

What Does the Bible Teach About Christians and Indebtedness?

(Part One; Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

A. America, the debtor nation

1. The national debt is 29 trillion dollars; \$86,200.00 per citizen
2. \$228,400.00 per taxpayer (<https://www.usdebtclock.org>)
3. The average American's personal debt is \$52,940, including mortgages, home equity, auto, student, and personal loans, and credit card debt.
4. Currently, there are more than 600 million credit cards held by Americans; that's two for every man, woman, and child in the country.
5. Last year, credit card debt grew by almost \$100 Billion.
(<https://www.businessinsider.com/personal-finance/average-american-debt>)

B. Debt is one of the most discouraging things on this earth.

1. Many Christians don't seem to understand it very well.
2. The world doesn't appear to understand it at all.

C. Symptoms of financial bondage:

1. Charging the necessities of life (food, clothing, fuel)
2. Borrowing money to pay fixed expenses (rent, utilities)
3. Creditors writing and calling for their money
4. Tempted to be dishonest about money
5. Unable to contribute at church or help in the community
6. Frequent arguments with spouse and family about money
7. Unaware of how much one owes
8. Uncertain about how much it takes to survive each week

D. Spending choices come from spiritual decisions - Phil. 4:11-13

1. The Bible addresses this at length, even though it is seldom taught in the home and almost never taught in Bible classes and sermons.
2. Therefore, we learn about debt and its management from our culture; and, our culture encourages it.
3. We cannot borrow our way into prosperity.
4. The Bible talks more about money than faith and prayer combined; this isn't because God cares about money, but because we do
5. The way we feel about money is a product of our faith - Luke 12:13-15

I. WHAT IS WRITTEN?

A. Debt is a form of slavery - Prov. 22:7, 26-27

1. Until we are debt-free, we will be enslaved to our past choices; the consequences will follow us until the debts are paid in full.

B. Debt prevents peaceful rest - Neh. 5:3-5

C. Debt is the temporary, lazy path to revenue - Ecc. 5:4; Prov. 6:10-11, 21:5, 20

D. Debt is God's metaphor for sin - Amos 2:6-8; Matt. 18:21-35; Rom. 6:16-23

E. Debt compromises our ability to provide - Prov. 13:22, 22:3

F. Debt reduces our ability to be generous - Prov. 3:9, 27; 1John 3:17

1. Matt. 5:42 - Jesus taught that we lend to those who are in need. If the act of borrowing was a sin; Jesus would be advocating our complicity with the sins others by lending to them.
- G. Debt conflicts with a hard working mindset. It is more than a number; it is a way of thinking - Ex. 22:14; Prov. 6:6-8, 10:4, 13:11, 14:23; Col. 3:23
- H. Going into debt for material desires erodes spiritual life
 1. Ecc. 5:10; Mark 4:19; 1Tim. 6:10; Heb. 13:5; Matt. 6:21, 31-32
- I. It is wrong not to repay our debts - Psalm 37:21
 1. It is not necessarily a sin to incur debt; it is a sin to refuse to repay it. Repaying our debts honors God and is the morally right thing to do.
- J. One cannot serve God and material desires - Matt. 6:24
 1. When we are in debt, it consumes our thoughts, influence, and life.
- K. Don't make financial decisions driven by fear - Matt. 25:24-25
- L. Acknowledge our true source of blessings - 2Cor. 9:10
 1. God is the One who provides our finances. Our jobs are not our source of income; God is - Matt. 6:26
- M. Maintain a generous spirit - Prov. 28:27
- N. Work with what you've got - Rom. 13:8; Luke 19:17

Conclusion:

A. An ancient Persian story is told about an unhappy king. In an attempt to find the answer to his discontent, he consulted his magicians and astrologers who told him he could find happiness by wearing the coat of a perfectly happy man. Immediately the king set out on his quest to find a man who was perfectly happy from whom he could buy his coat. He knocked at the doors of the very rich, for it seemed logical to him that he would find perfect happiness there, but it was in vain. He visited the institutions of higher learning, thinking the scholarly must be very happy in their wisdom. That, too, proved a dead end. He thought he might find happiness among the young; no. Perhaps the beautiful; not really. Weary with his disappointing search, he stumbled across a common laborer gleefully singing at his work of sweeping sand from the streets. When the king asked why he was singing, he confessed he was perfectly happy with his work. "Sell me your coat!" cried the king. "I'll give you a bag of gold for it!" But the laborer only laughed again and said, "I'd gladly give it to you, sir; but you see, I have no coat."

B. Remember that great wealth is not synonymous with great joy - 1Tim. 6:6