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Family Ties



Being in Debt Is Cool? No Way!

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

The modern American is a person who drives a bank-financed car over a bond-financed highway on credit-card gas to open a charge account at a department store so he can fill his savings-and-loan financed home with installment-purchased furniture.” This quote from Howard L. Dayton Jr.’s book, *Your Money Counts*, will sound familiar to most readers.

Obviously, borrowing has become a way of life for most Americans. It has moved from a position of disrespect in the community to a position of respectability—even status. Over the last thirty years or so, a subtle “brainwashing” has taken place, convincing many that debt is “cool,” according to Don Tauscher, a Christian speaker and money management educator. Financial consultants suggest there are two circumstances when borrowing can be appropriate: 1) for the purchase of a home, and 2) for your business or vocation. Even then, debt can create a bondage that seems unsurmountable and unbearable.

Society says, “Buy now and pay later with those easy monthly payments.” God’s Word says, “Stay out of debt.” Many ask themselves, How in the world did we get into such a mess? The average debt for families in the U.S. is \$15,000 and growing daily, excluding a home mortgage. The worst part is that very few credit cards are ever paid off completely.

If debt is a problem in your life, admit it.

Take the responsibility, realizing that it will take discipline, prayer, sacrifice, the complete cooperation of the entire family, and even courage! Getting into debt doesn’t happen overnight. It won’t be solved overnight.

Consider this.
The more television you watch, the more you look at catalogues and magazines, and the more you shop, the more you spend!

Decide to be absolutely honest with yourself. Why are you in debt? Is it unplanned medical expenses? Are you buying more house than you can really afford? Was there an emergency over which you had no direct control?

What are your sources of income? Do you need more? Are there things you can sell or do without? This process can be painful, but no solution will be disastrous. The longer you wait to get started, the more painful it will be before you find some relief.

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Most marriages ending in divorce have “perceived” financial problems. By that I mean that most

couples in divorce believe money is a major factor contributing to their breakup. While money is a factor, it isn’t actually the cause. It’s the attitude about money.

It’s important to recognize and accept that ignorance and/or disobedience to Scriptural principles frequently cause money problems. When we are in debt, we lose a degree of freedom. The deeper the debt, the greater the loss of freedom and contentment. Proverbs 22:7 says, “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender.”

If you are finding yourself with more month at the end of your money, if your financial burdens are devastating, consuming all your energy, reducing your giving, negatively affecting your family relationships, marriage, or your health, consider the fact that you are likely in financial bondage. You can find financial contentment! This is not a time to remain discouraged and fight feelings of failure and guilt, it is time to give your financial priorities to God and find real financial freedom.

Susan Murray is an assistant professor of behavioral sciences at Andrews University.