

Trapped By Debt

Turn a thumbs down on debt. There is a great danger in all societies of getting trapped by debt. Perhaps the greatest need in families today is to understand the consequences of being trapped by debt, with limited income, creating a financial position where recovery seems nearly impossible.

Anyone can find a wealth of information which deals with borrowing, easy credit and debt issues, but the problem counselors often encounter is failing to get people to recognize the seriousness of their actions *before* they make wrong decisions.

All too often, people only want help after their situation has become nearly hopeless. You should know that borrowing can be very hazardous to your financial health and possibly to your mental health, spiritual health and the health of your relationships.

Too often, people are quick to borrow first instead of trusting the Lord to meet their needs. After all, doesn't Scripture tell us that our God is a providing God, and that He will take care of us by meeting our needs? What if we turn to credit and take on new debt, when all along God wanted to show Himself strong on our behalf? Before you run to the bank for a loan, before you pull out the credit card, before you rush to meet your own needs, give time for the provision of God to work.

Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:17-19 NIV

We have been taught from childhood to make decisions and move quickly and decisively, so we feel compelled to hurry to fix our own problems. Yet, in spite of this need for speed, we should be patient in waiting on God. We should be cautious about always making our own way independently instead of seeking the wisdom of God.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways

higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
Isaiah 55:7-9 NIV

Debt: The Road Easily Traveled

The road into the misuse of credit is wide, broad, simple, easy, accessible, effortless, uncomplicated, painless, spacious, available and trouble-free.

“With debt, you essentially slide in and climb out. Easy to get in, difficult to get out.”

However there is no quick and easy way out from under a heavy debt load. With debt, you essentially slide in and climb out. Easy to get in, difficult to get out. If you have ever been heavily in debt and burdened down with monthly payments so steep that you could barely keep your head above water and then had to slowly and methodically climb out, then you know that it is an uphill struggle. There is no easy way out. You cannot wave a magic wand and undo in twelve months what it took twelve years to accomplish.

Debt: A Way of Life for Many

What about a lifestyle of debt? Is a Christian to borrow? Is debt okay? Some would believe that it is wrong for a Christian to have any debt. Some will say it is alright to borrow for a house, but never to borrow for anything that would depreciate. One of the greatest challenges and hindrances to reaching the world for Christ is this. People who live in a society where there is the possibility of making significant amounts of money all too often spend their way into enormous debt. In doing so, there is little left over (above their tithing) to give to their local church, missions, and evangelism projects. If you have to borrow, learn to give while borrowing.

Debt: Borrowing Money

It is not wrong to borrow money, but it is wrong to take on debt without the ability to pay it back or with the intention of never repaying what is owed. What is meant in Romans 13:8 when it says not to owe anything to anyone?

Obey the laws, then, for two reasons: first, to keep from being punished, and second, just because you know you should. Pay your taxes too, for these same two reasons. For government workers need to be paid so that they can keep on doing God’s work, serving you. Pay everyone whatever he ought to have: pay your taxes and import duties gladly, obey those over you, and give honor and

respect to all those to whom it is due. Pay all your debts except the debt of love for others— never finish paying that! For if you love them, you will be obeying all of God's laws, fulfilling all his requirements.

Romans 13:5-8 TLB

These verses simply mean that you should obey the laws, pay your taxes and repay all of your debts. That just makes good sense. Besides repaying your debts at some future date, you are to pay your creditors on time, with any interest owed. A person who borrows but does not repay is called wicked, meaning wrong, sinful, immoral, evil and depraved.

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously.

Psalm 37:21 NIV

Debt: The Lack of Self-Control

If a person or family will live a restrained lifestyle, they will be able to live on thousands of dollars less each year. You should only incur debt when it makes good economic sense. The expense of borrowing should be less than the economic benefit that you will receive.

Don't underestimate God's desire to help you in every way. Over and over the Scriptures indicate that you are to live a controlled and temperate lifestyle.

Now the overseer must be above reproach..... temperate, self-controlled, respectable....

I Timothy 3:2 NIV

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way you should go"

Isaiah 48:17 NKJV