

Harvest Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
Sunday School Study on Personal Money Management  
Start Positive – Prosperity & Our Response  
December 9, 2007

**START WITH PRAYER**

**Debt**

1. Debt is not a sin but the Bible discourages the use of debt. Those who got into debt in the Old Testament became indentured servants (slaves) to the lenders.

**Deuteronomy 15:4-6** – 4 "However, there will be no poor among you, since the LORD will surely bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, 5 if only you listen obediently to the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all this commandment which I am commanding you today. 6 "For the LORD your God will bless you as He has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you."

**Proverbs 22:7** – "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the servant to the lender."

2. Debt is never the real problem, it is only symptomatic of the real problem – greed, self-indulgence, impatience, fear, poor self-image, lack of self-worth, lack of self-discipline, etc.
3. To borrow money for a tax deduction is foolish. At a 28% tax bracket, every dollar you pay in interest becomes a 28 cents tax savings. For consumer debt, this ratio has been reduced to zero. Spending more than what you earn is hardly the way to achieve financial success.

**Economic Dangers of Debt**

1. The compounding of interest works against you rather than for you.
2. Debt becomes a trap – easy to get into it, but getting out of it is next to impossible.
3. Debt always mortgages the future.

**Spiritual Dangers of Debt**

1. Borrowing always presumes upon the future. You have to rely on future earnings to pay current expenses.

**Isaiah 56:12** - "Come," they say, "let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today, only more so."

**Proverbs 27:1** - Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.

**James 4:13-17** – 13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

2. Borrowing may deny God an opportunity to work. Invariably, God's method of meeting my needs and desires is different from my method. What we are really saying when we borrow is, "Yes God, You are sovereign enough to save me from my sins, but Your sovereignty ends when it comes to my finances.

**Daniel 4:37** - "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

**Isaiah 55:8-9** – 8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

The question that we have to ask ourselves is, "Does God provide for what I want by providing borrowed funds, or is this me meeting my needs and desires in my own way?"

### **Biblical Principle of Borrowing**

1. Not repaying debt is never an option for the Christian.

**Psalms 37:21** - The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous is gracious and gives.

2. Whenever you have borrowed from someone, you are servant (slave) to that person.

**Proverbs 22:7** - The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

3. By taking on debt, you may run the risk of not being able to provide for your own (your family). Debt mortgages the future.

**1 Timothy 5:8** - But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

4. Debt makes it very easy to fund greeds as opposed to needs.

**Luke 12:15** - Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

## **Why is so much written about Debt in God's Word**

1. Debt is extremely deceptive.
2. Debt creates bondage, and if that bondage is to the world system, we are no longer free to be the witness in this world that God has called us to be.
3. Debt is almost blasphemous when we use it and deny God an opportunity to work.

## **Criteria for undertaking Debt**

1. Does it make economic sense to incur the debt?
  - a. The cost to borrow must be less than the economic benefit received.
  - b. There must be a guaranteed way of repayment. This is tough even considering the mortgage on a house.
2. Are both spouses free from anxiety regarding this debt?
3. What personal goals and values am I meeting with this debt that can be met in no other way?

## **Simple rules**

Credit card debt	- never (it will never satisfy the economic criteria in 1).
Consumer debt	- never (it is just like credit card debt). Used to finance consumptive & depreciable assets – cars, furniture, etc.
Mortgage	- don't get so attached to the house that you couldn't sell it if you had to.
Investment or business debt	- If you cannot explain the deal or investment to your wife in such a way that she understands it, don't do it. Even if you can explain it so that she totally understands it, but she feels uneasy or unsure in any way about it, don't do it. God has granted to women a special sense (intuition) that cannot be explained.

## **Ways to get out of Debt**

1. Examine the assets you have to see which ones could be sold to reduce (eliminate) debt. Ebay.
2. Set up a repayment schedule and strictly adhere to it.
  - a. Pay something on each debt each month so that the creditor knows you are serious.
  - b. Concentrate on eliminating the smallest debt first.
  - c. Possible but dangerous – a debt consolidation loan. For this to work, you must commit to cut up your credit cards.

- d. Rather than a debt consolidation loan, go directly to the creditors with a repayment schedule in hand.
3. One of the other keys to repaying debt is to pre-commit any extra income or amounts from reduced expenses – excess cash flow – to debt repayment. God will provide funds in an unexpected and supernatural way as a result of your obedience to Him.

## **Surety**

### **1. Proverbs 6:1-5**

- 1 My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor,  
Have given a pledge for a stranger,
- 2 If you have been snared with the words of your mouth,  
Have been caught with the words of your mouth,
- 3 Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself;  
Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor,  
Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.
- 4 Give no sleep to your eyes,  
Nor slumber to your eyelids;
- 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand  
And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

To guarantee another's debt is unwise because it involves matters quite beyond the guarantor's control. Borrowing money is one thing, but to provide security for another is to walk into a trap of one's own making.

By accepting responsibility for another's debts you allow another to take control of your life. If you find yourself in this situation, God tells you to set aside your pride and do everything you can (have a great sense of urgency) to have the contract annulled. Even if your foot is already in the trap, continue to press your plea to get out of the arrangement. If not, the ultimate end could be loss of everything.

Example – An individual getting into a partnership relationship especially with an unbeliever.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-16** – 14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."

2<sup>nd</sup> Example – Cosigning on a friend's car loan because the friend's credit is suspect.

2. **Proverbs 11:15** - He who is guarantor for a stranger will surely suffer for it, but he who hates being a guarantor is secure.

Though this passage says basically the same thing as 6:1-5, look at what Solomon says the ultimate end will be for someone who guarantees a loan for a stranger (or foreigner). The opposite is true of someone who refuses to (hates) strike hands in pledge. **Look at the state of our economy (the cost to individuals) and results of guaranteeing loans of other nations.**

3. **Proverbs 17:18** - A man lacking in sense pledges and becomes guarantor in the presence of his neighbor.

Jay Adams says that this verse shows that only a person with little or no sense will do such a thing. I believe we must translate the verse narrower. A person who does not understand or has not been counseled in God's principles concerning surety can and will get himself into these kinds of situations.

**Hebrews 7:22** - so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

The only perfect surety was Christ, who was the guarantee for and the guarantor of our redemption.