

# Lenten Series '08: Everything Must Change

## Week #4 – The Systems – **March 3rd – March 9th**

A summary of Chapters 23–28, pp. 189–247

### **Chapter 23-27**

Beginning in Chapter 23 of *Everything Must Change*, the author challenges the ethics of capitalism in its purest form; i.e., “make money no matter what.” How much does making money shape our particular story and context?

Chapter 23 asserts that capitalism in the west is a religious system in its own right. He quotes Catholic theologian Tom Beaudoin and economist Herman Daly. Does capitalism especially capitalism run by the media replace what any religion does for its adherents? How much does advertising and the stuff we buy influence our: Identity, Community, Trust in the truth of advertising, experience of ecstasy, interpretation of images and symbols, do we create sub groups loyal to brand, and are we tempted to believe that some where there is fulfillment or inner peace in what we can purchase or save?

These are the four spiritual laws of Theocapitalism:

1. The law of progress through rapid growth — the one god of progress.
2. The law of serenity through possession and consumption — happiness through owning.
3. The law of salvation through competition alone — saved through competition.
4. The law of freedom to prosper through unaccountable corporations — etc.

Re-read pp. 197-198: 6 characteristics of mental/corporate disorders are they the same?

Answer question 5!

### **Chapter 28**

The richest 1 percent of the world owns nearly 40 percent of total wealth, and the richest 5 percent own 70 percent. Since 1950 global economic output has increased by 600 percent, but 80 percent of this increase was shared by 20 percent of the people. The USA is in the bottom 25 percent of all nations in terms of wealth distribution. In 1998 the richest 1 percent of US households held 47 percent of all household financial assets.

In this chapter the author places all these statistics into context. In spite of these figures can we move beyond “shame and blame.” The wealth of the rich does not cause the poverty of the poor, or does it? The culprit is systematized injustice. I think greed is also a contributing issue, along with the development of unhealthy over confidence. How does Jesus continually subvert the system and refuse to bow to its demands? In

many parables, Jesus does the “wrong” thing. One of the best examples is Luke 14, where he invites the wrong people to the party. Another unfair parable that subverts the system is Matt. 20:1-16. Finally in the most complex interpretation of a parable imaginable the author explains Luke 16 as an attack on those who value money over people.

Shrinking Gospel? pp. 243-244

Solutions: pp. 246

Answer Q's 3 and 7