

## Money - Debt

**The Bible doesn't say debt is a sin or a result of disobedience.** We assume it does, but not because it says it directly, but because of what we've heard or what we've interpreted from other scriptures we've read. (What Does the Bible Say About Debt?, Christian Stewardship Network)

According to the Bible:

### **Debt is to be released/forgiven:**

"At the end of every seventh year you must cancel the debts of everyone who owes you money. This is how it must be done. Everyone must cancel the loans they have made to their fellow Israelites. They must not demand payment from their neighbors or relatives, for the Lord's time of release has arrived. This release from debt, however, applies only to your fellow Israelites—not to the foreigners living among you. "There should be no poor among you, for the Lord your God will greatly bless you in the land he is giving you as a special possession. You will receive this blessing if you are careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. The Lord your God will bless you as he has promised. You will lend money to many nations but will never need to borrow. You will rule many nations, but they will not rule over you. "

Deuteronomy 15:1-6, NLT

"We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us. "

Nehemiah 10:31, NLT

' And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. '

Matthew 6:12, NIV

' "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. '

Matthew 18:26-27, NIV

' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. '

Matthew 18:30, NIV

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### **Those who were in debt went to David:**

'David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him. '

1 Samuel 22:1-2, NIV

'Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. '

Romans 13:6-7, NLT

### **Debt can happen for unexpected reasons:**

'The wife of a man from the company of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord . But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves." '

2 Kings 4:1, NIV

'About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. They were saying, "We have such large families. We need more food to survive." Others said, "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine." And others said, "We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others." When I heard their complaints, I was very angry. After thinking it over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, "You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!" Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem. At the meeting I said to them, "We are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?" And they had nothing to say in their defense. Then I pressed further, "What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations? I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of charging interest. You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive

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groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil.” They replied, “We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say.” Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised. '

Nehemiah 5:1-12, NLT

### **Avoid debt if at all possible:**

'Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.'

Romans 4:4, NKJV

### **Don't take on the debts of others:**

'Don't agree to guarantee another person's debt or put up security for someone else. If you can't pay it, even your bed will be snatched from under you. '

Proverbs 22:26-27, NLT

### **Pay your debts:**

'The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives.'

Psalms 37:21, NKJV

'She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.” '

2 Kings 4:7 NIV

**The Bible's central message regarding debt is that it should be released/ canceled, paid, or forgiven.** It doesn't always refer to debt as financial, and it overwhelmingly focuses on *our response* to debt situations while only referencing one verse instructing us not to guarantee a debt. **Another way to state this is that ninety percent of the scriptures using the word debt are about how we should respond to it, and only ten percent on avoiding it.**

Am I saying debt is something we should engage in? No! I don't believe financial debt should be a pursuit for anyone, especially Christians. But we should not ascribe morality to debt issues or simply judge them to be wrong in all situations. Doing so would be unfair and could lead to all kinds of abuses.