does our faith say about economics? What did Jesus teach and model about economics? How does God want people to live with material resources? Does the Bible tell us anything about this?

A read through the Bible reveals about 750 passages that have relevance to economic matters. Considering that there are 1189 chapters in the Bible, this means that there are not many pages of Scripture that do not contain something to inform the economic side of life. This should not surprise us; the Bible is a practical, life-related book. The question becomes not whether the Bible can inform economics, but how do we process the enormous amount that the Bible has to say on this subject? This is a daunting task; but it is perhaps one of the most important challenges for Christians in a time when economics shapes so much of life.

The 10 studies in this series invite you to open your minds and hearts to that challenge.

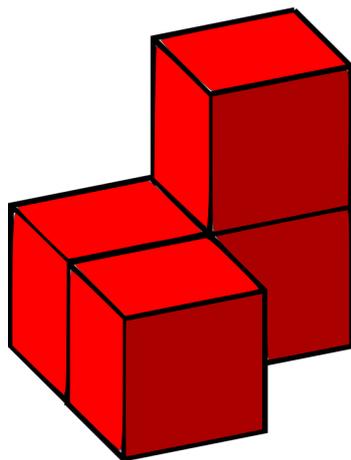
Rev. Philip Lyes

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## Study Topics

1. Ownership *Taking hold or letting go?*
2. Wealth Creation *The need for more, or more than we need?*
3. Caring for Those in Need *The value of compassion*
4. Consumerism & Sustainability *Buy, buy, or bye, bye?*
5. Worship & Justice *God's non-negotiables*
6. Work *Labour of love or necessary evil?*
7. Generosity *The Biblical take on giving*
8. Debt *A subject full of interest*
9. Leadership *Economics by example*
10. Jubilee *God's economic blueprint*

## Explaining the format of these Studies

In 1 Corinthians 13: 12 Paul writes 'now we see through a glass darkly' but later will see 'face to face'. The purpose of these studies is to help see through the glass more clearly. The imagery of glass, in different forms, is used to represent each stage of this study process as we seek to improve our vision of God's will. There are several stages to each study. While some stages may be left out, it is most useful if each stage is worked through. It may be more beneficial for a group to take more than one session to complete a study, rather than cut a study short.

**The stages in each study are:**



**Wiper** - A wiper cleans the glass to help us see clearly.

Pray as a group that you may see clearly whatever it is that God may wish to show you as you study his Word and discuss together.



**Porthole** - A porthole gives an initial glimpse of a larger view.

This section has one or more brief starting questions or activities that open up the subject of the study and gets the group members sharing their thoughts.



**Windows** - A window provides a view to part of what is beyond where we are.

The windows are the central sections of the study which explore Biblical passages and open up areas of discussion. Each window may follow threads through a number of passages or look at a particular passage in depth. Each study has a number of windows; it is helpful to look through each window in sequence.



**Telescope** - A telescope is used to look to the heavens.

This section encourages us to pause and examine what we are learning about the nature of God through this study.



**Periscope** - A periscope looks up above the murk to what is in clear view beyond.

This section invites group members to pause and highlight any new understandings, insights, or questions, that have come to mind through this study.



**Stained Glass** - Stained glass is often found in the church.

This section invites group members to pause and consider any issues, questions or practical implications for the life of the local church, or church denomination, or wider Christian church, that are raised by this study.



**Mirror** - The glass of a mirror reflects your own image.

This section gets personal, asking how the subject of the study relates to your own life. This section can be completed privately or may be shared within the group.



**Sunroom** - A sunroom is a place to sit and ponder the view.

In this section spend some time as a group praying over what you have discussed, asking God to bring into focus how you may respond to his Word in an ongoing way.



**Microscope** - A microscope examines a subject in minute detail.

This section offers the option of additional passages to study, or additional discussion questions, or further resources to explore. This can be used for group or personal ongoing study.



**Magnifying Glass** - A magnifying glass makes reading easier.

This section contains some helpful background notes on the passages used in this study.