

## Day 1

**“...The borrower is servant to the lender.”**

**Proverbs 22:7**

Several years ago as I was doing some research in the library, I came across a very interesting article. The title of the article was “U.S. Consumers Keep Piling on More Debt” (*Puget Sound Business Journal*, November 14, 1997). The title immediately caught my eye so I printed a copy to read at home later.

The article stated that at that time, our country’s consumer-debt balance exceeded 1.23 trillion dollars! I can’t even fathom that much money. The article went on to say that of all the cities in America, Jacksonville, Florida, had the highest per capita debt load. The average adult in that city carried \$11,842 in personal debt (excluding mortgage payments). By contrast, Milwaukee was considered the most “frugal” city because the average adult there only carried \$6,840 in personal debt.

When I hear statistics like these, I cannot help but think about Proverbs 22:7. Sadly, debt is a very powerful taskmaster by which many Americans are ruled. Think about how sorry we feel for someone who is controlled by drugs or alcohol. In the same way, we sympathize with people who cannot break free from cigarettes or gambling. Ironically, most people do not realize that being in debt is the same kind of bondage and slavery.

Do you know someone who stays in a job he hates simply because he cannot afford to quit? Of course, every job has its ups and downs but that’s not what I’m talking about. I am referring to the person who owes so much to so many, he cannot afford to leave no matter how bad his job situation gets. Because of his debt, he is in bondage to that job. His company owns him because he is too burdened with debt to leave without securing a higher paying job. To me, that kind

of bondage is just as devastating as any drug or alcohol dependency.

I confess that occasionally I am tempted to buy something on credit. For example, we have only one car for which we paid cash. There have been moments when I thought to myself, *Wouldn't it be nice to have another car?* Thankfully, it only takes about 60 seconds (sometimes even less) before I remember the freedom and joy of not having a car payment to worry about each month. Having only one car can be inconvenient at times, but what a blessing it is that my family is not servant to any bank or finance company just so we can have an extra car sitting in our garage.

Remember John 8:32? It says, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." One of the great truths in life is that being in debt means being in slavery. Being free from debt means being free from this bondage. It means being free to pursue a lower paying career you love rather than a high-dollar, high-stress job you hate. It means choosing to work less so you can have more time with your family. In a nutshell, it means trading the cheap thrills of instant gratification for the joy and liberty of knowing that you are owned by no one but God!

### *Thought Questions:*

1. Do you view debt as a provision or as a burden?
2. Have you ever thought about being in debt as being in slavery to the bank or lending institution?
3. How would life be different if you were completely debt-free?
4. Have you ever thought about debt-freedom bringing freedom to other areas of your life such as your choice of jobs or the number of hours you work each week?
5. Do you think it is God's desire for you to be free from debt? Or does He even care one way or the other?