



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

**I'm expecting the headline, any day now**; my mind is inclined to connect dots. The demand to empty Guantanamo Bay's current occupants links with the widespread public outrage over the AIG bonuses: what do you have? ***"Gitmo Now Hosting Executives from Wall Street for Extended Stays"***

**Turn the clock back just one decade**, and you're in an era when many brightest-and-best were in MBA programs hoping for placement in blue-chip public companies. That same career dream today may land you on someone's prayer list, hoping that good sense will overcome ambition and redirect...

**I guess I'm looking for the meeting time and place for a local chapter of Capitalists Anonymous**. I confess: that's who I am. I fit the classic definition: *"a person who uses money to invest in trade and industry for profit."* I tend to identify with people who are supporters of capitalism; words like *"private"* and *"competition"* and *"free market"* don't get derided as dreadful by my peers. We're going to have to find a clubhouse where we can congregate without fear of reprisals; *maybe we could sublet an old Circuit City store somewhere...*

**Here's a shocker**: Jesus told a story - in public! - that cast God as a capitalist: *"The*



*servant given one thousand said, 'Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent.' The master was furious. 'That's a terrible way to live! It's criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest. Take the thousand and give it to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this "play-it-safe" who won't go out on a limb. Throw him out into utter darkness.'* (Matthew 25:24-30)

The ending of this famous parable - most call it ***"The Parable of the Talents"*** - has the loser describing God as One who

looks for a return on His investments, in places where He has not labored. His *money* is at work; *He isn't...* Shocker: *God reveals capitalist tendencies!*

**Two weeks ago, Newsweek's cover announced:** "We Are All Socialists Now." *Really?* The markets are in upheaval: both private and public companies are in derision because some of their highest-ups have secured pay packages that are outrageous. No capital at risk, they *demand* - and, *get!* - pay-for-failure, courtesy of the "capitalist" investors who put their money into mutual funds/stock holdings, trusting the efforts of the CEO/servants to serve their interests...

**God doesn't go easy on the person who knew what was expected of them,** but then served their own personal interests rather than the interests of the one(s) who provided the capital.

**Here's the bottom line, for this week:** Capitalism is *amoral*... but, in the hands of people without a servant ethic of accountability to the investors, it can be used to create *immoral outcomes* (think: *Bernie Madoff, or Al-len Stanford*).

**It's time for people who have a solid foundational ethic of servant leadership to emerge and reclaim the American system...** or, we'll need to find that clubhouse for the remnant to meet and dream about the old days, before Socialism pushed Capitalism out of America...

*Bob Shank*

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