

“(re) Define = Sacrifice” 1. 24.10

Roget's Thesaurus lists the following synonyms to describe a familiar word. Quietly attempt to figure out the word:

To be obligated – liable – in deficit – in default – encumbered – in over one's head – in arrears – paupered – needy – distressed – in difficulty – living hand to mouth – beggarly – racked & ruined – bad off – beaten down – reduced to ruin – fleeced – embarrassed - broke

1 more hint - you will never find it in a credit application – but that's what they are selling! It's the word 'DEBT.' There's no great mystery why they don't use the word debt on the credit application. They are literally saying – “We want you to be in debt enslaved to us.”

DID YOU REALIZE?

- Non-mortgage consumer debt in America now stands @ 2.4 trillion dollars - that's NOT what the government owes – that's what you & I owe

Bible says... “The one who borrows is the servant to the lender.” Proverbs 22: 7

- Any time you take a loan go into debt you are becoming a servant to that person or company until the debt is paid back in full!

Another realization?

- The average student steps brightly into the working world w/no less than \$19,200 in student loans. Flash forward a few years & this same student is soon saddled w/ \$92,600 in mortgage debt & \$9,200 in credit card debt.
- Total American household, consumer debt averaged \$11, 840
- Also credit card debt has increased 167% since 1990
- The avg. American has over 7 payment cards in their wallet including credit card, retail store cards, & bank debit cards.
- Avg. interest rates paid on credit cards is approximately 14.54%
- The rate of personal savings in the U.S. dipped below 0% for the 1st time since the Great Depression, hitting a negative .5%.
 - Approximately 96% of Americans will have to retire financially dependent on the government – family – or charity
 - 7 out of 10 low to middle income households reported using their credit cards as a financial safety net; i.e. to pay for car repairs, rent or housing repairs & medical expenses rather than relying on savings.

Consider this since 1995 non mortgage consumer debt has increased 112% to nearly \$2. 4 trillion dollars according to the Federal Reserve.

- Last statistic since 1945, consumer debt in the U.S. has multiplied 31 times.
 - The IRS calculates that the average filer spends more than 10 times as much money paying off interest on debts as he gives to charitable causes ☹

Historically consumer debt has not always been the American way of life!

As a matter of fact

- In the 1910 edition of the Sears catalog it said, “Buying on credit is folly.”

- James 'Cash' Penny = J.C. Penny didn't allow credit in his store while he was alive; credit was extended to customers only after his death!
- Henry Ford disliked debt so badly that he waited 10 yrs. after his company was started to provide financing because of his disdain for debt.

'Consumer debt' is a fairly recent phenomenon that has been unnaturally ingrained into our mindsets!

God has a different plan for your life than you being enslaved to your financial creditor(s) + obligations.

Today we are going to open up God's Word and see what He desires for you in regards to your finances & a plan to help 'eliminate consumer debt'

PRAY

Come Holy Spirit, Come. Teach us how to handle our finances, as God desires!

- I. What does the Bible say about "consumer debt"?
 - A. Foundational Scripture does not tell us that debt is a sin; but 'consumer debt' is highly discouraged!
 - B. The Bible describes 'consumer debt' in (2) ways:
 - 1st, 'consumer debt' is described as a curse
 - (R) Deuteronomy 28: 43 – 48 or 160 in pew Bible
 - Modern parallel = Curse is feeling jealous of others; not being content w/what God has given you; impulsive behavior; Greedy, fearful of others!
 - 2nd, 'consumer debt' is described as slavery
 - Proverbs 22: 7 says, "Just as the rich rule the poor; so the borrower is servant – slave to the lender."
 - "Debt keeps you in the trap of using your future to pay for your past" (Mary Hunt)
 - I Corinthians 7:23 encourages, "God purchased you @ a high price. Don't be enslaved by the world."
 - C. Consider 'Practical consequences' of Debt
Money, Possessions & Eternity by Randy Alcorn, p. 314
 - Debt lingers ~ the purchase gets old & wears out, but you're still paying for it.
 - Debt causes worry & stress ~ Debt is an enemy of mental health.
 - Debt causes denial of reality ~ we are living a lie & hocking our futures to finance it
 - Debt leads to dishonesty ~ some lie to get away from repayment or buy time, others steal in desperation.
 - Debt is addictive ~ Debt is an internal problem. It is simply a matter of insufficient funds but insufficient perspective & self control.
 - Debt deprives God of the chance to say no or provide thru a better means.
 - D. Common sense about 'consumer debt:'
1 When is it OK to go in to debt?

1. It's OK to go into debt if it's an 'appreciating asset.' The item purchased is an asset w/the potential to appreciate or to produce an income.
i.e. mortgage payment or property investment
2. It's OK if, the value of the item equals or exceeds the amount owed against it
3. It's OK if, the debt is not so large that repayment puts undue strain on the budget.

Next question When is it dangerous to go into debt?

1. It's dangerous when, a possession's resale value is less than what we owe. i.e. cars – clothes – furniture etc.
2. It's dangerous if it tempts us to violate our convictions.
i.e. Does it keep a mother from staying home to raise her children?
3. It's dangerous if, we are tempted to rob our primary Creditor (God) to pay our secondary creditors (earthly institutions)
4. It's dangerous if it restricts our freedom to respond to the Holy Spirit's call to make a move or change.
 - a. (R) I Kings 17: 8 – 16 or p. 275 in pew Bible
 - b. LOOK what blessing she would have missed out on =
(R) I Kings 17: 17 - 24
 - c. Would you dismiss God's call to go in ministry or to the mission field because your debts demand a level of ongoing income that effectively immobilizes you?
 - d. Randy Alcorn writes, "...in the same way, money, things, & debt entrench us in the present world. Financial commitments & debt can be like spikes chained to our legs & driven into the ground, making us inflexible & unresponsive to God's call to move & serve Him elsewhere."

So, what should I do, now that I'm in debt?

Here are some practical ideas of how you can get back on the road to obedience:

II. GOING FORWARD ~ 3 common words with uncommon outcomes

A. 1st common word = STOP

- Draw the line in the sand NOW - - commit to no more new debt!
 - Don't pull out the plastic to make another purchase;
Don't get rid of your car & borrow to buy the next one = Be content
1. Citibank calculates that a consumer using a credit card will buy 26% more than IF they would have been carrying cash.
 - a. Bottom line If you use a credit card & do not pay the full amount when your bill is due, you should not own a credit card!
 - b. Jesus said in Matt 5: 30, "...if your right hand offends you, cut it off."
 - c. Plastic surgery we want to challenge you to shred all those cards in your wallets & pocket books that are causing you to stumble!
 - d. Immediate plastic surgery
 2. Good idea to keep one credit card in case of emergencies!

(R) I Corinthians 7: 23 reminds,

“God purchased you @ a high price. Don’t be enslaved by the world.”

B. 2nd common word = PRAY

- Ask God to help you honor Him in this way; to keep you steadfast in your commitment to stop hocking your future to pay for your past poor decisions.
- Be specific
 - INSERT Financial Classes available now
 - INSERT stats from Financial Bootcamp

Matt 21: 22 says, “You can pray for anything & if you have faith, you will receive it.”

C. 3rd common word = SACRIFICE

- Sacrifice is a misunderstood word in our culture today ~ somewhere along the lines we have cheapened this concept & lost its meaning.
 - i.e. Sacrificing chocolate for Lent
 - i.e. Sacrificing your day off to help move a friend
- 1. How about us (re) Defining the idea of SACRIFICE?
 - Etymology ~ origins of the word from the ‘old English’ means to make sacred!
 - Ever considered capping your lifestyle in order to make it sacred?
 - John Piper, “The issue is not how much a person makes. Big industry & big salaries are a fact of our times & are not necessarily evil. The evil is in being deceived into thinking a \$100K salary must be accompanied by a \$100K lifestyle. God has made us conduits of His grace, danger when we think the conduits should be lined with gold; it shouldn’t. Copper will do” ☺
- 2. 1 line in our WRCC vision states, “They seek to simplify their lives so that others may simply live.”
 - We should live more simply = eliminate debt because we are God’s pipeline; literally God’s delivery people thru whom He does His giving to a needy world. We are conduits of God’s grace to others.
 - When we say no to living more extravagant lifestyle here and now; we are making eternal investments in order for others to simply live.
 - Haitian refugee orphans – week of January 17, 20-10
 - Let refuse to have this type of un-preferred future!
 - Fruit of continuing down road of disobedience & being enslaved by debt;
 - DOUBLE VISION

Prayerfully STOP + PRAY + SACRIFICE
in order for God to use you as a conduit of His amazing grace!