

LENDING AND BORROWING WHAT ARE THE SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS

1 Timothy 5:8

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The term lending is a noun which is the action of allowing a person or organization the use of a sum of money under an agreement to pay it back later. In this instance the one giving out the money is the lender. Borrowing is a similar word as lending. Borrowing is Receiving something of value in exchange for an obligation to pay back something of usually greater value at a particular time in the future. (Business Dictionary).

“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” (1 Timothy 5:8).

One man always tell his children, *“We cannot afford it,”* even when they had the money. This is a vital principle we have not given our children. Inferior things must not come at the price of eternal things. There are many things Christians simply cannot afford.

Our economy is consumer driven. Buy this buy that. We are always buying. The word is always *“Now!”*. There is no place for deferred gratification. The government, business, school, house, and persons are all *“up to their ears”* in debt. The greatest creditor nation is now the world’s greatest debtor nation! Debt has done us in! Debt is now the accepted lifestyle.

In 1945 (WW II was over), credit cards were virtually unknown. Loans on cars were a rarity. But today the story is different. Debt everywhere. In the developed countries this is even worse, where credit is everywhere. Even kids have plastic cards. Cars are financed up to eight years. There are thirty-year house mortgages. Young couples owe \$100,000.00 within two years of marriage. Every segment of society is dependent upon debt. Companies now offer to send you credit cards through the mail. Department stores want you to use cards (not a cash discount). Credit card companies do not want you to pay off that bill fully each month (because of the 16 to 21 percent annual interest which they receive). They want you only to pay the minimum. What about our own society today, credit buying is still booming. Some women can brag to you, that they have gotten lots of properties through credit buying

forgetting that you end up paying if not two times the price if you were to pay cash. Paying with cash always gives you a higher bargaining power. Debt is now the order of the day.

There are three basic causes of over-indebtedness:

(1) **Ignorance** (*not stupidity*). We have not taught our children basic finances. They do not have a value for money. The Bible talks about the naive in **Proverbs 22:3**. *A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished.* We need Bible classes taught on Christian finances.

(2) **Indulgence** (*yuppyism*). Men making a huge salary yearly have terrible financial problems! Can you believe that? The super-rich are in debt! Pawn shops now serve the rich more than the poor! This proves that “*simply more money*” is not the answer. Teaching, discipline, and priority are the answers. Impulses can always outgrow salaries.

(3) **Poor planning** (**Proverbs 21:5**) - *The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.* Credit makes it too easy to splurge and too difficult to pay back. Diligent planning either is not done or is “thrown out the window.”

WHAT THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY

Romans 13:8 is abused and misused. There is nothing inherently wrong either in loaning or borrowing money. The Bible does not promote debt; it does not prohibit debt. Jesus even talked about usury (Parable of the Talents). The Bible (the Old Testament) did legislate for the poor. You could not charge a poor Jew interest. You had to give the poor his coat back (collateral) nightly since he slept in it. You see these loans were for *survival*, not productivity! The loans spoken of in the old Testament and New Testament are mainly for survival and not economic or business purposes – **Luke 6:34-35**. You were not to take advantage of the poor. All of us are debtors (**Romans 13:8**) . . . in love. This debt can never be paid. This text involves relationships, not business.

Contrary to the “prosperity gospel” of TV preachers, God has nowhere promised to bail us out of debt. We should not try to manipulate God.

WHAT THE BIBLE DOES SAY

What Are the Implications (Spiritual & Physical)?

(1) **The debtor is a slave to the lender** (**Proverbs 22:7**). *“The rich rules over the poor. And the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.”* Indebtedness presumes upon the future. *You rob the future for today.* Indebtedness, rather than increasing your living standard, can lower it. It is hard to climb up the ladder of success; it is more difficult to come back down it. Borrowing results in bondage to creditors. The very nature of going into debt is **entanglement**. God intends for Christians to avoid earthly entanglements in order to serve Him freely, without reservation and without distraction. *“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier”* (**II Timothy 2:4**).

- (2) **Borrowing presumes upon the future:** Borrowing is based on the assumption that **future conditions** will allow us to repay the debt. God warns against such presumption: *“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1).* *“Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . .” (James 4:13–14).*
- (3) **Borrowing creates an illusion of independence:** Borrowing money allows us to make decisions that are independent of God’s provision of funds. Borrowing may encourage an individual to feel that he is his own authority and that he does not need to **wait for wise counsel or sufficient funds**. Such an attitude is condemned by God. *“Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?” (Lamentations 3:37).* *“. . . For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:14–17).*
- (4) **Borrowing evades Self-examination:** God always has a good reason for withholding funds. It is a signal to **reevaluate** our decisions and to put our faith in Him. If we automatically borrow money when there is a financial need, we evade the opportunity for self-examination and often proceed depending on our own wisdom and efforts.
- (5) **Borrowing pressures family members:** Borrowing puts pressure on those who depend on our leadership and provision, especially family members. **Unexpected events can transfer the burden of debt directly to them.** The anguish of this situation is illustrated in the plight of a widow who lived during the time of Israel’s prophet, Elisha. The widow’s husband had been deeply in debt. When he died, his creditors demanded payment from his wife. She forfeited everything she had, but the proceeds were not sufficient to pay off the debt, and her creditors demanded that her sons become their bondservants. The woman sought counsel from Elisha, and God moved supernaturally to provide for the payment of her debt. (See *II Kings 4:1–7.*)
- (6) **Borrowing interferes with God’s provision:** God wants to **demonstrate His supernatural power** as He provides for our needs. In this way, He exposes the false confidence people place in their own wisdom, abilities, and riches. *“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him . . .” (II Chronicles 16:9).*
- (7) **Borrowing demonstrates discontentment with necessities:** We need only a few basic things to survive: food, clothing, and shelter. Yet, most of us have expectations of additional provisions, and often borrowing is regarded as a means to purchase items that are not necessities. God warns us of the danger of coveting the power to buy whatever our hearts desire. *“Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Timothy 6:6–10).*

- (8) **Borrowing removes barriers to harmful items:** There are many things we think would be beneficial to our lives, but God knows if they would be harmful to us or not. **In His mercy and wisdom, He may limit our funds** so that we cannot afford to purchase things that would be harmful or destructive. When God does not provide funds for something we want, Satan tempts us to get the money in other ways.
- (9) **Borrowing devours resources through high interest payments:** Most people who borrow money **do not comprehend the final price tag** of going into debt, because they think only in terms of monthly payments. They typically think of the interest as a small amount, but in the end, interest payments pile up. The final cost of the loan is often several times greater than the initial price of the item. God calls us to be good stewards of money and to be faithful in managing small amounts as well as large amounts. *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [wealth], who will commit to your trust the true riches?” (Luke 16:10–11).*
- (10) Borrowing stifles resourcefulness: Having loans available on demand tempts us to reject the option of thinking of creative solutions to meet financial needs. Only when you make a firm and final decision that you will not borrow money are you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually **free** to be truly resourceful. Jesus gave two illustrations of men who wanted to buy expensive items. Although neither man had enough money to make the purchases, neither man borrowed any money. Instead, the men **sold what they had**. With the money from the sale, they bought what they wanted. (See **Matthew 13:44–46**.)
- (11) **Borrowing promotes impulse buying:** Buyers are often encouraged to make impulsive decisions based on the desires of the moment. **Easy access to loans facilitates hurried purchases** that bypass prayerful evaluation and wise counsel. We should carefully consider our management of the funds God provides and wait until we know we are finding a good buy before making a purchase.
- (12) **Borrowing often instigates overspending:** Credit buyers **tend to buy more** than those who pay with cash, and they tend to pay more for the items they buy. Overspending is destructive because of the bondage debt brings. Overspending also stimulates pressures and conflicts that damage relationships, especially within the family.
- (13) **Borrowing weakens personal faith:** God has promised to provide for the needs of His children. (See **Matthew 6:25–34**.) When Christians borrow, it suggests that God is not taking care of their needs and that they have to make up the difference with a loan. If we do not have money for something, it may be that God is saying “wait” or “no.” It is far better to wait for God to provide rather than to borrow money to make the purchase. God’s provision confirms His direction for us and demonstrates **His faithfulness to us**.
- (14) **Borrowing excludes help from others:** God uses the needs in the life of one Christian and the abundance in the life of another Christian to bring them together in fellowship. The one with abundance is given grace to help those in need, and the one who receives is filled with joy and gratefulness because of God’s provision through the giver. **Interdependence played a key role in the early Church.** *“Now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for*

your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack” (II Corinthians 8:14–15).

Conclusion:

- 1. Never co-sign a note (Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18).** Surety means accepting an obligation to pay without having a guaranteed way to make the payments. The most recognizable form of surety is cosigning a loan for another person. But surety also can be any form of borrowing in which an unconditional guarantee to pay is committed.
- 2. Beware of a long-term debt.** The maximum in Scripture is *seven* years! With but little increase in payments you can pay off a house in *fifteen* years—not thirty! “Borrowing is hazardous to your health.” Every Christian ought to have a goal to be debt free! *Stay out of debt; get out of debt; use debt wisely.*
- 3. Have an absolute commitment to repay!** As Christians we are failing in our ethic (honesty). Bankruptcies at times may be necessary. But a debt is a vow, a covenant, or a pledge! Your word, your character, your integrity, your name, your conscience, and your reputation are on the line (**Ecclesiastes 5:4, 5; Psalm 37:21**)! God keeps His promises. *The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.*