

Our Debt-Crisis

I recently read something incredible. You probably already knew that the U.S. has been and is heavily indebted to China, and continues to borrow more and pay unfathomable amounts in interest to them. But did you know, as I read, that we also send them millions each year in “foreign aid”? Let that sink in... we’re borrowing money from China, and then sending huge chunks of it back to them AFTER we pay interest on the loan. How stupid can the budgetary/finance people in government be??? (We actually need to stop asking that question as apparently they take it is a challenge rather than a question!)

Our whole society seems to be founded on DEBT. But think about it- as long as we are willing to continue to pile up what surely seems to be insurmountable debt, others are going to keep providing us things to “buy” with it. For instance, if we continue to be willing to go into \$60,000+ debt to buy a truck or automobile, manufacturers will continue to make (and “sell” us!) cars and trucks that meet or exceed that amount.

What if we, collectively, were no longer willing to mortgage eight or ten years of monthly payments for an automobile? What if we stopped buying autos that cost more than say, \$15K? Would the automakers go out of business, or start meeting the demand for lesser-priced models? It’s one thing to say, “Cars are so EXPENSIVE these days,” but another thing entirely to go into debt for ten years in order to buy the “latest and greatest”! And it’s not just automobiles...what about luxury/dream houses? Student loans? Did you realize that people are going into debt to buy phones? I saw one advertised recently that lists for \$1979.99 at a major retailer!

Biblical Borrowing. “Neither a borrower nor a lender be; for loan oft loses both itself and friend” is Shakespeare not Bible (Polonius counsels his son Laertes before he embarks on his visit to Paris, Hamlet). But the Bible does address the subject...

- Rom.13:8. “Owe” is from *opheilo* (of-i-lo) and means *to owe; to be indebted to; to be under legal obligation to*; though the context indicates it may not be an absolute restriction against “paying over time” as much as *delinquent debt*, v.7.
- Prov.22:7. But even “paying over time” has its consequences, cf. Jas.2:6.
- Deut.15:1-6 surely has implications- one being that neither side of the agreement should take advantage of the other! But consider also...
- Matt.18:23-34, the *Parable of the Unmerciful Slave*. Since *parables* are *earthly stories with heavenly/spiritual meanings*, it is dangerous to use them to make purely *physical applications* (such as using Matt.25:27 to turn the church into a *for profit* financial institution), cf. v.23. But there are a couple of things we need to note regarding *debt* here: “*ten thousand talents*” is an insurmountable sum for a *slave/servant*, vv.23b-24; this *servant* did not then, and would never, “*have the means to pay*,” v.25; though his *intent* and *desire* is laudable, it is simply not possible, vv.25-26; and given what we’ve already covered, is surely not to be taken as a license to *pile up* insurmountable financial obligations; and most importantly, remember the *heavenly meaning* point of the parable, vv.21,35. But this parable brings us to the **spiritual** aspect of “debt”...

We have a “debt” of sin. So, think about our *spiritual* “debt” of sin:

- **The “debt” we cannot pay.** *Spiritual debt*, for the conscientious, is *burdensome*- it is a constant “weight” and worry. Though we have legitimately acquired its obligation (through sin, Rom.6:23; 3:23), it *oppresses* us, cf. Ps.51:3; Isa.59:12; Ps.38:1-8,11-2,18.
- **The “debt,” though we want and vow to do so, we could never pay in a lifetime, Ps.38:9-10; Matt.18:24.** All we can do is *serve faithfully*, cf. 1Tim.1:12-16. Our *spiritual indebtedness, inability to pay*, and the *mercy we have been shown* should cause us to be *merciful* to those who are *indebted to us*, Matt.18:33,21-22,23a,35b.
- **We are, because of this *debt*, spiritually bankrupted.** “Bankruptcy” is when your total (and potential!) *assets* are less than/cannot cover your accrued *debt*. This is where we *all* are because of *our sins*, Rom.3:23; 6:23. But please understand that even if *we died for our sins*, that wouldn’t insure heaven- the *thief on the cross* was not saved because *he* died for his sins- he was saved because Jesus *died/paid* for and *forgave* them, cf. Matt.9:6; Rom.3:25; 1Pet.3:18 (the *just* for the *unjust*).
- **Jesus is our *propitiation*, 1John 2:1-2.** *Propitiation* (Grk. *halismos*- the means of *appeasement/expiation*) is a big word with a simple but important meaning: the *redemptive price/cost paid*. It means that Jesus paid our debt of sin... the debt *we could not* and *cannot pay*- the debt that *crushes our bones* and *deflates/defeats our spirits*. This otherwise insurmountable *debt* the *sinless Son of God* paid, appeased, expiated, or propitiated for us, 1Pet.2:20-24a! And what do we owe for having our *debt* so *mercifully* and *compassionately* forgiven (cf. Matt.18:27?

Conclusions/Take-Home Application Points:

1. **“that we might die to sin and live to righteousness,” 1Pet.2:24b.**
2. **Be not only *willing* but *able* to “forgive” the “*hundred denarii*” debts that others owe us- always remembering the “*ten thousand talents*” debt He forgave us, Matt.18:28,24,21,35.**
3. **Allow your *spiritual freedom*, achieved by His *debt-cancellation*, to motive you to greater and greater *spiritual growth* and *development*, 2Pet.1:5-9; and achieve *spiritual security*, 2Pet.2:10-11.**
4. **Share the *spiritual wealth* He provided with others, 1Pet.2:9-10!**

There’s no feeling that equates to being “debt-free” *financially*. But even that can’t compare to being *spiritually* debt-free through and in Christ Jesus!