

## ***LENDING AND BORROWING MONEY***

### **LENDING MONEY**

1. The believer is commanded to lend money without interest to those in need.

***Leviticus 25:35-37*** "If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. **Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from him**, but fear your God; let him live with you. **You shall not lend him your money at interest taken in advance, or provide him food at a profit.**"

- ❖ Comment: Biblical law demands taking care of family members as well as those in our spiritual family. (I.E. "Brethren"). Collecting interest is prohibited when loaning money to the poor.

***Exodus 22:25*** "If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; **you shall not charge them interest.**

- ❖ Comment: Collecting interest on loans to the poor is prohibited.

***Deuteronomy 15:2*** "And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall release *it*; he shall not require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release.

- ❖ Comment: Loans were to be completely canceled every seven years.

2. Interest could be charged to foreigners.

***Deuteronomy 23:19 -20*** "You shall not charge interest on loans to another Israelite, interest on money, interest on provisions, interest on anything that is lent. **On loans to a foreigner you may charge interest**, but on loans to another Israelite you may not charge interest, so that the LORD

your God may bless you in all your undertakings in the land that you are about to enter and possess."

- ❖ Comment: Interest free loans were made to the poor as a charity to help support them. Charging the poor interest would only prolong the poverty the loan was intended to relieve. It would also reveal an attitude unworthy of a member of the covenant community, for the rich would be profiting from another man's plight. However, merchants from other nations who might come for business could be charged interest (Deut. 28:12, "You shall lend to many nations"). The distinction is made between fellow Israelites and foreigners, as well as those who have real need and those who do not.

### 3. Generosity toward all men is expected of the believer.

**Luke 6:30-31** "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. [also **Matthew 5:42**; "Give to everyone who asks from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you."]

- ❖ Comment: When God commands us to "Give to everyone who asks," He is not suggesting that we abandon all discretion, support every addiction, and freely give to the professional beggar who refuses to work. It is assumed that the one who is asking for money has real needs and the giving is helping to relieve the person's distress, not helping him to sustain a sinful life.

**Luke 6:34-35** "If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. "But love your enemies, **do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return**; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil."

- ❖ Comment: A Christian is encouraged to be generous and not give with the expectation of reward, though Jesus insists that a reward is there.

***Ephesians 4:28*** "Let him who steals steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, **that he may have something to give him who has need.**"

❖ Comment: The motivation for working is that the one who works can help the one in need.

***Proverbs 21:26*** "All day long the wicked covet, but **the righteous gives and does not spare.**"

**4. Lending without interest is an act of righteousness and results in personal blessing. Such a person will abide with the Lord, will be called a son of God, and will avoid judgment.**

Those who will abide with the Lord are those "who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be moved." (*Psalm 15:1-5*)

***Luke 6:35*** "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. **Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High;** for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."

The person who follows his father's evil ways will die as his father did. "But if this man has a son who sees all the sins that his father has done, considers, and does not do likewise, who does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, does not wrong anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, withholds his hand from iniquity, **takes no advance or accrued interest**, observes my ordinances, and follows my statutes; he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live." (*Ezekiel 18:14-18 contrast Ezekiel 18:12-13*)

**5. Charging interest to the poor is sin and results in judgment.**

Just as interest free loans to the poor result in blessing, the opposite is also true; charging interest to the poor results in judgment.

**Ezekiel 22:12** "In you, they take bribes to shed blood; **you take both advance interest and accrued interest**, and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord *GOD*."

**Proverbs 28:8** "One who augments wealth by exorbitant interest gathers it for another who is kind to the poor."

- ❖ Comment: God will eventually cause wealth amassed by unjust means to go to the poor.

**Nehemiah 5:7, 10** "After thinking it over, I brought charges against the nobles and the officials; I said to them, "**You are all taking interest from your own people.**" And I called a great assembly to deal with them. . . Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. **Let us stop this taking of interest.**"

**6. Having enough money to lend demonstrates God's blessing, having to borrow suggests the opposite.**

**Deuteronomy 15:6** "When the LORD your *God* has blessed you, as he promised you, **you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow**; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you."

**Deuteronomy 28:12** "The LORD will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. **You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.**"

- ❖ Comment: If Israel fully obeyed the Lord, they would experience the material and social blessings that God had promised to them. God would prosper their work so that they would not have a need to borrow. The poor would disappear from the land and the nations would look to them for wealth. (Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

**Deuteronomy 28:44** "They shall lend to you but you shall not lend to them; they shall be the head and you shall be the tail."

- ❖ One of the curses for Israel's disobedience is that instead of being the head and ruler of the nations, it will be the subservient

tail. Instead of lending to the nations they will be begging them for help. (Read Deuteronomy 28:15 -68)

## **BORROWING MONEY**

1. The Bible warns about the dangers of borrowing money, the servitude of it, and the possible oppression from it.

### **Direct warnings:**

***Proverbs 22:7*** "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender."

- ❖ Comment: Poverty makes people dependent upon others. This is not appreciably different than the person in modern society who is working to pay off bills.

***Habakkuk 2:6*** "Shall not everyone taunt such people and, with mocking riddles, say about them, "Alas for you who heap up what is not your own!" How long will you load yourselves with goods taken in pledge? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty."

- ❖ Comment: This prophecy against Babylon for plundering the nations is likened to someone using credit. Babylon acquired wealth that was not its own just as people who borrow money do. Like a person who has too much credit, the nations will turn on Babylon to "collect" what was "borrowed".

### **Indirect warnings:**

***2 Kings 4:1*** "Now the wife of a member of the company of prophets cried to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead; and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but a creditor has come to take my two children as slaves."

- ❖ Comment: In this case, having borrowed money has led to the threat of enslavement. It was a common practice of the Israelites to sell themselves into slavery to pay off their debts (Exo. 21:2-7).

***Psalm 109:11*** "Let the creditor seize all that he has, And let strangers plunder his labor."

- ❖ Comment: God uses the creditor as a tool for judgment against the one who has unwisely borrowed.

## **2. Command to owe no one nothing**

***Romans 13:8*** **Owe no one anything, except to love one another;** for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

- ❖ Comment: In the context, the "debt" spoken of is referring to tax (Ro. 13:7). Therefore, this verse is not saying that we should never be in financial obligation to anyone else, for some debt is inescapable (i.e. tax). Nor does this mean that we may never borrow from others in times of need. Rather, it is saying that we should pay what we owe. It condemns the looseness with which we contract debt and the indifference we often display in paying it back.

Love, however, is a debt that can never be paid. It is owed to all men and should be discharged freely.

## **3. The righteous pay back to the creditor what is borrowed.**

***Psalm 37:21*** "The wicked borrow, and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving;"

- ❖ Comment: Bankruptcy as a means of canceling debt did not exist when the Bible was written, nor should it be used by the righteous in any generation to escape paying a bad loan. Whether we lose all we borrowed, or not, it is our obligation to repay our loans even if the law does not require it of us.

To borrow more than we can reasonably pay back places us with the wicked, not the just.

### ***CONCLUSIONS ON BORROWING AND LENDING MONEY***

- 1) A Christian should be generous, and money should be given without any expectation of return.
- 2) Interest can be charged in business dealings, but not when it is an issue of poverty.
- 3) Having money (enough to lend) is a sign of God's blessing.
- 4) Borrowing money can lead to servitude.
- 5) When money is borrowed it must be paid back.
- 6) Borrowing money is not absolutely forbidden. It is not sin. However, borrowing for reasons other than necessity (such as extreme poverty) is always presented in a negative light.

### ***THINGS TO THINK ABOUT***

- 1) Isn't God capable of meeting our financial needs? If He is, then couldn't a lack of money to buy what we want indicate that God doesn't want us to have it?

Doesn't our Father have boundless resources (Ps. 50:10-12) and give them generously? Doesn't God know our needs before we even ask (Matt. 6:32)? If He does, then wouldn't a lack of provision indicate either (1) a failure on our part to ask (Ja. 4:2), (2) that we are asking with wrong motives (Ja. 4:3), or, (3) that giving us what we perceive we need is not in our best interest at that time (Matt. 7:8-11)?

- 2) It is not sin to borrow money, but God repeatedly cautions us about the dangers of incurring debt.

If God warns against a certain course of action, even if He does not forbid the action itself, doesn't better wisdom suggest that His warnings be heeded? Should we expect God to place us in a situation where the best course of action is to ignore His advice?

3) Faith cannot claim what it does not know to be the will of God. To borrow money to buy something because "I believe God wants me to have it" or "I prayed and I feel a real peace about it" does not mean it is God's will.

In fact, isn't borrowing money more of an indication of a lack of faith? Doesn't it imply that one doubts the direct and immediate provision of God as well as questions the wisdom of His response to our request?

In determining what God wants to give us, isn't it wiser to ask God for what we desire, believing that He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think (Eph. 3:20), then allow God to decide how He will answer, rather than to pray, act, and hope that it all works out in the end?

4) If we borrow money and become financially constrained, we will be less capable of responding to the leading of the Spirit when needs and ministry opportunities that demand finances come up.

Although it may not be immediately apparent, poor financial decisions may restrict the future spiritual blessings that God intends for us.

**CONCLUSION:** God does not forbid us from borrowing money, but with any debt we incur we should be reasonably sure that we can pay it back. Uncontrolled spending, buying beyond our means, not having the money to pay the bills, carrying over credit card balances, all reflect a flagrant disregard for God's many warnings about debt. Such spending is often indicative of being discontent with and unthankful for what we have. It stems from the belief that we should have more than what God has provided and demonstrates an ungodly hunger for material possessions. It is also poor stewardship. Our money, in reality, is God's money. It is something that God has allowed us to manage for Him and something from which He is expecting

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a return. How will our stewardship fair when someday the books are finally closed? Wisdom tells us to avoid every form of debt. . . except one, the debt of love.