



Regularly folks ask me what the Bible teaches about borrowing. I have noticed two opposing views among these people. One group believes borrowing is evil; the other, it is good. As usual, the answer is neither.

Over the next two weeks, I will look at borrowing under these headings:

1. Borrowing today
2. Biblical teaches about borrowing
3. Assumptions & alternatives
4. Effects & Costs

Borrowing Today

The New Concise Oxford Dictionary defines borrowing as ...

- 1a. Acquiring temporarily with the promise or intention of returning**
1b. Obtaining money in this way

Source: The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Ninth Edition

We borrow when we use a credit card and don't pay the full balance. As well, we borrow when we accept financing to buy items. But it's not so obvious, for example, we borrow when we lease a car. Leasing and straight borrowing have the same effect: we take on responsibility to pay someone from future income to use their goods or service today. Under a car lease agreement, we agree today to pay to use the car for a fixed future period.

Here is a practical borrowing definition ...

"Borrowing" is committing to spend future amounts to use someone's services, goods, or money today.

Before you get extra consumer debt, usually you don't think about its impact on your present commitments for stuff and services. So later your monthly spending seems heavier than you imagined.

With this understanding, let's look at what the Bible teaches about borrowing:

What Does the Bible Teach About Borrowing

Scripture shows borrowing negatively, but it does not prevent it. Proverbs 22:7 says:

"The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender." --- Proverbs 22:7

But the Scriptures are clear; when you borrow you should repay. Bankruptcy is not an alternative. Psalm 37:21 states:

[Graphic]

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously --- Psalm 37:21

Apostle Paul reinforces this message in Romans 13:7-8:

Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law." -- Romans 13:7-8

Besides reminding us to pay our debts when due, Apostle Paul reminds us about our duty to love one another. As fallen people, we have a debt we can never repay. Graciously, when He died on the cross, Jesus Christ paid the supreme price for this debt – for our past, present and future sins. But even after we surrender our lives to Christ, our sin nature remains. Happily, each believer has the Holy Spirit to help him or her "crucify" it. In Romans 13:8, Paul tells us to clothe ourselves with Jesus' love—to focus our lives on Him first, and then on others. Later, we will become less selfish and better able to resist tempting advertising that appeals to our "fleshly desires."

The Bible addresses also another borrowing form, co-signing loans. This too it shows negatively. Proverbs 11:15 says:

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He who puts up security for another will surely suffer, but whoever refuses to strike hands in pledge is safe --- Proverbs 11:15

Often we forget when we co-sign we agree to accept responsibility to repay if the borrower can't pay. We should never co-sign unless we accept, if asked, we will repay the loan, joyfully. Further, we shouldn't co-sign if we know co-signing will encourage delinquency. But, like all decisions we should ask Jesus to direct us.

Next time we will look at these three borrowing assumptions:

- 1. Borrowing assumes the future will resemble the present**
- 2. Borrowing assumes we have no alternative**
- 3. Borrowing puts Jesus in a box, so we don't depend on Him**

God bless and remember Jesus loves you.

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