

The Family Heritage Series

A weekly discussion of Americanist truths and traditions for those "heirs of all the ages" who will have to preserve that most important inheritance of all — freedom. Produced by the Movement To Restore Decency.



Volume II

Lesson Eighty-One

Free Enterprise

LESSON IDEA

To learn why the American free enterprise system, while admittedly not perfect, provides more and better goods than Communism or socialism — or even government-run enterprises in this country. And, to see why it is the only economic system that is compatible to freedom.

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THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM in the United States is usually described as free enterprise. Tonight, we will discuss what this really means, and how "free enterprise" compares with other systems that have been tried. Let's see if we can discover why free enterprise is the only system that can operate under freedom, and why it is the only system that provides an abundance of goods and services for those fortunate enough to live under it.

Free enterprise is sometimes called private enterprise. But they are not necessarily the same thing. Piracy, for instance, was a private enterprise. But it was not a free enterprise, because its whole success depended on violation of the property rights of others. Likewise, the Mafia is a private enterprise, but its reliance on murder, coercion, and theft places it in total opposition to free enterprise. While all free enterprises are private enterprises, not all private enterprises are free enterprises.

Free enterprise means men and women working voluntarily at whatever task they prefer, and being free to exchange the fruits of their labor with others. Under free enterprise, we can choose

whether to be engineers or architects or doctors or bricklayers. We can build a factory, and decide whether to make televisions, safety pins, or model racers. We can decide where to buy materials and what prices to charge for our products. Free enterprise means, simply, working in freedom — so long as we do not interfere with the rights of others.

The American system of free enterprise has helped make it possible for us to have more of the material necessities and comforts of life than any nation on earth has ever enjoyed. Communist countries have often had to erect barriers, such as the Berlin Wall, to keep their people from leaving, while we have had to pass laws limiting the immigration of people from other countries because so many want to come here to live. One example of the difference between Communism and Americanism is that no American has been machine-gunned while trying to escape the United States, to live in another country.

NOT EVERYONE in our country favors free enterprise, however. Some even urge that it be abolished in favor of a socialist or communist system. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that even those most actively engaged in criticizing free enterprise depend on the fruits of free enterprise to wage their attack. Their food, clothing, shelter, books, cars, telephones, television sets, radios, theaters, musical instruments, microphones, print-

