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Personal Flourishing Leads to National Economic Prosperity

The freedom to spend as one pleases, to buy the products and services most wanted and to work at the best workplaces brings an individual a greater chance at flourishing. That freedom comes from a limited government, low taxes, and a larger private sector across the board. Personal flourishing is an individual experiencing a period of success and growth. It can take many forms, such as spiritually, financially, socially, emotionally physically, and many more, but this essay will focus on primarily financially. To be flourishing in a financial sense is to be free of debt (or at least rapidly paying off debt), making money, saving money, but also being in a position to spend money and reap its benefits. There are multiple sectors that can determine if an individual can flourish: the government, personal motivation, the economy and political world in general. An individual flourishing will in turn increase the likelihood of those around them flourishing. This is a way to economic prosperity.

The biggest factor affecting personal flourishing is the government and how much reach it has over its citizens. A nation that aims to be more controlling of its people, be it by higher taxation for more social services, a smaller private sector restricting what could be higher paying jobs, or limited personal freedoms will be inhibit the economic heights that its citizens can reach. One cannot flourish if they are paying tax money for services and infrastructure that they do not support and that could be better handled by the private sector. An individual would be able to flourish more with a smaller government, paying less in taxes, because they could then spend their money in a way they see best. They could put their money into charities, projects, and businesses that they believe in, which would make them happier than giving it to the government to never see it at work. They would also have the option to save money and create more wealth for themselves, a key component of personal flourishing.

Another way the government can aid personal flourishing is by limiting itself and giving more tasks to the private sector. If that were to happen, then current government jobs, that are perhaps lower paying, could turn into private sector jobs that aim to attract the best and therefor pay better. This would allow those individuals in the new private sector jobs to get a better wage than the comparable job by the government. Also, a larger government in terms of agencies and services gives less choice to the individual. To help the citizens flourish, options in how they spend money and choose healthcare and other services is necessary, so a larger government will hurt the individuals.

In addition to what has been previously listed about the government, personal freedom is also a huge part of being able to flourish. Simply put, if the government does allow individuals to choose much and make their own decisions, they will not flourish. An example of this would be in times of war such as World War Two in the United States. The government took a lot of extra power, and went to extreme measures such as using the draft and food rationing for those on the home front. While the nation was able to prosper, on an individual level people did not flourish. Luckily in this case after the war the government gave back the peoples individual freedoms, and people started to flourish much more. The personal freedom to choose how you make and spend your money will lead to more personal flourishing.

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Higher paying jobs often require more education and skill than lower paying jobs. Higher pay also will help an individual flourish, as they will have more money to save and spend. This means that motivation is required to flourish, especially given a limited government is also important, so little to no governmental aid will make people flourish. If one is not motivated (unless they are born to a wealthy family and do not actually have to work for it,) one will not make the amount of money required to flourish. This amount of money is not a set number. I as a college freshman might flourish by working a low paying job a couple hours on the weekend for some spending money, while a grown adult will need to work more and earn more to be flourishing. But no matter what counts as flourishing now, assuming nothing major happens, it will become stagnant in a while, and to grow will require more motivation and work. So, no matter who the individual is, motivation is another factor that goes into an individual's personal flourishing. This is where self-interest comes in. If one is not motivated and does not act in self-interest, then they will not be able to flourish. Even if one is ultimately motivated by the desire to help others, and that is how they would emotionally prosper, self-interest is needed to reach the level of financial security to donate to others. Motivation is one of, if not the most important factor to personal flourishing, because if one is not motivated it will not matter how limited the government is, they will not flourish.

Another, slightly unfortunate factor into personal flourishing is how the economic and political world is doing. While as an individual we can technically influence this, in reality it is something that we are completely subject to. To find an example in United States history, we can look to the 1920's and 30's. In the roaring twenties the economy was in a great period, and it did not take a ton of motivation to prosper and flourish. However, once the great depression hit in 1929, very few people were financially flourishing, no matter the motivation. This is to show that the world around us can determine if an individual flourishes. This is also influenced by the political world. In certain big government political climates around the world, it has been hard to impossible for an individual to prosper, such as modern China, the Soviet Union, and places under colonial rule in the 1700's. The people living in those places did not have a choice, but nevertheless because of the political climate in which they lived they could not flourish as easily as if they had lived in a limited government. It is of course still possible to flourish in those places, but there are less opportunities and they primarily lie in a governmental leadership position. While ultimately these both tie back to limited government, I feel that it is an important distinction to make, because an individual does not always have control over these situations, as it is generally simply due to where and when they are born, not their motivation.

So far, I have been focused on the individual and how to make the individual flourish. I will now shift to how personal flourishing will lead to economic prosperity on a larger scale. When an individual is flourishing, they have enough money and free time to spend their money. So a flourishing individual will spend their money, which will help businesses and in turn help create more jobs. These jobs will give other people money and help them flourish, which will create a positive feedback loop. When most of the people are flourishing and doing well financially, we are in a time of economic prosperity. When people are doing well financially, they are more likely to donate to charity and those in need, which will help them get jobs or pay the bills, getting even more people close to flourishing. With a small government and motivated individuals, a large amount of people can flourish and can create a nationwide time of prosperity. It would be impossible for economic prosperity to happen if none of the individuals in the nation

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(or not many of them) were personally prospering, because in that case money would not be circulating and reaching all around the nation.

Personal flourishing is necessary for success, be it financial, social, mental, or other. If one cannot flourish and thrive in life, then they will not be able to achieve anything more than simply surviving. To flourish, certain prerequisites must be met. The government must be limited in amount of taxes and general scope, it must give the citizens large amounts of personal freedom, and those citizens must be motivated. Not every single box must be checked, but a sufficient combination is required to flourish. Also, flourishing and success breeds more flourishing and success. When one individual prospers, it is easier for another to prosper. When a large amount of individuals are prospering, then the economy is prospering and it is easier for the individual to do better and so on and so forth. This positive feedback loop, prosperity helps business', which helps individuals get jobs and prosper, which repeats the cycle, is why limited government is needed. Limited government allows the individual to find ways for themselves to flourish, which will, given time to allow enough individuals to flourish, will lead us as a nation to economic prosperity.