

THE  
KINGDOM  
ECONOMY

Build a Legacy of Love in a Transactional World

GEOFFREY LADELL

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# Dedication

For my wife, whose steadfast love reflected Heaven's economy long before I understood it.

And for all who have searched for meaning in the world's economy, only to discover that love was the true treasure all along.

May these pages remind you that what the world counts as loss, Heaven often calls gain.



# Foreword

Some of the clearest illuminations we receive come not in seasons of success, but in moments of disruption—when familiar structures fall away, and the questions we’ve avoided can no longer be ignored. It is often in seasons of loss and uncertainty that truth stops being theoretical and becomes essential.

In a season when much of what had once defined Geoff Ladell’s life and business was stripped away, he encountered a deeper reality—one not governed by performance or transaction, but by love, trust, and surrender. What emerged was not a strategy for recovery, but a revelation: that God’s economy operates by an entirely different logic than the one most of us have learned to live by. *The Kingdom Economy* is the fruit of that hard-won clarity.

Geoff writes as someone who has lost, listened, and learned—and who has discovered that what appears as scarcity in one system can, in another, become the doorway to abundance.

This book is for everyone. For the mom faithfully navigating the unseen rhythms of home to the CEO in a corner office, who senses that success alone cannot satisfy, to pastors, leaders, and business owners who feel the quiet tension between the values they profess and the systems they inhabit. Wherever you find yourself, *The Kingdom Economy* meets you there and invites you into a different way of seeing and living.

The truths and insights in Geoff’s new book have the power to shape individual lives, reform churches, and humanize the way businesses and

organizations operate. More than that, it offers hope—that the world we long for may be closer than we think, already breaking in wherever love is allowed to lead.

My invitation to you is simple: read this book slowly. Let it question assumptions you may no longer need to carry. Allow it to open your imagination to a life—and a legacy—formed not by transaction, but by love.

*Ken L. Roberts*

Helping followers of Jesus ultimately finish well

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Ken L. Roberts is the founder of The Legacy Leadership Group, a former senior pastor, and the author of *Unexpected: Navigating Life's Unforeseen Turns* and *Staying Power: Five Core Ideas in Sustainability in Christian Leadership*.

# Preface

We live in a world that measures almost everything in terms of money. Career success, personal security, and even our sense of worth are often tied to what we earn, build, or own. I lived inside that story for most of my life. I worked hard, built a business from the ground up, sought God's wisdom, and believed I was following His lead.

Then COVID hit, and the business I had poured twenty years into collapsed.

Losing everything financially was painful enough, but the deeper loss was internal. I found myself wrestling with questions I never expected to ask: *Why did this happen? Where was God in it? What did this say about my faith? About me?*

Through the steadfast love of my wife, the support of close friends, and the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit, God began to rebuild far more than my income could buy. He started to rebuild my understanding of value itself.

In the ashes of that season, I began to see the difference between the economy I had lived in—the economy of earth—and the economy Jesus taught. One runs on achievement, accumulation, and control. The other runs on love. In Heaven's economy, relationships are the true wealth, generosity is the measure of success, and money is simply a tool rather than a master.

This book was born from that revelation. It isn't only my story, though my journey weaves through it. It is an invitation for you to

examine the economy you're living in—and the one you may be called into.

If you've ever reached a milestone and felt oddly empty or found yourself anxious about money, no matter how much you had or wondered how to align your faith with your work and relationships, then you will recognize pieces of your own story in these pages.

As you read, you will explore what happens when we stop letting the world define success and begin letting love define it instead. You will discover how Kingdom values reshape our decisions, restore our peace, and transform the way we lead, give, and live. And you will see that the freedom Jesus offers is not found in abandoning the world but in living differently within it.

My hope is that this book helps you breathe again, trust again, and love again—that it frees you to handle money wisely without letting it rule you, and to succeed in a way that strengthens your soul rather than drains it.

The Kingdom economy is not a theory. It is the way of life Jesus invites us into. If you're willing, let's begin the journey together.

# Introduction

Every economy runs on exchange. It shapes how we live, what we value, and how we measure success.

The world's economy trades in achievement, profit, and control. It rewards accumulation and applauds those who perform the hardest and rise the fastest. Yet even those who reach the top often find themselves asking a quiet question: *Is this all there is?*

The message of this book is simple: The Kingdom economy runs on relationships, not transactions.

It is an entirely different way of seeing and living—one where true wealth is measured in love, purpose, and compassion, and where money becomes a tool instead of a master.

I didn't learn this in a classroom. I learned it in the rubble of my own collapse, when the metrics I had trusted could no longer hold the weight of my identity. In that season, I saw something I had missed for years: Jesus wasn't trying to pull me out of the world; He was trying to teach me how to live in it differently.

This book is written for anyone who feels that tension—believers who long to integrate faith with everyday work, parents who are trying to raise children with Heaven's values, professionals who sense that success alone cannot satisfy, and entrepreneurs searching for a calling deeper than profit margins. It is for every person who has felt the pressure to perform, the fear of not having enough, or the quiet ache that says, *there must be more than this.*

Before you move further, I want to give you a glimpse of what happens when Heaven's values begin to shape an ordinary life.

I have walked into boardrooms paralyzed by fear and watched what happens when leaders dare to replace pressure with trust. I've seen stagnant teams come alive, businesses find new purpose, and marriages heal—not by working harder, but by changing the currency they operated in.

What happened to them is what happens to all of us when we begin to live from the Kingdom's economy:

Love creates what pressure never can. Hope grows where fear once dictated. Peace replaces striving. And purpose begins to breathe again.

Throughout this book, you'll explore how that transformation happens—one decision, one relationship, one act of generosity at a time. Each chapter transitions from story to principle to practice, demonstrating how the currency of love can transform not only your inner life but also your work, leadership, finances, and relationships.

My invitation is simple: read with an open heart. Ask God to show you the economy you've been living in—and the economy He's calling you into.

The world's economy pushes. The Kingdom's economy frees. And when love becomes the currency of your life, everything else changes.

Whether you come to these pages with faith, curiosity, or frustration, I invite you to look again at what truly matters. The Kingdom economy isn't about escaping the world; it's about redeeming it—one act of love, one relationship, and one decision at a time.



## Chapter 1

# Revelation

We all feel the subtle pull of two different worlds. One urges us to move faster, achieve more, and measure life by what we produce. The other invites us to slow down, to notice God’s presence, and to remember that identity is not earned—it’s received.

Most of us live somewhere in between. We want to trust God fully, yet we still feel the pressure to prove ourselves. We believe in grace, yet we often measure our worth the same way the world does. We long for peace, yet hurry becomes our default. Somewhere along the way, the gap between what we know is true and how we actually live begins to form.

It’s not a sign of failure. It’s simply the place where discipleship happens. The tension itself becomes a teacher, revealing the habits we’ve absorbed from the world and the hope we’ve inherited from the Kingdom.

This chapter explores that tension—not to condemn it, but to understand it. Because until we can name the forces that shape us, we cannot be free from them. And the good news is this: the Kingdom meets us right here, in the very place where our desire for God and the demands of everyday life collide.

As I sat amidst the ruins of my financial world, questioning everything I once believed about success and faith, I wondered whether this was a test from God or simply the consequence of my own actions. Well-meaning friends pointed me toward the Bible's Job. While it was comforting to think I was being tested, I quickly realized that wasn't my story.

I was forced to dig deeper.

## **The Economy of Illusion**

I sensed in my heart Jesus asking me, *"How do you think I feel about money?"*

I went searching through Scripture—not for a financial system, but for His heart. One moment stood out.

When the collectors of the temple tax approached Peter, Jesus asked, *"From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?"*

*"From others," Peter answered.*

*"Then the children are exempt," Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth, and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."*— Matthew 17:25–27 (NIV)

In this moment, Jesus treats money with a kind of holy ease. It shows up when needed, serves its purpose, and nothing more.

Paul later offers the warning we all know:

*"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."*— 1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV)

Together, these passages clarified something in me: money is a tool,

not a source of identity or security. Its power isn't in what it is, but in what our hearts ask it to be.

*"How do you feel about money?"* I sensed Him ask.

"Money is necessary for living," I replied. "I want to enjoy life and provide well for my family—to have and do the things we enjoy."

*"Do you love money?"* He asked more directly this time.

The question pierced my heart.

"Not as much as I love you," I answered, my voice quiet, uncertain.

I had often wrestled with the place of money in my spiritual life. I knew the Scriptures that warned about the love of money, and I recognized how easily it could become an idol. Somehow, I had convinced myself that as long as I held Jesus in higher regard, I was safe.

Yet in that moment, I realized how easily love for money can hide behind the language of responsibility.

During my devotions, I was reading 1 Samuel Chapter 5. The Philistines once placed the captured ark of God beside their idol Dagon. Each morning, they found their god fallen before the Lord until finally:

*"Dagon was lying face-down before the ark of the Lord; his head and hands broken off and lying on the threshold."* — 1 Samuel 5:4 (NIV)

## **The Fall of My False Gods**

It became clear to me that my God would not tolerate the presence of any idols, no matter how small or insignificant I might claim they were. I had allowed money to become an idol in my life—and it wasn't the only one.

Pride had stealthily woven itself into my thoughts and actions, making me overly concerned with my image and accomplishments. I had measured my worth by achievements, accolades, and the recognition of others. My relentless pursuit of professional success had consumed

my time and energy, often at the expense of relationships and spiritual well-being.

Selfishness, too, reared its ugly head. I realized how often I had placed my own desires above the needs of those around me, even my family and friends. My decisions were guided by what benefited me most rather than by love, service, or the greater good.

In that moment of clarity, I acknowledged these idols and their hold over my life. I repented with a contrite heart, laying my burdens before the Father.

As I did, I experienced an overwhelming sense of release. The weight of my past mistakes—the guilt and constant striving for more—fell away. The chains that had once bound my spirit were broken, and I was a captive set free.

The forgiveness of the Father washed over me, bringing with it an indescribable peace and contentment. I was no longer shackled by the idols that once dictated my actions. Instead, I felt liberated to live a life centered on love, generosity, and the values of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## **True Wealth Revealed**

With the discipline complete, the teaching began.

Jesus asked me, *“If money is the currency of earth, what is the currency of Heaven?”*

He reminded me of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Though I had read it countless times, this time it felt as if He were speaking it directly to me.

### ***The Parable of the Good Samaritan***

*On one occasion, an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

*“What is written in the Law?” He replied. “How do you read it?”*

*He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

*“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this, and you will live.”*

*But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”*

*In reply, Jesus said:*

*“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

*“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’*

*“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”*

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” — Luke 10:25–37 (NIV)

The greatest commandments are clear: love God and love your neighbor. Do this, and you will live. To remove any ambiguity about what this love looks like, Jesus defines it through action—through mercy expressed in generosity.

The Good Samaritan saw a man in need and immediately gave everything to help him. He used his oil and wine to cleanse and soothe the man’s wounds, tore his own cloth to bandage them, and placed the

man on his donkey—the very one he had been riding. He took him to an inn, stayed through the night to care for him, and the next morning gave the innkeeper what money he had, along with an open-ended promise to cover whatever else was needed.

Then it struck me: *Wow*.

Love is the currency of Heaven.

Love is the medium through which value is exchanged in God’s Kingdom, far surpassing any earthly wealth. When we love others selflessly, we participate in an economy that enriches the soul and aligns us with God’s will.

That realization changed everything for me. True wealth isn’t measured by material possessions but by the depth of our love for God and our neighbors.

Embracing love as Heaven’s primary currency, I discovered a new sense of purpose and fulfillment. Every act of kindness, generosity, and compassion became a measure of eternal worth, drawing me closer to the very heart of God.

## **Love That Lifted Me**

Our conversation continued. Jesus asked, “*Who are you in the parable?*”

As I reflected on my journey from failure to recovery, I immediately identified with the man in the ditch.

I had been beaten up by life, left ashamed, vulnerable, and stripped of everything I once possessed. My financial collapse felt like a physical assault, robbing me of dignity and stability. What I had built over decades vanished in months, and I was plunged into despair.

I needed healing—mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. My mind had become a battleground of regret and anxiety. Each day, I fought to find purpose, hope, and courage. Spiritually, I felt distant from God,

questioning His presence and my faith. The weight of my failures seemed heavier than His promises.

And then there was the practical reality: I needed a job.

Financial stability wasn't just about survival—it represented purpose and dignity. Yet the search was exhausting. Each rejection chipped away at my confidence until hope seemed almost out of reach.

In that desperate state, Jesus provided everything I needed for the journey ahead. I came to recognize He had sent “Good Samaritans” to lift me—friends and family who stood by me with quiet compassion, mentors who reminded me of God’s faithfulness, and strangers who extended kindness when I least expected it.

The first was my wife, Nicole. As devastating as the loss was for me, it was at least as painful for her. She had been a passenger in a train wreck she couldn't prevent. She saw warning signs but could never have imagined the full impact until it came crashing down.

Yet through the chaos, Nicole remained steadfast. She could have chosen an easier path and walked away, but she didn't. Instead, she shielded me from her own pain, carried more than her share, and processed her grief quietly before God.

Over the next six weeks, she became my quiet anchor. Without pressure or pity, she gently reminded me who I was and what God had placed in me. When the time was right, she began sharing opportunities she'd found. At first, I could barely respond, but her belief in me began to chip away at my fog of defeat.

Hope returned. Then interest. Then enthusiasm.

My confidence slowly rebuilt. My faith that God would care for us was no longer theoretical—it was alive again. The flame was rekindled. I was ready to move forward.

Looking back, I see how masterfully she loved me through that season. She didn't push. She simply stayed near, walked gently, and

reflected the love of Christ when I had forgotten how to receive it. Her love—God’s love through her—saved me. Again.

For seven months, I searched diligently for work. I came close several times, finishing as the runner-up for three promising positions. Each near miss felt like another blow. But even then, Jesus was at work, preparing the next Good Samaritan.

Luke, the son-in-law of my spiritual parents, Ken and Sandra, called one day. I’ve known him for more than twenty-five years—since his youth at the church in Michigan where I first gave my heart to Jesus. Though distance separated us after my family moved to Minnesota, we stayed connected through the years.

Now Luke was running a thriving commercial construction business and asked if I’d consider joining him to help expand it. He made a generous offer, which I gratefully accepted.

In the fall of 2022, Nicole and I packed up our family and moved back to Michigan with our two youngest sons. Friends helped us move in, delivered meals, and invited us into their homes. We felt surrounded by love.

Good Samaritan after Good Samaritan.

Sandra, especially, has been more than a Good Samaritan. She opened her home to us, fed us, encouraged us, and poured spiritual wisdom into my healing. By asking the right questions, she shifted my focus from “*Why did this happen to me?*” to “*Where is He leading me?*” That shift became the foundation for my ongoing conversation with God and the revelations that followed.

My heart overflowed with gratitude. I met with each of them—Nicole, Luke, and Sandra—to share what Jesus had shown me and to thank them for being His hands and heart in my life. In each one, I clearly saw Jesus.

What an amazing God I serve.

## When Love Became a Mission

A second time, Jesus asked, “*Who are you in the parable?*”

As I reflected, I realized that for most of my Christian life, I had lived like one of the religious leaders who passed by the man in the ditch. Yes, there were moments when I stopped to help or gave money, but more often, I turned a blind eye.

My actions—or lack of them—revealed a shallow engagement with the needs around me. My faith had been a comfort more than a calling, a veneer rather than a transforming power.

But something had changed. The failures, the pain, and the mercy I’d experienced had softened my heart and opened my eyes. I began to see myself differently—not as the one who passed by, but as the Samaritan who stopped. I wanted to be someone who truly *saw* others, who acted out of compassion and love.

I came to understand that love isn’t a feeling; it’s an investment. It demands presence, sacrifice, and action.

And yet, as I looked closer, I realized that in one way or another, we are all still the man in the ditch. We’re struggling to pay bills or find work. We’re fighting disease, depression, or self-doubt. We’re worried for our children, our parents, or our marriages. We’re battling loneliness, addiction, or fear. Each person I meet carries their own wounds—often hidden, but just as real.

Just as I’d seen Jesus in the Good Samaritans who lifted me, I began to see Him in the suffering of those around me. It was a humbling revelation: the same Jesus who healed me was now inviting me to love others as He had loved me.

It reminded me of another story Jesus told to reveal the heart of Heaven’s economy.

## The Sheep and the Goats

Jesus described the day when the Son of Man will separate the peoples like a shepherd divides sheep from goats. To those on His right, He will say:

*“Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”* — Matthew 25:34–36 (NIV)

Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?”

The King will reply:

*“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”* — Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

In that moment, the first phase of my calling became clear: God wasn’t asking me to rebuild what I had lost—He was inviting me to live differently. The world’s system had trained me to strive and measure worth by achievement, but Heaven’s way runs on love.

I was being called to let compassion, generosity, and service—not ambition—become the true measure of success, seeing every person as a reflection of Christ and every encounter as carrying eternal weight.

As the dust of that revelation settled, I realized what had fallen wasn’t only a business—it was an entire belief system. The ideas that had once defined success, worth, and provision belonged to one economy. The truth Jesus was revealing belonged to another.

From that day forward, I knew this journey wouldn’t be about recovery. It would be about reorientation—learning to live between

two worlds: present in the one I could see but governed by the one I could not.

## Love's Invitation

Now, I invite you to begin your own journey of transformation. This isn't about behavior modification; it's a call to reorient your heart, your habits, and your purpose around the values of God's Kingdom.

This is the invitation: to step out of the economy of self-interest and into the economy of Heaven—where people matter more than profit, where giving replaces grasping, and where the fruit of your life is measured in joy, peace, and purpose.

In the chapters ahead, we'll explore this divine economy in depth. But before we explore how love flows outward, Chapter 2 will take us to the foundation of it all: loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Without that first love, every other exchange in the Kingdom economy loses its power.

## Reflection

### The Currency of the Heart

1. **The Audit:** What has taken root in your heart that may be competing with God's rightful place?
2. **The Idols:** Which specific idols—success, control, approval, comfort, or money—have quietly claimed your trust and affection?
3. **The Invitation:** What could change in your family, workplace, or neighborhood if love became the currency you spent most freely?