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GOD WANTS YOU TO BE RICH

HOW AND WHY EVERYONE CAN
ENJOY MATERIAL AND
SPIRITUAL WEALTH IN OUR
ABUNDANT WORLD

Paul Zane Pilzer's unique gift is to tame the mysteries of making money and put you in the saddle. *God Wants You to Be Rich* will set your mind racing with new ideas." —SCOTT DEGARMO,
EDITOR IN CHIEF AND PUBLISHER, *SUCCESS* MAGAZINE

Paul Zane Pilzer



ALSO BY PAUL ZANE PILZER

UNLIMITED WEALTH
OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

HOW AND WHY
EVERYONE
CAN ENJOY
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SPIRITUAL WEALTH
IN OUR
ABUNDANT WORLD

A FIRESIDE BOOK

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GOD

WANTS

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TO BE

RICH

PAUL ZANE PILZER



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To my tsadik, Charles Jay Pilzer

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1

GOD WANTS YOU

TO BE RICH

“Professor Pilzer!” the woman exclaimed, following me into the elevator after my speech. “I must tell you how much your work has changed my life!”

“In what way?” I asked.

“All my life I wanted to be rich,” she replied. “But I always believed that I could only succeed in business at the expense of someone else, and as a good Christian I could never do that. Reading your book and hearing you speak has shown me how wrong I was!”

The woman explained that two years ago, at age fifty-five, she had gone into her own business, and that she was now making three times more money than she had earned after working thirty-two years for someone else.

“How does your new financial success relate to your religious beliefs?” I inquired.

“That’s the real tragedy of my life,” she replied. “For fifty-five years, I believed that God didn’t want me to have money, that the economy was always heading downhill, and that the only way to climb the ladder to success was by stepping on someone else. But I was wrong!

Now I realize that these views were just excuses for my lack of initiative, and that one of the things God wants me to do most as a good Christian is to be rich. That’s why he created a world where the more successful I am, the more wealth there is for everyone else to share.”

Every major religion has an explanation of how God created the universe. What is important, however, is not *how* it was done, but *why*. As an economist and businessperson, I have devoted my life to explaining *how* people can become rich. I realize now that I have failed to reach certain people because I have incorrectly assumed that they already understood *why* they should become rich.

There is a widespread feeling today that there is something wrong with individual economic success. People who have become rich through great personal sacrifice sometimes feel guilty about their success—and often pass this guilt on to their children, with disastrous consequences. Even worse, people who fail to achieve success on their first try sometimes refuse to try again.

Most people believe they should achieve wealth primarily for their own material comfort or that of their families. This is far too narrow a view. God does want each of us to be rich in every possible way—health, love, and peace of mind, as well as material possessions. God wants this, however, not just for our own sake, but for the sake of all humankind. The reason, as we shall see throughout this book, is that an increase in wealth for an individual almost always represents an even larger increase in wealth for society at large. This is especially true in our modern economy, where the largest individual financial rewards are increasingly reserved for those people making the greatest positive impact on our society.

In ancient times people didn't spend much time wondering about how to improve their lives. People generally believed that their lives were predestined. A person was not supposed to try to change his or her fate, let alone even ponder whether such a fate was predestined in the first place. It was each person's obligation to follow the will of God—or the gods—whatever that will might be.

Until roughly the fourth century B.C., it was commonly believed in parts of the world that the mysterious lights in the sky were gods wandering about the heavens. In fact, the word "planet" comes from the Greek word for "wanderer." This illustrates what most people thought about their daily lives. The gods (planets) wandered about in the heavens, and their wanderings caused the crops to grow, the rain to fall, and the tragedies and joys of human existence.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle was one of the first people to refute this belief. Aristotle believed that there was an order to things

that people could understand and use to control their lives. In 340 B.C., Aristotle devised one of the first modern theories of the universe, asserting that the planets and every other object in the heavens were in fact spheres that revolved in fixed paths around a stationary earth.

The Aristotelian view of the world, and the order to the seasons and our lives that it created, was refined by Ptolemy about 450 years later into a mathematical calendar. And this view, though wrong in its fundamental assumption that the earth, rather than the sun, was at the center of our solar system, became the bedrock of civilization for the next eighteen hundred years.

Looking back, we can see that its endurance was hardly surprising, for it accorded with the evidence of one's senses. After all, from your vantage point on earth, it certainly looks as if everything revolves around you.

But the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic calendar was not accurate, because it incorrectly placed the earth at the center of the universe. Every hundred years or so it would snow in Rome in July, and the pope would set the calendar back about six months. This led to a great quest among astronomers to discover a working model of the universe that could accurately track the months and predict the beginning of the seasons.

It wasn't until the early sixteenth century that the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus succeeded in this quest. By manipulating mathematical equations, Copernicus determined that the sun was at the center of the solar system, and that the heavenly bodies—including the earth—revolved around it. This model was later refined by the Italian astronomer Galileo, who, using his newly invented telescope, was able to confirm Copernicus's hypothesis.

We can easily see how astronomers before Copernicus were misled. For centuries they labored in vain trying to perfect the calendar and predict the seasons in order to increase agricultural and economic output. But the very definition of their science—the study of how the spheres in the heavens revolved around the stationary earth—precluded astronomers from discovering the true nature of the universe.

In our time, the science of economics has been hindered by the same sort of tunnel vision. Today the very definition of economics—"the study of how people choose to employ scarce resources"¹—

precludes economists from discovering an accurate theory of economics and hinders economic success.

Most economists have agreed on one basic premise—a *society's wealth is determined by its supply of physical resources (land, oil, gas, minerals, and so forth)*. Underlying this premise has been another, even more basic (in fact, so basic that it is rarely mentioned)—*the world contains a limited amount of these physical resources*.

The incorrect supposition that we live in a world of scarce resources has done more than preclude most individuals from achieving economic success. Over the centuries, this zero-sum-game view of the world has been responsible for wars, revolutions, political strategies, and human suffering of unfathomable proportions.

Since 1975, when I entered the Wharton Graduate School, I have belonged to a small group of economists who believe that the world does *not* contain a limited amount of physical resources. Quite the contrary, I believe that the world is a virtual cornucopia of physical resources. I developed my belief into a theory of economics, which was first published as *Unlimited Wealth—The Theory and Practice of Economic Alchemy* (Crown Publishers, 1991).

Many notable people found truth in my theory. The late Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, praised *Unlimited Wealth* for having put into writing beliefs to which he attributed his own success. My views were disseminated via national television appearances and in numerous publications. And businesspeople worldwide applauded *Unlimited Wealth* for establishing a practical, decision-making framework based on a cornucopian theory of economics.

Yet, both as a writer and as a teacher, I had failed. *Unlimited Wealth* was highly praised by those who were already successful or who were on their way to success. But it was largely ignored by those who could benefit from it the most. I felt like a clergyman preaching to the choir. The people who really needed to hear my sermon were not attending my church.

Unlimited Wealth explained in scientific terms, through deductive logic, why we live in a world of unlimited physical resources. It explained how, over the short term, advancing technology continually increases the supply of our existing physical resources and how, over the long term, advancing technology constantly changes our very definition of “physical resources” as new ones are discovered. But, in