



**FINANCE**  
**PAYING FOR THE HOLIDAYS**  
**Waking Up To Debt**  
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**Sunday, January 10, 2010**

**Intro:** Good Morning. Did you have a good Christmas? Did you eat too much over the holidays? Yea, most of us did and we're paying for it now aren't we? Ladies, has that perfect size six gotten a little snug? Guys, is it time to break out of those 32's and go for the 36's? most of us probably started our New Years off with some type of hard core diet and exercise program.

But we do a lot more than just over eat during the holidays don't we? We over spend too? And many of us are going to be, literally, paying for the holidays for many days to come. We wake up on December 26 and the first thought on our minds is ***"How in the world am I going to pay for all this stuff?"*** We find ourselves in a debt trap.

Now, why is debt a trap? It's a trap because it enslaves you. When you go in debt, you loose your freedom. The Bible tells us in **Proverbs 22:7, "The borrower is the servant to the lender."** Any time you take a loan, any time you go in debt to someone or some company, you are, in a sense, becoming a servant to them because you're obligated to those people. It becomes a very major trap that many people can never get out of.

Here are some synonyms for debt that I think just says it all: to owe, to be obligated, liable, in deficit, in default, insolvent, encumbered, in over one's head, tied up, out of pocket, in arrears, indigent, paupered, destitute, penniless, needy, lacking, distressed, in difficulty, a deadbeat, having a wolf at your door, living hand to mouth, beggarly, emptied, having seen better days, gone to the dogs, racked and ruined, impoverished, bad off, hard up, beaten down, reduced to ruin, fleeced, stripped, bereaved, reduced, unable to make ends meet, embarrassed, broke, busted.

Now if you had any idea that debt was all of those things would you have been so quick to whip out the old Visa card during the holidays? I don't think so! All they tell you to do is chase what matters!

**VIDEO CLIP**

Sadly enough many of us are there, in the debt trap that is, and don't even know it. So this morning I want to give you six danger signs of *"The Debt Trap."*

## SIGNS OF *"THE DEBT TRAP"*

### **Living on credit instead of paying cash**

If you depend on credit to maintain your lifestyle you're spending too much. **Proverbs 3:27-28, "Don't withhold repayment of your debts. Don't say 'some other time,' if you can pay it now."** In other words, if you have cash to pay it now, pay it now. Here's a little quote for you: *"Don't put off until tomorrow, what you can pay cash for today."*

How do you know if you're living on credit? Simple: the balance is going up. If on your credit cards, that balance keeps going up and up, all kinds of red flags should be going off, warning signs exploding in your mind.

### **There are a couple of problems with living on credit:**

**It shows a lack of contentment in your life.** You can't wait. You can't be patient. You can't save. You have to have it now. It shows a lack of contentment. The Apostle Paul said in **Philippians 4:11-12, "Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little."**

**It is a presumption on the future.** You say, *"I can always pay it off tomorrow."* Why do you think so? We have no idea what tomorrow might bring. Every time you buy something on unsecured credit (like a credit card) you are buying something that you're presuming in the future that you'll be able to pay it back. **Proverbs 27:1, "Boast not of tomorrow, for you don't know what tomorrow will bring."**

Debt always presumes upon the future.

Studies have shown that if you use a credit card, you'll spend 23% more money in a store than if you use cash. It makes it a whole lot easier to buy things you don't need with money you don't have. It doesn't seem like its real money.

There is a second sign that you might be in the debt trap if you are...

### **Delaying Payments Or Paying The Minimum Amount Due**

That's a telltale sign that you're in the debt trap if you're missing payments or if you're making late payments. If you're paying the minimum due on that credit card instead of paying it off every month you might be in some serious debt trouble.

It is a telltale sign you are in the debt trap if you find yourself constantly under tension over money because you find yourself bouncing checks because of insufficient funds. If you find yourself withdrawing money out of your reserve account in order to pay today's bills. All kinds of signs should be exploding in your mind saying, ***"Something has to stop right now! I'm spending too much money! I'm spending more than I make!"***

The Bible says in **Romans 13:8**, **"Let no debt remain outstanding."** You need to pay it off. Don't bounce it over to the next month and the next month and the next month. **"Let no debt remain outstanding."**

The third sign that you might be in the debt trap is you are...

### **Unable To Tithe Or Save**

If you're not saving any money, if you're not tithing, you're spending too much money. God takes this very seriously. **Malachi 3:8**, **"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob Me. But you ask, 'How do we rob You?' In tithes and offerings."** If I'm not tithing, I'm robbing God. I'm using God's money to pay my bills. And God takes that very seriously. How do you expect Him to bless your finances if you're robbing Him?

Listen to this verse: **Genesis 1:1**, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** Now listen to how Creator God gets up front and personal with His creation. **Isaiah 40:28-31**, **"Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of His understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; He offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."**

**Psalm 106:8-11, “Even so, He saved them to defend the honor of His name and to demonstrate His mighty power. He commanded the Red Sea to divide, and a dry path appeared. He led Israel across the sea bottom that was as dry as a desert. So He rescued them from their enemies and redeemed them from their foes. Then the water returned and covered their enemies; not one of them survived.”**

Now here is my point: Do you want this incredibly awesome God for you or against you? I’m telling you, you need His power and blessing on your finances!

Then the Bible tells us in **Prov. 21:20, “The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.”** If you’re not saving any money, you’re spending too much. You need a radical overhaul of your lifestyle.

The two entities that need to get paid out of every paycheck are the two entities most responsible for the earning of the money and for this financial blessing that is coming your way, and that is God and that’s you.

You know you’re in the debt trap if you are....

### **Unable To Pay Taxes**

You get to April 15 and you don’t have the money to pay your taxes, the Bible says in **Matthew 22:21, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”** If you can’t pay your taxes it means you’re spending too much money. You are in the debt trap.

The fourth sign that you are in a dept trap is...

### **Extravagant Spending**

**Proverbs 21:17, “Indulging in luxuries, wine, and food will never make you wealthy.”** If you want to get wealthy, then don’t indulge in luxuries. Have you ever noticed that some of the catalogues you get at Christmas and other times of the year are filled with things that are ridiculously unnecessary, and totally unneeded? It’s for the person who has everything.

I read one Christmas about a \$200 nose-hair remover! Folks! I could show you a much cheaper way to do that, but Karen's here so I'm not going to do that. Who needs something that costs \$200 to cut your nose hair? Here's the point. When you buy things just because you've got the money, that's stupid. When you buy things just because you think can afford it, watch out. You are headed square into the debt trap! When you buy things you don't need with money you really don't have, or even if you do have it just shows that there is no contentment in your life.

And last you are in a dept trap if you are constantly...

### **Looking For Get Rich Quick Ideas**

The Bible says run from get rich quick schemes. It says it over and over again. **Proverbs 21:5, "Steady plodding brings prosperity; hasty speculation brings poverty."**

When you're in debt, you're ripe for a rip off. Some con artist, some business scam – someone is going to come along and get you to throw down hard earned, good money on a get rich quick scheme that promises to double or triple your money and you're going to be fooled into doing it.

People often get in debt because they live in a fantasy world. They're always fanaticizing and dreaming of some big strike tomorrow that's going to make their future, rather than just getting a serious job and plodding toward wealth, plodding toward prosperity – little by little. They don't want to do it the hard way.

In our entrepreneurial country, I can't tell you how many people I've talked to who are always waiting for the Big Deal to come along. In the meantime, they're barely making it, waiting for the Big Deal. They're always waiting for their ship to come in. I want to say, ***"Get a stinking job!"***

Some people are always waiting to win the Lotto. You are more likely to be hit by a meteor than you are to win the lottery. The odds are more likely that you will go to the moon than you will win the lottery.

**Ecclesiastes 5:7, "Dreaming instead of doing is foolishness."** I've talked with couples and individuals - who's financial situation, when you looked at it laid out on a piece of paper, looked humanly impossible. You'd think, ***"There's no way they're going to get out of debt,"*** from a human

standpoint. Some of you feel that way. You think that your financial situation is really impossible from a human standpoint. But there is a way out. I'm here to tell you – There is a way out! Next week we are going to look at **“HOW TO AVOID FINANCIAL COLLAPSE.”** I'm telling you, you don't want to miss next Sunday because we are going to specifically look at **“Five Principles For Financial Stability”**. If you will follow God's financial plan and the steps to getting out of debt, you can do this. I can give you many, many examples. If I didn't believe there was any hope of getting out of debt, I wouldn't waste your time looking at the principles in God's word. But they are there and they do work.

In closing, let me say one thing. There is a debt that you will never be able to repay. It is the debt of your sin. The Bible says that all of us have broken God's laws. Not just financial laws, but others too. We've all blown it and the Bible says there is a penalty for sin. The penalty is death. That is a debt you will never, ever be able to repay. So God assumed your debt and Jesus Christ came to earth, stretched out His arms on the cross and paid for your debt. So you get to go free!

What a deal! What a God!

**“We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules that we failed to follow. But God forgave us and took away that debt and nailed it to the cross.”** It's as if He took a piece of paper and wrote everything we've ever done wrong and then He nailed it to the cross.

You need to get your financial plan in order, but before you do that you need to resolve this spiritual debt issue. If you've never accepted God's forgiveness and grace and turned your life over to Christ, you need to do it before you leave this room this morning.