



Lent Day 8, February 29, 2012 Drowning in Debt

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

Proverbs 22:7

It would be foolish to study self-denial without camping a little bit on the subject of debt. Many of the economic problems our country is facing are due in large part to the debt that we are in. Our federal government is in a boatload of debt, and unfortunately, many of our citizens have followed suit and overextended themselves with expensive houses and multiple cars that they really couldn't afford. Add to that misery a crushing amount of credit card debt, and we have a fine mess to dig ourselves out of.

Part of the problem is that we have been taught that we are "entitled" to all the fun things we want, and many of us have never learned delayed gratification and how to save up for something we want.

My sisters and I were lucky. Our dad was the son of German immigrants and our mom was one of the youngest of 15 children, so from a young age we were taught to save our money, work for what we wanted, and take care of what we had. They're lessons that many of us in America are learning again the hard way.

When we look at today's verse, we see God's heart. Why doesn't He want us in debt? I can think of at least three good reasons.

First of all, the rich rule over the poor. If you are a poor person, it can be very hard to have a voice or a say in your country. Survival becomes all you can do. It consumes your every waking moment and probably is a cause of many of your nightmares. It robs you of energy, hope, life, and many times your health. Purposefully squandering your money by having it all tied up in debt is a bad idea, because you will lose so much more than your money.

Secondly, we see that the borrower is servant to the lender. When you owe a person or an institution a lot of money, you lose control over your own finances. Until you pay that debt off, you can't do much of anything else. You are literally a slave to the lender as the verse says.

Finally, I think probably one of the things that God dislikes the most about debt is that it robs us of the ability to contribute any resources to God's kingdom work. How can we help others if we have nothing financially left to give?

Application: Today take an honest look at your finances. How are you doing in the area of spending and debt? Are you able to tell yourself “no”? Fortunately, we serve a God of hope, so where the Lord is, there is always hope—even if you are in debt up to your eyeballs. First of all, I recommend starting with confession and prayer. Ask God to help you change. Then go buy one more thing--Dave Ramsey’s book *The Total Money Makeover*. This is an excellent book with help for everyone in it--from those totally in debt to those who need to figure out how to set up and live on a budget. He’ll walk you through the process step by step.

Prayer: Lord,
Help me to realize that I need to surrender my finances to you as well. Give me the strength to deny all those urges to buy things. Help me to set and stick to a budget. I pray for your wisdom. Forgive me for my failings with my finances and help me to find a better way. Amen.