

a Bible Lesson from PROVERBS 22:7:

THE DEBTOR IS THE SLAVE OF THE LENDER

Robert Baral
2/06/2008 AD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. IS THIS SHOCKING PICTURE A PORTRAIT OF YOUR FAMILY FINANCES?
- II. DEBT A FORM OF SLAVERY WHICH GOD DOES NOT CALL HIS PEOPLE!
- III. SOME PAINFUL DEFINITIONS
- IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BROKEN, THE PROBLEM ARISES, OF DEFAULT
- V. WHEN BORROWERS BECOME ENSLAVED TO LENDERS
- VI. SELLING OURSELVES INTO SURETY TO POSSESS MAMMON
- VII. WHAT IF ALL AMERICAN CHRISTIANS WERE DEBT FREE?
- VIII. IN CONCLUSION – SLAVES, MERCENARIES OR CHILDREN OF GOD
- IX. REFERENCES

I. IS THIS SHOCKING PICTURE A PORTRAIT OF YOUR FAMILY FINANCES?

Is this shocking picture a portrait of your family finances? In the 4 plus decades following World War II in The USA: ¹

**the average US family spends ¼ of its spendable income to maintain outstanding debts.

**since 1945, consumer debt in The US has multiplied 3100%.

**the average US income tax filer spends 10 times more on paying interest on debts than on giving to charity”

**financial pressures due to debt are major factors in over 50% of divorces in The US

II. DEBT A FORM OF SLAVERY WHICH GOD DOES NOT CALL HIS PEOPLE!

Matthew Henry observes, that “it should be our endeavour to keep as much as may be out of debt. [But] some sell their liberty to gratify their luxury. ² What happens when we become indebted to a lender by borrowing? PROVERBS 22:7 says, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” ³

When we sell ourselves into debt, we are ruled over by the lender. In that debt, we become the servant of the one who lends to us. We then place ourselves under direction of the lender to do his will first.

And when we can not repay that debt, the lender becomes even more our master. We then become the slave of the lender, under duress to serve the will of the master to the exclusion of all else. And as the devil would have it, at the exclusion first of GOD, to Whom our first and greatest debt is due!

III. SOME PAINFUL DEFINITIONS

Principal is “a capital sum, as distinguished from interest,” borrowed. ⁴ It is the amount, service or asset which the borrower obtains from the lender on credit.

Interest is “a sum charged for borrowed money; the rate for such charge” ⁵ It is the fee that the creditor receives and the debtor pays for the loan.

Debt is ”something that is owed; an obligation to pay or render something” ⁶ It is the condition of being under such an obligation” ⁷ It is the borrowed principle, plus fees and penalties, plus interest owed to the lender.

¹ 1, Alcorn, “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” Chpater 17, “Debt: Borrowing and Lending,” p 305, paragraph 3.

² 2, Matthew Henry Notes, PROVERBS 22, Verse 7.

³ 3, KJV, PROVERBS 22:7.

⁴ 4, Webster’s Dictionary, entry “principal,” p 720, # 5.

⁵ 4, Webster’s Dictionary, entry “interest,” p 475, # 8.

⁶ 4, Webster’s Dictionary, entry “debt,” p 232, # 1,2

⁷ 4, Webster’s Dictionary, entry “debt,” p 232, # 3.

Default is the "failure to meet financial obligations."⁸ It is when the borrower can not make the required interest payments on the loan to the lender, breaking the terms of the agreement, which gives the lender the right to enslave us: The right to apply penalty fees. The right to repossess whatever tangible goods we have bought with those borrowed funds. The right to possess whatever other assets we may have to satisfy the outstanding debt.

IV. THE RELATIONSHIP BROKEN, THE PROBLEM ARISES, OF DEFAULT

Now when we borrow from a lender, we establish a relationship, the terms of which we bind ourselves to live up to. But when we borrow money on credit, we are using money that we have not earned. The interest we pay the lender is a mortgaging of our future time, energy, assets, earnings and possessions, of which we pledge to the lender if we should default on the conditions of the loan.

The problem arises in two ways, when the borrower becomes servant to the lender, or even worse his slave: First, the creditor has first call on our earnings to meet the terms of the interest payments required until the principle is paid back to the lender in full. Second, the creditor has first call on our assets required to repay the owed debt when we default.

V. WHEN BORROWERS BECOME ENSLAVED TO LENDERS

We become servants to the lender when we are struggling to repay that debt. And when we can not repay that debt, we become the slaves of the lender. And it is so easy to become so enslaved in our society today! Credit is so easily and laxly given. Happiness is equated with rampant materialism. And the rates charged to consumers are exorbitant!

Saint Cyprian says, "Their property held in chains... chains which shackled their courage and choked their faith and hampered their judgement and throttled their souls. They think of themselves as owners, whereas it is they rather who are owned: enslaved as they are to their own property, they are not the masers of their money but its slaves!"⁹

"Usury" is the enslaving and offensive practice of "lending of money at an exorbitant interest rate."¹⁰ Martin Luther says, "GOD opposes useyr and greed, yet no one realizes this because it is not simple murder or robbery. Rather, usury is a more diverse, insatiable murder and robbery!"¹¹

⁸ 4, Webster's Dictionary, entry "default," p 236, # 2.

⁹ 1, Alcorn, "Money, Possessions and Eternity," Chpater 17, "Debt: Borrowing and Lending," quote of Saint Cyprian, introduction, p 305.

¹⁰ 4, Webster's Dictionary, entry "usury," p 988, # 1.

¹¹ 1, Alcorn, "Money, Possessions and Eternity," Chpater 17, "Debt: Borrowing and Lending," quote of Martin Luther, introduction, p 305.

Therefore we often find, in this fallen world, as it is written in PROVERBS 22:7, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”¹²

VI. SELLING OURSELVES INTO SURETY TO POSSESS MAMMON

What happens when we offer to sell ourselves into prisons administered by lenders, but fashioned by the debts we bow down to? There are always the wicked who are willing to enslave us into usury. PROVERBS 22:26-27 says, “Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?”¹³

To what lengths do men go today to sell themselves as surety to obtain the worthless false idols of materials of this age? How far from The Lord GOD when we become surety, making ourselves and our futures – and our loved ones – as pledges, mortgaging the heritage even of our children, for such things?¹⁴

What does CHRIST say to us in LUKE 16:13? “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and mammon!”¹⁵ These are the false gods of materialism, earthly riches and treasures that become personified as idols, demanding our worship and enslavement before their consuming flames!¹⁶

VII. WHAT IF ALL AMERICAN CHRISTIANS WERE DEBT FREE?

What if all American Christians were debt free? How much The Kingdom of GOD would shine forth in our land! Think of how much stronger our families would be! Think of how much less the divorce rates would be! Think of how much more time husbands and wives could spend with each other!

Think of how much more time parents could spend with their children! Think of the amounts of money, time and resources that Christians could give for the work of The Kingdom of GOD on earth!

¹² 3, KJV, PROVERBS 22:7.

¹³ 3, KJV, PROVERBS 22:26-27.

¹⁴ 5, Strong’s Data, 6148 עָרַב - ”ARAV, meaning: 1) to pledge, exchange, mortgage, engage, occupy, undertake for, give pledges, be or become surety, take on pledge, give in pledge...

¹⁵ 3, KJV, LUKE 16:13.

¹⁶ 5, Strong’s Data, 3126 μα(μ)μωνᾶς - mammonas, meaning: 1) mammon 2) treasure 3) riches (where it is personified and opposed to GOD).

VIII. IN CONCLUSION – SLAVES, MERCENARIES OR CHILDREN OF GOD

We have choices. If we find ourselves enslaved to lenders in the bondage of debt, it is because we chose to enter into that prison! As PROVERBS 22:7 says, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”¹⁷

GOD gives us the ability to choose to cooperate with His Grace and Love, or to turn away from Him in rebellion and sin. We can choose to be slaves to money and possessions by placing ourselves in enslaving debt. We can choose to seek, not The Lord and His Kingdom, but the getting of money and things above all else and become mercenaries.

Or we can choose to serve our Saviour JESUS CHRIST first in our lives - being content with the money and possessions we are blessed with and using them for The Kingdom of GOD on earth – being instead neither slaves nor mercenaries, but blessed and beloved sons and daughters of The Most High at The Cross!

Saint Basil puts it this way, “If we turn away from evil out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves. If we pursue the enticement of wages..., we resemble mercenaries. [But] if we obey for the sake of The Good itself and out of love for Him Who commands..., we are in the position of children” of GOD!¹⁸

¹⁷ 3, KJV, PROVERBS 22:7.

¹⁸ 6, Catechism of The Catholic Church, # 1828, p 502.

IX. REFERENCES

1. "Money, Possessions and Eternity." Randy Alcorn. Tyndale House Publications, Inc. Carol Stream, Illinois. 1989, revised Edition 2003.
2. "Matthew Henry Commentary." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
3. "King James Version [Bible]." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
4. "Webster's Dictionary of The English Language." Based on The Random House Dictionary, Classic Edition. Random House, Inc. Avenel, New Jersey. 1983.
5. "Strong's Data." Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
6. "Catechism of The Catholic Church." United States Catholic Conference. Doubleday of Random House, Inc. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland. 1995.