

Mitt and Newt: Two Rich Guys Arguing Over Money

✘ I once wrote a column called “Thank God for Rich People” and was deluged with hate mail from liberals. That makes sense, of course, since liberals have a visceral *thing* when it comes to rich people. Liberals think the world would be a better place without rich people, when logic tells you the opposite is true. If we didn’t have rich people, we’d have a lot more poor people, since rich people pay a lot of taxes and spend a lot of money and hire a lot of people, all of which is good for everybody. I don’t expect liberals to understand this since economics, like common sense, is not one of their strong suits. But is it asking too much to expect more from two rich Republicans running for president, both claiming to be conservatives, no less?

I’m talking about Newt and Mitt, two guys who became wealthy thanks to capitalism and the free market; two guys who now sound like socialists, or liberal Democrats, waging a kind of class warfare against each other.

It started when Romney said Gingrich should give back the \$1.6-plus million he was paid by Freddie Mac, the corporation he gave advice to and which many conservatives say played a big role in causing the 2008 financial crisis.

Asked on Fox News if Gingrich should “give that money back,” Romney, said, “I sure do.” Michael Moore would have given the same answer. So would everybody who works at MSNBC.

When reporters confronted Gingrich with the shot by Romney, Newt fired back: “I would just say that if Governor Romney would like to give back all of the money he’s earned from bankrupting companies and laying off employees over his years

at Bain, that I would be glad to listen to him. And I bet you \$10 – not \$10,000 – that he won't take the offer."

Does Newt understand that sometimes a CEO has to shut down companies that are failing and lay off workers; that getting rid of failure lays the groundwork for success? That while he did indeed fire some workers, Romney also started new companies that hired tens of thousands of new employees?

And does Romney understand that Gingrich has no obligation to give back money he legitimately earned – even from Freddie Mac?

Do either of these guys understand capitalism?

But it didn't stop there. Just the other day, Romney took another shot at Newt, again over money. "He's a wealthy man – a very wealthy man," Mitt said of Newt. "If you have a half-a-million-dollar purchase from Tiffany's, you're not a middle-class American."

No, Gingrich isn't a middle class American – and neither is Romney. So what? Is there anything more pathetic than the sight of two men of wealth going after each other because of their wealth? And why is it so damn noble to be middle class? Sorry I asked. Romney was only doing what President Obama does every day – pandering to the middle class because that's where most of the votes are.

This whole thing, I'm figuring, started a few thousand years ago with that anti-rich guy verse in the New Testament, the one about how it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. This suspicion, or downright hatred, of wealth has been in our cultural DNA ever since.

As for me, I'll vote for whichever candidate says: *I'm rich. I like being rich. It enables me to buy lots of stuff, even if I don't need it. I didn't steal the money so back the hell*

off. And admit it: If you had a choice you'd rather be rich than middle class, too. So who are we kidding here? But if you still have a problem with me because I'm successful and have oodles of money, then vote for Obama – or one of the so-called conservative Republicans who attacks wealth and success just like he does.

I know, I know ... I'm not holding my breath.