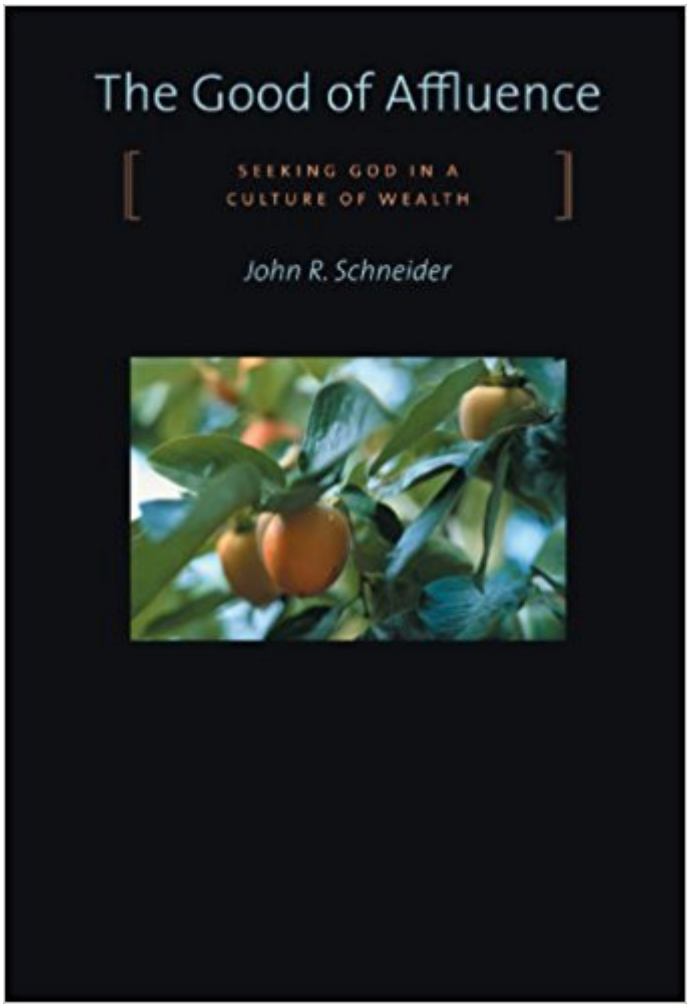
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The Good Of Affluence: Seeking God In A Culture Of Wealth



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Synopsis

How should Christians live in a material world? Should personal guilt accompany financial success? Is wealth incompatible with true Christianity? InÃ Â The Good of AffluenceÃ Â John R. Schneider reopens the debate over the proper Christian attitude toward money, arguing, ultimately, that Scripture does indeed provide support for the responsible possession of wealth. This is a provocative book of Christian theology, written to help people seeking God in a culture that has grown from modern capitalism. By comparing classic Christian teaching on wealth with the realities of our modern economic world, Schneider challenges the common presumption that material affluence is inherently bad. Careful interpretation of Scripture narratives -- creation, exodus, exile, and more -- also shows that abundance is the condition that God envisions for all human beings and that faithful persons of wealth are part of this plan. Schneider believes that the "wealth-as-blessing" themes of the Old Testament are not to be spiriÃ Â¡tualized and do not run contrary to New Testament teachings but provide exactly the frame of reference for the incarnate identity, life, and teaching of Jesus, who came to make real the messianic feast, both in this age and in the age to come. Through insightful engagement with the biblical text Schneider overturns some of the most cherished and unquestioned assumpÃ Â¡tions of influential Christian writers (particularly Ronald Sider) on modern capitalist affluence. Yet Schneider's message is also finely balanced with the need for responsible Christian living. He offers rich Christians biblical affirmation but also challenges them to a life shaped by an uncommon sense of stewardship and compassion. Incisive, thought-provoking, and biblically grounded,Ã Â The Good of AffluenceÃ Â is a superb resource for anyone -- students, professors, businesspeople, general readers, discussion groups -- wishing to grapple seriously with the subject of faith and wealth. Ã Â

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Customer Reviews

This substantially revised edition of Schneider’s earlier book Godly Materialism: Rethinking Money and Possessions is more scholarly and theological than the earlier title, but it retains the same thesis: there is a biblical precedent for the responsible ownership of wealth. He cautions, however, that "human history has never before known circumstances in which entire societies were affluent" and not just individuals, so such biblical support needs to be tempered with careful reflection about how Christians can seek God in a full-blown capitalist society. Schneider is unabashed in his admiration for capitalism, which he regards as uniquely suited to ensure that all of God’s people enjoy prosperity. However, even readers who disagree with him on this point can learn much from his overall position, which lies between the "prosperity theologians," who believe that God blesses the faithful with material wealth, and the "radical Christians" (e.g., Tony Campolo and Ron Sider), who view individual wealth as almost entirely negative.Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Schneider is professor of religion and theology at Calvin College.

Wonderful read and insightful thoughts. Addresses a perspective of abundance for good as supported by biblical interpretation.

I appreciated the theological depth of this book and feel it’s a needed corrective to the assumed "Christian" position on wealth, which views wealth as almost entirely negative--in distinction to the Bible, which on the whole views wealth as positive in its proper place. Schneider’s book gives a clearer picture of what that "proper place" may be. I did, however, find myself wishing the book had better legs in terms of application. There’s an important ball at play here, but it’s up to readers to hit it out of the park.

Of all the issues that hold ideological significance in my life, none reach the level of gravity that the subject of faith and capitalism do. I am convinced that there are more souls to be won by demonstrating the compatibility of free market economics with the Judeo-Christian worldview than any other mechanism on the planet. Likewise, I am convinced that there are more societies and

nations that can be won over to prosperity and freedom, if but only for the faith community's stubborn inability to embrace such. Dr. John Schneider's remarkable work, The Good of Affluence: Seeking God in a Culture of Wealth, is a huge first step in seeing this dream become reality.I do not know what impact the book will end up having, as I do not believe it has received the audience it deserves. I am determined to change that. But allow me to comment a bit on what the book has successfully demonstrated:- That God, as part of his normative will, desires for His people to live in delight. Our covenantal journey is one of starting at, and returning to, Edenic conditions. This is an economic journey, just as it is a spiritual and moral one. Schneider's thesis ought not be confused with prosperity theology. Schneider does not argue that all Christians will live in prosperity; he merely argues that those who do are called to such, and ought not be ashamed.- The doctrine of moral proximity. That is, that believers are most responsible for the things most proximate to them. After reading Schneider's elaboration here, it is almost too obvious to be profound. But I believe it has gigantic implications in the Christian life.- That the "problem texts" for rich Christians are 100% of the time "problems" only for those abusing the poor - not those whose hard work and ambition has created material abundance. Schneider carries us through Eden, the Exodus, the prophets, and the age of Jesus' own earthly ministry. He powerfully posits that riches are not only not condemned in the Scriptures, they are encouraged. This is where Schneider's credentials as a theologian become very valuable. Pagans like Adam Smith, F.A. Hayek, Joseph Schumpter, and Ludwig Von Mises have done yeoman's work in demonstrating the superior capabilities of free market ideology. Contemporary economists like Milton Friedman and Larry Kudlow have elaborated on such, and done so with a certain appreciation for faith and values. But theologically pedigreed scholars have been few and far between in the movement to advocate a decidedly capitalistic culture. Schneider gives us the best of all worlds.The notion that all Christians belong in the "promised land" is rank heresy. But so is the idea that all Christians belong in the "wilderness". The sociological benefits of capitalism are so clear and so persuasive it is remarkable that the discussion still has to take place. The Proverbial message of hard work leading to prosperity is not merely descriptive - it is prescriptive as well. Schneider goes beyond the historical, sociological, and economic arguments for free market capitalism. He intertwines such with the theological prescription that has been so massively absent from the works of Ron Sider, Jim Wallis, and Brian McClaren. No theology professor in the country has written a book as important as Schneider's this decade. I commend it wholeheartedly, and even more so, commend the efforts of all people of faith to bridge political and economic ideology with theology.

Very satisfied with my purchase. Item was exactly as described. It was my first experience but sincerely I will try them out again.

A very worthwhile an informative study on the theology of work and economics. Written fromm a Christian perspective, it debunks the common thought that believers should divest themselves from possessions. The author also engages in a survey of Old and New Testament thought and how it relates to current thinking about monetary matters. Strongly defending capitalism as the reason for why the USA became a strong country, this book is highly recommended for those interested in current economic developments.

This book is an apology for capitalism. Not an apology in Justin Martyr's sense of "a defense," but an apology as in "I'm sorry." At every turn, Schneider attempts to distance himself from those whom his leftist academic colleagues may not approve of: greedy plutocrats, health and wealth gospel charlatans in shiny suits, Republicans, etc. As much as I disagree with Christian Reconstructionists about some issues (including Calvinism, post-millennialism and theonomy), they are the only Christians willing to take on the statist assumptions of the intellectual elites. Schneider published this book in 2002 and I fear now in 2009, after the longest recession since WWI, he would be even more tentative in his assessment of the virtues of capitalism. Instead of apologies, we should be asking angrily: after over a century of the Progressives telling us that wise government monetary, fiscal and regulatory policy (controlled by the self-same Progressives, of course) would "tame the cycle of boom and bust" in Bill Clinton's famous phrase and would lead to consistent growth (along with the benefits of a more even distribution of wealth), hasn't it become clear that the Progressives' policies simply do not work and cannot deliver what they have promised? Isn't it clear that all they have done has empower government, which has undermined civic virtue and the American character, as each interest group jockeys to take its place at the public trough? And shouldn't Christians, most of all, who are warned against the self-deifying nature of the State in the Apocalypse, express the greatest skepticism about the motives behind, and the effects of, this rise in State power? Apparently not - it is capitalism that is in the dock, while the State is on the bench.

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