Spiritual Economics

7-Week Spiritual Study Guide

Based on the book

Spiritual Economics: The Principles and Process of True Prosperity

By Eric Butterworth
This fall we embark on a seven week study of Spiritual Economics by Eric Butterworth. Talking about the economy has become a national preoccupation. It is remarkable how much power we attribute to this mysterious entity by the way we think and talk about it, so much so that the state of the economy now has the power to determine the state of our collective consciousness. Our mood goes up and down like a roller coaster along with the Dow and the price of oil. Could it be that the way our nation regards the economy has become a form of neo-idolatry, the golden calf of post-modernism, a god like being unto itself?

True prosperity is measured by the state of our consciousness not the state of our bank accounts. Eric Butterworth brings a refreshing and much needed perspective to the subject that is free from magical thinking and dogmatic attitudes about manifesting and tithing. Most importantly, he stays focused on the primary aim of all of our teachings which is to show us how to become self liberated, fully functioning human beings instead of using spirituality to justify egocentricity and materialism.

Each week we will work with a theme, a color and an affirmation. We invite you to coordinate your Sunday wardrobe with the color for the week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Affirmation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>I have immediate access to the unlimited power of Creative Intelligence which is my instant, abundant and constant Source of supply.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>I am a fully integrated, free functioning human being. The Source and Essence of all that is flows through me now.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Instead of trying to put things right, I strive to see things from a higher consciousness of abundance and order.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>I bring an attitude of gratitude to all the events of daily living and in everything, I am grateful.</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>In the face of any challenge I affirm that I accept the reality of this situation, but not its permanence and I give it no power over me.</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>I am free to give generously, secure in all that I do because I am one with the Creative Intelligence that is the Source and essence of all that is.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Gold</td>
<td>I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. And what needs to be done, by the power of Spirit, I will do.</td>
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A few years ago a friend advised me that if I wanted to know what was going on in the real world, I should read the business pages. Although my lifelong interest has been in the study of religion, I am always willing to expand my horizons; so I took the advice, vaguely fearful that I would have to cope with a new and baffling vocabulary. Instead I was surprised to discover that most of the concepts I ran across were quite familiar.

Expecting a terra incognita, I found myself instead in the land of déjà vu. The lexicon of The Wall Street Journal and the business sections of Time and Newsweek turned out to bear a striking resemblance to Genesis, the Epistle to the Romans, and Saint Augustine's City of God. Behind descriptions of market reforms, monetary policy, and the convolutions of the Dow, I gradually made out the pieces of a grand narrative about the inner meaning of human history, why things had gone wrong, and how to put them right. Theologians call these myths of origin, legends of the fall, and doctrines of sin and redemption. But here they were again, and in only thin disguise: chronicles about the creation of wealth, the seductive temptations of statism, captivity to faceless economic cycles, and, ultimately, salvation through the advent of free markets, with a small dose of ascetic belt tightening along the way, especially for the East Asian economies.

Soon I began to marvel at just how comprehensive the business theology is. There were even sacraments to convey salvific power to the lost, a calendar of entrepreneurial saints, and what theologians call an “eschatology”—a teaching about the “end of history.” My curiosity was piqued. I began cataloguing these strangely familiar doctrines, and I saw that in fact there lies embedded in the business pages an entire theology, which is comparable in scope if not in profundity to that of Thomas Aquinas or Karl Barth. It needed only to be systematized for a whole new Summa to take shape.

There is, however, one contradiction between the religion of The Market and the traditional religions that seems to be insurmountable. All of the traditional religions teach that human beings are finite creatures and that there are limits to any earthly enterprise. A Japanese Zen master once said to his disciples as he was dying, “I have learned only one thing in life: how much is enough.” He would find no niche in the chapel of The Market, for whom the First Commandment is “There is never enough.” Like the proverbial shark that stops moving, The Market that stops expanding dies. That could happen. If it does, then Nietzsche will have been right after all. He will just have had the wrong God in mind.

(Nietzsche is a philosopher who once proclaimed that God is dead)
1. This article was written in 1999. Were the author’s key ideas born out by events or did he miss the boat? Why?

2. What is “The Market”? Hint: take a look around the room!

3. What evidence do you see in the world to support the author’s conclusion that the first commandment of the market is “there is never enough?”

4. Can the market evolve beyond the idea that there is never enough? How might that happen?

5. Like the Japanese Zen Master in the last paragraph, how do we learn how much is enough in our lives?

6. In our contemporary American culture, what relevance if any do the following Bible verses have?

   25. “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26. Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27. And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?... Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 28. For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 29. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 30. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today. **Matthew 6:25-34**

   21. Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” 22. When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. 23. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” **Mark 10:21-23**

   Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. **Luke 12:33-34**
Spiritual Economics
Week 2 Chapters 1 & 2
A Radical Re-definition of Prosperity

1. Emilie Cady’s description of an impersonal God (chapter 1 pg 14) has caused considerable resistance and anxiety for persons reading it for the first time. If you are reading this for the first time or the 50th, discuss what it means to you.

2. Discuss the quote from Mike Todd on page 16 where he says: “Many times I have been broke, but I have never been poor.” How does this serve as an example of the way that faith forms and shapes spirit substance?

3. The idea that we live concurrently in two realms is called non-dualism. What are the characteristics of each of the two realms and how can we reasonably say that they are not two different, separate things? (duality)

4. The Quakers say, “When you pray, move your feet.” (pg21) How does this relate to the idea that we live concurrently in two realms? How might we apply this idea to our relationship with money? (which is simply one of the external forms of substance)

5. In chapter 2 page 34 Eric says, “you are where you are in experience, in relationships, even in financial conditions, because of what you are (which is where you are in consciousness).” Is Eric telling us that we cause or bring about those conditions?

6. How do conditions in the economy, like the stock market, reflect the consciousness of the people? What can we do about it?

7. Eric might be branded somewhat of a heretic for his statement on page 39: “Don’t expect a miracle!” He goes on to say that expecting a miracle is “to be in tune with the indefinite.” (as opposed to being in tune with the infinite) What does he mean by these statements and what is your reaction to them?
Spiritual Economics
Week 3 Chapters 3 & 4
Avoiding the Pitfalls of Spiritual Materialism

1. Read the paragraph on page 52 (of the 2001 edition) that starts with the words: “This is why Jesus said, do not judge by appearances and ends with the quote: “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand…”

2. What is the difference that you see (if any) between the way Eric talks about visualization and the traditional notion of treasure mapping?

3. How is true seeing a flow of consciousness, flowing like a fountain from within?

4. Discuss some ways that we can continue to be informed about events in the world and still be able to “put your own stamp of God consciousness upon everything you see and hear.” Pg 56

5. On page 69, Eric gives this definition of faith: “consciousness centered in the universal source.” How does this definition differ from the way you were taught to think of faith?

6. For Eric, believing is tantamount to knowing. Find the three things (on page 72) that we need to know and believe about ourselves in order to realize the truth of the quote below.

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7. How do we learn to let go of “I can’t”?
1. What does Eric mean by “a controlled life?”

2. Eric says, “…it doesn’t make any difference to God whether you give thanks or not. But it makes a lot of difference to you.” What does gratitude do for us?

3. The word grateful can be looked at a couple of ways. Eric calls a heart that is grateful one that is full of greatness. Compare that to the idea that gratefulness really means “great fullness.”

4. Read the following from page 96 as a guided meditation Read slowly and clearly and at the end, allow the silence to continue for a few minutes then discuss your experience.

Take a moment right now to engage the experience of gratitude. Close your eyes and just feel grateful. Don’t turn outward, casting about for things to give thanks for. Remember, it is not an emotional reaction to the blessings you can count; it is an energy you stir up within you that is causal. Resist the temptation to indulge such thoughts as, I would be grateful if I received that promotion and raise in salary. No qualifications, no ifs or whens. Just feel grateful. Let the spirit of thanksgiving flood your whole being with its healing warmth. In the silence.

5. Eric says that with regard to work, success is not getting there; it is earning the right in consciousness to be there. If earning the right in consciousness means the values we bring to our work, what values do or did you bring to your work that you believe brought you success?

6. What are some of the ways that Eric’s redefinition of success could help the world deal with the challenges we are facing? (global warming, energy, terrorism, economic uncertainty)

7. What has been your experience of the difference between making a living and making a life? Conclude by affirming together:

   *I am God’s living enterprise, and God cannot fail*
1. How difficult has it been for you to avoid gossip and negative conversation?

2. One of the more challenging teachings in Unity is our concept of personal responsibility. Some may call it radical personal responsibility. We are responsible for what we make of our life. Eric explains how this radical responsibility leads to freedom. What is your understanding of how this works?

3. Eric says, “In every attempt in life, there must be the possibility of success and failure.” Why? How does this fit in with his view of a non-dual universe?

4. In chapter 7, Eric gives us this powerful affirmation and denial: “I accept the reality of this situation, but not its permanence.” Does that mean that we should simply wait and let the situation pass of its own accord?

5. What is the difference in consciousness between calling a problem a challenge or a project?

6. Eric talks about the principle, “All things work together for good.” How might this principle be applied to transform our perception of the various “projects” the world is facing?

7. Our desire for security may be tantamount to a desire that things never change. What is the downside for humankind resulting from this consciousness?

8. What is your reaction to Eric’s statement on page 134: “God doesn’t heal! God is life.”
A Radical, Non-magical Re-definition of Tithing

1. “Any study of prosperity fails unless it teaches you how (and why) to give.” Why?

2. Eric Butterworth wrote this book in 1993. If he were alive today, what do you think his reaction might be to “The Secret?”

3. On page 171, Eric says, “The law is exact: if you give, really work in a giving consciousness, you must receive.” How is this different from the notion of giving in order to get something?

4. Were you surprised to learn that Jesus was never quoted in support of tithing and that the only time he referred to tithing was to be critical of the practice as it had evolved in his day? Why or why not?

5. On page 187 Eric says that tithing is presented as a divine law rather than as a training discipline by which to work toward knowledge of the law of giving. What is the difference?

6. Discuss the following question Eric poses on page 188: “Do I tithe to get things or to get a greater awareness of divine law? Do I analyze the effectiveness of my tithing on the basis of my income or my general well being?”

7. “Let us hear less of tithing and more of giving. Let us not be deluded by claims of “the magical law of tithing.” Tithing is not a law but a technique for fulfilling the law of giving. There is no magic in it whatever, any more than there is magic in the flow of water when the tap is turned on. There is no need for magic when one works diligently to keep in the flow of life.”

How might tithing work as a technique for fulfilling the law of giving? What are some of the benefits of using the measure of 1/10th as a way of determining how much to give? Could 1/10th perhaps be limiting?
1. Eric says that money is an enigma (puzzling, inexplicable) because it causes the most worry, can cause unhappiness and yet also makes people happy. But the question is, does money actually DO anything?

2. On page 152 Eric gives us an affirmation: Money is good! Money is God in action! He offers this as a way to counter any negativity we may have around the concept of money. How do you react to this affirmation? Would it help to re-phrase it: Money is good, if we use it for good; Money is God in action, if we choose to see it so.

3. “Life is always biased on the side of healing and renewal.” This is a powerful statement of faith. What evidence do you see in the world and in your life to support this?

4. Come up with a list of at least 4 concrete and practical things that you can do in order to transform your relationship to and perception of money.

5. Eric refers to the Chinese symbol for crisis which is a combination of danger and opportunity. When we identify the problem or “project,” we identify the danger. Now discuss what opportunities can be found in the various projects facing the world today.

6. Ask a volunteer to read aloud the quote from Teilhard de Chardin on pg 202. After the reading, take a minute or two in the silence and then discuss what you see as the destiny of humankind.

7. After working with this book and its principles for the past 7 weeks, are you absolutely convinced that human beings have the power to meet and transcend any challenge by collectively cultivating a consciousness of the ever presence of spirit-substance? What are you willing to do to get this message out to more people? If you are not convinced yet, what can we do answer your questions and help? Please let us know!

Karen and Mark
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530-888-6489
We agree to the following values:

- Confidentiality-I will keep anything that is said strictly confidential.
- Attendance-I will give priority to the group meetings for the agreed number of weeks.
- Acceptance-We accept each other unconditionally. We are not here to “fix” each other.
- Feelings-We respect each other’s feelings.
- It is okay to pass-No one is required to share.
- It is okay to disagree-I accept that others may not hold the same view.
- Participation-I speak for myself only and I listen to others attentively.
- Balance-We seek a balance in our sharing times. Everyone is welcome to share and no one dominates. Only one person at a time speaks.
- Prayer Support-I am willing to pray for others.
- Other(s):