

1. Deuteronomy 15:4-6

However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, if only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

In 2004 the dept of the Government, business dept and personal dept in America amounted to \$7 trillion!

The average household in the US spent \$400 per year more then they earned.

Personal consumer dept increased at a rate of \$1,000 per second!

Dept has become our culture – it is our way of life in our modern society.

And why should we be surprised – because we know that the prince of this world wants to enslave us he wants to take away our freedom – and what easier way of doing it then putting us under the authority of mammon.

Proverbs 22:7

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Every time we take out a loan we are putting ourselves into subservience to the lender.

But if you do that – there is no short cut out of it – you have to honour the Lord by honouring your dept

Leasing the car...

If we take on any financial commitment – we have to see it through.

It's made me think very hard about every financial decision I make

The 'Crown Financial Ministries' publication 'Biblical Financial Studies' – (where I get most of this information from), said back in 2004 'we are drowning in a sea of dept. And, with all this credit floating around we have serious financial casualties.'

The financial tension is caused by believing the teaching of the Western World-

you can buy now and you can pay later – in easy monthly installments

The Advertisers don't tell the whole truth- we give you this product now – and you will be in dept to us!

If your children are hungry you still have to pay us – if you can't afford to keep a roof over your head – you still have to pay us – it doesn't matter what state your life is in – you still have to pay us!

Of course you can defer payments if things get really bad – but that's only making things worse and drawing you in deeper – you can defer your payments but we'll still be charging you the interest – the longer you take to pay, the more you'll have to pay.

That advertising angle isn't quite as inviting is it?

It's very easy to get into dept – it's happened to me very often – but sometimes it's not easy at all to get out of it.

The Biblical financial studies book suggests that there are ten steps to getting out of dept.

The steps are easy – but following them requires hard work. The goal is D-day – by which they mean deptless day – the day when we are absolutely dept free.

Step 1 - Pray

2 Kings 4:1-7

The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."

Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."

Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbours for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."

She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing.

She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

The God that provided supernaturally for the widow is the same God who wants to provide for you today – So prayer is the first step – He is the God who owns all the money in the world – seek His help and guidance.

I remember when my business collapsed...

He may act immediately as He did with the widow or he may act over time – in either case prayer is essential! – and as you pray if you can afford even the smallest monthly payment on your dept then do it – as we heard the lord can multiply your efforts.

Step 2 – Establish a budget

According to the 'Biblical financial study book most people who find themselves in dept don't use a budget – they don't plan their spending and are therefore vulnerable to impulse spending, which is the biggest cause dept.

Step 3 – List everything you own

Evaluate your possessions and see if you have anything you don't need – we can sometimes amass so much stuff – much of it we've stopped using. If there are things we can do without or don't use anymore then sell them – we have eBay – people sell anything and everything on eBay – there is a ready market for all kinds of stuff on the Internet.

Sometimes possessions in themselves distract us from God – my life has more meaning because of the amount of possessions I have.

Just ask yourself is there anything I can sell to help me to get out of dept.

Dept has to be taken very seriously – it is against God's will for us.

The more I read about this subject the more I realised how important this is - Bruce used to say every spending decision is a Spiritual decision – and in our

society today – we just don't grasp how serious it is – because it's so encouraged – but being in dept to somebody is against God's will for us!

Step 4 – List everything you owe

Many people, particularly if they owe a lot of money will bury their heads in the sand and hope their problems will go away – they won't!

It is very important to face the situation full on and find out exactly how much you owe.

Step 5 – Establish a dept repayment plan

If you can't pay off all your depts at the same time then aim to pay off the smaller ones first – or if you have any depts that charge you a high interest rate then pay those off first.

Step 6 – Consider earning additional income

If you can fit it in without exhausting yourself then do – but be sure you spend the additional income on paying off your depts and not using it as spending money.

It's serious stuff this dept business – isn't it. - joke

Step 7 – Control the use of Credit Cards

Credit Cards are a quick and easy way to pay – you don't have to carry around loads of cash with you. They can be deceptive – you can spend a lot of money without even realising it. Credit cards aren't sinful – but they are dangerous – it's estimated that people spend 1/3 more when they use credit cards rather than cash.

There is a line of advise in the 'Biblical financial study' book that says "If you don't pay the entire balance off at the end of each month then you need to perform a little plastic surgery – any sharp scissors will do.

Step 8 – Be content with what you have

The advertising industry uses powerful methods to get us to buy – they try to make us discontent of what we’ve got and a desire for what we haven’t got. There’s a story about an American company...

There are 3 realities that we need to be aware of in our Modern consumer driven society

- The more you shop – the more you spend
- The more you look at catalogues and magazines – the more you spend
- The more you watch television – the more you spend

Research shows that these statements are a reality

1 Timothy 6:6-9

“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”

This passage isn’t condemning financial wealth – it’s just pointing out the temptations that lay in wait for people who are not content in the Lord! That’s a huge statement isn’t it – I thought about that statement for a long time – some people can resist the temptations and others can’t

Step 9 – Consider a radical change of lifestyle

It’s worth looking at the way we live – it may mean short term sacrifices – sell an expensive car buy a cheaper car to run – you may have to stay in on a few more Saturday nights - but it will be worth it to start living in freedom from dept.

Step 10 – Do not give up

This step is very difficult in trying to get out of dept – but it is very important. It’s also something we can remember in our walk with the Lord.

On October 29th 1941 Winston Churchill was invited to give a school commencement address – World War II was overwhelming all of Europe and the country's fate was in doubt – Churchill got up and said “Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.” – Then he sat down.

We should never give up in our efforts to get out of debt and live out of debt– it may need a lot of hard work and sacrifice – but the freedom is worth the struggle

We should never give up in listening and doing as the Lord tells us because this is the only way we will receive all that the Lord wants to give us – as Deuteronomy tells us.

Deuteronomy 15:4-6 tells us

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