

Lessons on

MANAGING

YOUR MONEY

(Christian Stewardship)

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First Edition
1995
Second Edition
2001

for

World Christian Literature Outreach
324 W. Ash St.
Piqua, OH 45356
U.S.A.

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Reprinted 1997
Second Edition, 2001

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

This material was originally written and taught in seminars held in Kenya, East Africa. It is my prayer that it might help both individual Christians as well as churches in their struggle to serve God the best way they can with their money. I believe the principles found in this short study are a good foundation on which to build an understanding of dealing with money in our daily lives.

There are many other books and study material which go into much more depth than this short study. It is a book for the beginner in learning to handle money.

This study does not address the need to give our money (or wealth) to God. I am assuming that you understand that need already. Instead this study deals only with our responsibility to handle money in the proper way.

It has been my experience that after teaching this material for several years, that those living within the cities find it easier to apply this material to their lives. The simple fact is that our brothers living in the rural villages have less actual money with which to work. Much of their livelihood comes from the things they plant or raise on their farms. They trade for many things which they use rather than use money. This is called a “Barter System”. It is my belief that God expects people who trade things with others to have the things they need, also to use those things in a good way. We are accountable for what we have, not what we do not have. I believe that many of the principles which you will find in this material will be useful to all people, because they deal with what God expects from us today.

I pray that this material will be a blessing to Christians and churches wherever it may be read.

In Christ,

Russ Lawson

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book has been written in such a way that either the individual student can read and study it on their own, or it can be used as a study guide for churches.

When using this book, you should: **FIRST**, read each section all the way through. **SECOND**, read the text of the book stopping to read each scripture from the Bible which is shown. **THIRD**, as individuals spend some time thinking about the discussion questions at the end of the sections. If you are studying this material as a church or a group of Christians, discuss the questions at the end of the sections as a group among yourselves.

PART I

"THE NEED TO UNDERSTAND STEWARDSHIP"

(From a biblical perspective)

Introduction to Stewardship:

One of the greatest problems we face today is how to deal properly with money. Money is a gift from God and yet it can bring problems if it is used in the wrong way. Many times rather than us deciding how we will walk with our money, (managing our money), our money manages us or decides how we will walk. The danger many times is in loving, trusting and making the wrong use of money. It is allowing our hearts to develop the wrong attitude about money and failing to concentrate on giving Glory and Honor to God.

What does the Word of God say about managing our money or "Stewardship"? This study is designed to help us understand what God expects from us as Christians.

I. DEFINITION OF STEWARDSHIP

We are discussing the idea of Stewardship or Managing our money. As we look and see just what the Bible says about this idea, we need to understand with the same understanding which those who wrote had. All of us in Africa understand the idea of speaking in one language and translating into another. The New Testament was written in the Greek language, so let us understand the proper translation.

Greek Words:

1. "Epitropos", a manager, foreman, or steward. Used in Galatians 4:1-2
2. "Oikonomos", Steward, manager, or administrator.

Lets also take a few minutes and see how the words are used in the Gospels accounts. We see these words used in several places as listed below. If we read these scriptures we will understand the meaning more clearly and know how God wants us to understand the word today.

Used in the Gospels:

1. Luke 12:37-48; 16:1-2 - the management or administration of the property which belongs to another.
2. Paul - I Corinthians 9:16-17 - Paul accepts his responsibility for preaching the gospel as a divine trust (another form of stewardship).

As we look at this idea of "Stewardship" we see that there are three English words which help to deepen our understanding of stewardship.

1. **Trustee:** "One who is trusted"
 - a. I Timothy 1:11; I Thessalonians 2:4 - It shows the receiving of privileges and benefits and obligations of being "trusted" or "intrusted" with the things of someone else.
 - b. The Greek word "pisteuo" (pisteuo) means to have the confidence of someone. A steward is someone who is trusted or in whom the master has confidence that they will handle things correctly.
 - c. See I Peter 4:10 on being good stewards
2. **Steward:** "one given oversight"
 - a. I Corinthians 4:1 speaks of one who must administer the trust which he has received in a spirit of genuine devotion and responsibility.

3. **Partner:** (from the Greek word for "partnership, fellowship or partaking.")
 - a. A Christian is more than a servant or a slave, in a sense they become partners or one sharing in the responsibilities of caring for things in a good way.
 - b. **EXAMPLE:** They are partakers of the divine nature, II Peter 1:4 (having God within them and the responsibility to live right because of that partnership).
 - c. They are fellow workers with God, I Peter 3:9
 - d. They are sons of God and Heirs of Abraham, Galatians 3:26 & 29.

D. OUR AIM:

Our aim as Christians today is:

- (1) to realize that a Christian is a true steward. We have received a trust from God to be a good steward. We are being trusted to accept that responsibility for all that he has given us and become a partner with God. We are expected to share ourselves and our money with Christ in the fulfillment of God's word in serving Him in this world.
- (2) We must also realize that God will accept no corruption in handling his money. We are stewards and all that we have really belongs to God. God will hold us accountable for how we manage our money or how our money manages our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain your understanding of the word "Stewardship".
2. Think about each of the three words used to deepen our understanding of the idea of Stewardship. In your own words, explain what they each mean.
3. If you are a "Steward" of the things of someone else, how should you act? (notice especially Luke 12:37-48)
4. In your own words, how would you explain "Our Aim as Christians today?"

PART II

DEALING WITH MONEY

Christians are stewards. Stewards are Trustees, Caretakers of that which belongs to another. Dealing with money and especially the money of the church has caused more problems, more people to leave, more souls to be lost than almost any other thing. People fight over the money, steal the money, use it for wrong things and in general are not good stewards before God.

The church which belongs to God is involved in the greatest mission under heaven the spreading of the gospel message. Money is necessary to carry out the work which God has given us. Because of this the New Testament deals with how we, as Christians, are to manage the money which God has given to us. The first sin in the Jerusalem church of which we read was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira in the matter of giving money to the Lord (Acts 5). Christian church leaders, who use the money which God has given them, must also make sure that they have the glory of God in mind in all that they do.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING FINANCES (MONEY)

I. We find certain directions in God's word which give "general principals" for handling our money in a good way. In this section we will see several of those principles.

1. We must be found faithful as good stewards, I Peter 4:10; I Corinthians 4:1-2, Not wasting the things God has given to us, Luke 16:1.
2. We must some day give account of our stewardship, Romans 14:12, Revelation 20:12-13.
3. We must not hoard (*hide back*) the money for our own security, Luke 12:13-21 (esp. V.21)
4. God does not allow us to take out of our money, all that we want or feel that we have a right to and then give Him a little of what is left. He demands a "first fruit offering" , Leviticus 23:9-14. Note Especially v. 10, We see how God views giving as it relates to our stewardship. God gave them the land and expected the best in return; Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God". (also see Malachi 3:7-8).
5. It is not a question of "how much I have" or even "how much I give", but rather it is a question of "how do I use that which God has given entrusted to us? (What do I have and how do I use it?) II Corinthians 8:12.

II. Our relationship within the local church to other Christians determines much about how we use the church finances/money. If we don't know and love other Christians in our home church we will not be as likely to treat them in a good way concerning matters of money.

1. Money must be used in "love". I Peter 1:22, "*Love one another from a pure heart*", Colossians 2:2, be "*knit (joined) together in love.*"
2. In suffering, "*Bear each others burdens*", Galatians 6:2
3. In service to one another, Galatians 2:9-10, Philippians 1:3-5; 4:16, Galatians 6:9-10 (help where we have the ability).
4. In financial/money matters, "*let each one of you*" I Corinthians 16:1-2, "*according to his ability lay by in store (give to the church)*", II Corinthians 8:12. It is living up to the responsibility to use that which God has given us properly, Matthew 25:41-44. See Mark 12:41-44, the widow's mite.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the problems people have today in dealing with money? (as seen in this section)
2. What was the first sin we read about in the church at Jerusalem?
3. What are the five general principles discussed in governing our use of our money?
4. Which of these principles do you find hardest to follow?

THE CHURCH AND MONEY

(How should it be used?)

I. Examples from the Scriptures of how churches use money.

1. **Helping the poor or those in need in the church**, Acts 4: 32-37. In this scripture we see the example very early in the history of the New Testament church of helping other Christians. The people in this scripture were so committed to one another in love, that they actually sold some of the things which they had and gave the money to the church to help those who had needs. This is an example, not a command for us today. It shows us one of the ways in which we as Christians or the church leaders might choose to use the money we have.

In I Corinthians 16:1-2 and in II Corinthians 8 we see further examples of the apostle Paul collecting money from the churches throughout the world to take to Jerusalem to help the needy Christians there. At that time there was a severe famine in Israel and many people were going hungry. Money was sent from many churches to help buy them food and the other things they needed.

This might be a good place to emphasize that what was given by the individual Christians was not always money. Sometimes people brought some of the things they owned and gave them to the church. I have attended worship assemblies of the churches in Africa where people have given chickens, corn, vegetables and tools at the time of contribution. These things are then either given to those who have needs or sold by the church leaders to give money to those who need it. We are to give of what we have, not of what we do not have, II Corinthians 8:12. (also see Romans 12:10-13)

2. **Helping those who preach for the church**, I Corinthians 9:13-14, Galatians 6:6.

In I Corinthians 9:13-14, the apostle Paul speaks very clearly when he says, ***“Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.”*** God has always planned that those who are in his service should be provided for by those they serve. Paul uses the example of those priest who served God in the temple and says the same thing still applies to the church today. Those who preach should be helped to live by the people to which they minister (or teach).

In Galatians 6:6 the apostle Paul writes, ***“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”*** Paul then goes on and shares the example of those who sow seed and receive the blessings of the harvest (verses 6-10). He is using this example to show that the Christians (churches) who receive the teachings of God’s word from someone, should share with them the things they need to live.

Again let me say, this does not mean that the man who preaches must be given money. Those who are being taught (the church) should try and provide what they can to help the man and his family live. They might provide him with a chicken, corn, vegetables, grass for the roof of his house, a house in which to live or something else that will allow him and his family to live while he teaches God’s word. In the early days of America it was not unusual for preachers to work with a group of churches, traveling to each in turn to teach and preach. Each church would give this man the help which they had. Many times the man owned a farm and also during the week would work on his farm to help provide for his family.

3. **Helping the Elders of the church**, I Timothy 5:17-18.

In this passage of scripture Paul writes, *“Let the elders who rule well be counted worth of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worth of his wages.’”*

This scripture indicates that there were some elders in the church who spent all of their time teaching and ministering to the church. Paul is telling us very clearly that men who do this deserve to be helped by the church so that they might continue to live and serve the church.

4. **Helping those who are not Christians**, Galatians 6: 9-10.

This question has always troubled the church as well as individual Christians. Should we help people who are not Christians and if we help them how much should we help them. This scripture helps us to understand what God would have us to do in these cases.

Paul writes, *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* In this scripture Paul gives us at least two guidelines.

First, we should help (do good to) *“all”* (people). This is people who are members of the local church as well as people who are not. He however gives us a guideline in this matter when he says, *“especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* This would seem to indicate that if there must be a choice of who the church is able to help, then those who are Christians should be helped first. Sometimes the church just does not have enough money to help “all” people or everyone who asks. Those who are members of the local church should receive any help available first.

Second, we should help *“as we have opportunity”*. I believe that this can have a double application. First, our opportunity comes from the crop we reap from what we sow. Sometimes we have been blessed more that we can help with than at other times. So as we have opportunity (within our own ability), let us help others. Second, that opportunity (the occasion) to help people, we should help them if we can.

5. **Helping missionaries**, Acts 13: 1-3, Philippians 1:2-6, 4:15-19.

Perhaps we need to define “What or Who is a Missionary?” For our use here we will define a missionary as: “Someone who is sent from or by a local church (or group of churches working together) to another place to teach and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ”. They do not necessarily have to go to another country, just someplace away from where the local church, usually to a location where the church does not exist or is not strong. We have examples of New Testament churches doing that in the scriptures listed above.

6. **Other things**

The church will always have many needs that we have not listed or discussed in the scriptures above. A church may need to use money to buy wine for communion, songbooks, Bibles, pay rent for a place to meet, buy property to build a building in which to meet or many things such as these. There are no specific scriptures which instruct us in how, how much or when to spend money on these things. Part of being a “good steward” of the things which God gives us is to consider and use wisely the money which is given to our local church. Our main concern as “churches of Christ”, is that we use the money which we have to help spread the gospel and to strengthen the local Christians.

A TRUE STORY FOR DISCUSSION:

A man came to the church leaders one day as they were to go to his home areas to teach and he was to travel together with them. He told the church leaders he had a problem, he needed help for his son to go to school. Later as they were traveling to his home, they passed a herd of about 20 cows. The man pointed to them and said, "These are my cows I have hired this man to watch them for me." They traveled a little further and saw another herd of about 20 cows and he said, "See these cows. These are my cows also, I have hired this man to watch them for me."

Questions for discussion: The man said he did not have the money for school fees, yet he had 40 cows and a farm.

1. Should the church help this man with money?
2. Would you have helped this man with money personally?
3. Was this man being a good steward and using his wealth wisely in providing the things his family needed? (I Timothy 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:10)

A TRUE STORY FOR DISCUSSION:

A man came and told the church, "My son has been very sick and needs to go to the doctor, but I have no money, will you help me with this problem?" After talking with the man the leaders discovered he has a farm and 10 cows, 4 goats and about 20 chickens. They told the man that he needed to sell a cow and pay for the doctor fees. He refused and said he could not do that. The son died and he killed two cows to feed people at the funeral.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is our Christian duty
2. to our families according to the scripture?
2. What is the duty of the church in this situation as far as helping the man?
2. Should the man sell the cow to pay for the doctor fee?
3. What do you think God would have him to do? (I Timothy 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:10)

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. For what do you think that the money can be used? (I Corinthians 9:13-14, Galatians 2:9-10; 6:6, 9-10)
2. What is more valuable cows, goats and chickens or money?
3. If a person doesn't have any money, what can they do or give?
4. If a the church has money in the bank and a member has a special need, (school fees, medical bills, personal debts or funeral expense) can the church use that money, or **should** they use that money?
5. If someone has a financial need, is the church obligated to meet all of their need?
6. As you consider the ways mentioned in this section in which churches can or should use their money, how do you see your church following this pattern?

Part III

USING OUR MONEY WISELY

"Making a Budget, How and Why"

The idea of making and keeping a budget is not a new thing. Both individuals and churches need to make and keep budgets. In the Old Testament the Israelites had to keep an accounting of the money they made to be able to give back to God in a proper way, Deuteronomy 14:22-26. As Christians we are encouraged in the scriptures to "provide for our families" I Timothy 5:8, and to "lay by in store" (Lit. "put into a treasury"), to give to God's church. I Corinthians 16:1-2. As the church we are encouraged to use the money which our members give in the work of God.

The main problem in using our money wisely is understanding how to make a budget and then knowing how to spend your money in the way you have planned in your budget. For many people and churches, when they get to the end of the month, there is no money left to buy the things they need.

WHAT IS A BUDGET:

The dictionary tells us, that a "Budget" is "**an estimate of future money we hope to receive and how it will be spent**" or "**to make a plan for using our money.**" That is not too difficult to understand. Each of us only have so much money which we think we will be getting each month. Each of us also has an idea of how much we will need to spend to buy food, clothing, pay rent, school fees and other things like these. That is what a budget is all about, making a **plan** to use the money you receive **and then follow the plan**. This plan of using a budget will not work, unless you can be strong and spend your money only as you have planned to spend it. You know that there are many people coming to you to ask for help if you have work. If you have not planned money for this help in your budget then you must not give the help, unless you are willing to do without something yourself. That something may be food for your children or money for medicine. **I suggest that you promise before God to begin to use your money wisely and according to the budget plan you make.** When people come to you, you will have to decide whether or not to break your promise to God about how you spend your money, because we are stewards today. This is a hard thing, but something that must be done. Read the Parable of the Faithful Steward, Luke 14:28-32 and the Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30. I can tell you from experience that it is not an easy thing to make and keep a budget. But to handle your money in the right way is necessary to be pleasing to God.

Part IV

HOW TO MAKE A BUDGET FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR CHURCH:

A budget really has two and sometimes three parts. (1) Those things you must spend money for each week (like food, rent or benevolence). (2) Those things you need to spend money on every few months (like school fees or wine for communion). (3) Those things you need to spend money for only once a year (like transport money to travel home or for large yearly church meetings). To begin with, make a list of all of the things you need to buy or spend money for in the next week, that you can think of.

Your list might look something like this:

Example of a personal Budget: (STEP ONE)

(For one week): These monies may be too big or too small, it is only an example. You must make a list with the real monies you use to buy these things as well as other things.

Maise (corn) Meal65/
Rent100/
Milk25/
Tomatoes8/
Onions8/
Cabbage6/
Sweet Potatoes12/
Meat25/
Contribution to the church10/
Savings (for emergencies, Doctor, etc.)	<u>..10/</u>
Total Per Week269/
Total Per Month1076/

****Note:** Since people in different countries may read this, you will need to convert the numbers into whatever type of money you use in your country.

When you write down your money and the things you spend it on, it gives you an idea of how much money you need to live the way you want to live each week. **This is not to be your budget, but is just given to give you an example of how to make a budget of your own.**

ADDING LARGER THINGS TO YOUR BUDGET:

STEP TWO: Now you need to make up a list of the things that come at different times during the year such as "School Fees for you children" or "Communion Wine to be bought for the church".

EXAMPLE:

**School Fees (Every three months)900/
Communion Wine (Every three months) ...125/**

The problem with things like this is that they are a big amount of money that you need to pay at one time and it is difficult. By using a budget (having a plan) you can make it not so hard to do.

In a budget you think ahead and **plan** to be able to pay this big bill with your small money. What you must do is to begin to set the money aside each week (or pay day) for the big money you will need at one time. If we take the 900/ for school fees and divide it by three months it is only **300/ per month**. If we divide the 300/ by the four weeks in a month then it is only **75/ per week** we must put into our budget. Your budget will now look something like the one following.

Examples: (Step Two)

(For One Week) **These monies may be too big or too small, it is only an example.**

Maise Meal	65/
Rent	100/
Milk	25/
Tomatoes	8/
Onions	8/
Cabbage	6/
Sweet Potatoes	12/
Meat	25/
Contribution to the church	10/
Savings (for emergencies, Doctor, etc.)	10/
School Fees (900/ every three months)	75/
Total Per Week	344/
Total Per Month	1420/

This gives you an idea of how much money you need to live each week or month. **This is not to be your budget, but is just given as an example of how to make a budget of your own.**

ADDING ONCE A YEAR THINGS:

STEP THREE:

At this point you need to consider the problem of once a year expenses such as "Transport for traveling to your home village or town or a large yearly church meeting". It is handled the same way as "**Step Two**". You must plan ahead in your budget for the expenses you know will be coming in the future. Lets say that the transportation to your home village is 250/ each way or **500/ total**. How do you plan ahead for this expense? (Yes, I know there might be increases in the cost of transportation, but lets say that we have already added some money to make up for that increase. Remember this is only an example.) Just like before, lets figure that 500/ divided by twelve (the number of months in a year) gives us an expense of **41/ per month**. If we again divide this by four weeks in each month this gives us a total of 10/25 per week. Your budget now will look like the one following.

BUYING EXTRA THINGS:

Examples: (Step Three)

(For One Week) **These monies may be too big or too small, it is only an example. You must make a budget/ list of things you buy and how much money you have to spend in your house.**

Maise Meal	65/
Rent	100/
Milk	25/
Tomatoes	8/
Onions	8/
Cabbage	6/
Sweet Potatoes	12/
Meat	25/
Contribution to the church	10/
Savings (for emergencies, Doctor, etc.)	10/
School Fees (900/ every three months)	75/
Transport for traveling home	10/25
Total Per Week	354/25
Total per Month	1461/

This gives you an idea of how much money you need to live the way you want to each week or month. **This is not to be your budget, but is just given to give you as an example of how to make a budget of your own.**

Buying Extra Things:

When we speak of buying extra things, we are speaking of buying things which are not included in your budget. The English term for this is "Miscellaneous Expense." Miscellaneous means, "all different kinds of things". It might be money that is used to buy a knife, shovel, kerosene, a new flashlight (torch), to repair a puncture on your bicycle tire, nappies for the baby, Food for a friend, giving money to help with someone's funeral expense or any other things. All of us have these "Extra Things" that cost money that we had not planned for, so it is best that we plan for them any way. That is why in most budgets we include a line called "Misc." which is short for "Miscellaneous Expense." It is up to you to decide how much you will include for buying "Extra Things" in your budget. Don't forget to do it (see the worksheet for an example). **(Page 22)**

In the following section you will find a work sheet with some things suggested on it for a general budget. Use it as a place to start your own budget. Fill it out with your own things you need to include in your budget and see how you do.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you use a budget now in managing your money?
2. How do you feel about using a budget?
3. What kind of things should be included in a budget?

CONCLUSION AND FINAL WARNING!

We are warned in the scriptures about how important it is to do whatever we have decided to do, especially if we have made a promise before God. Luke 9:62 warns us about putting our hand to the plow and looking back. It is impossible to plow (do what we wanted to do) if we turn our head from the way we should go. Matthew 5:37 warns us to let our yes be yes and our no be no. In other words, whatever your mouth says is the thing you should be doing. You are judged before God by your words.

One other suggestion I might add is a very simple way to organize your money to help with your budget. Some of you might find it helpful to separate your money into separate groups as it is to be used. I suggest that you get some envelopes and mark on the outside what the money they will contain is to be used for. After you do that place the money for that thing in the envelope and don't use it for anything else. **Example:** Mark on an envelope, "Rent" and place all of the money for your rent in that envelope until you need to give it to your landlord. Don't take money from the envelope to use for another purpose. If you don't have the money set aside for something, then you can not spend it. But this is something about which you must make a commitment to God. No one else can do it for you.

Do not plan a budget and then let it get lost. If you set your hand to this thing, then do it as unto God.

I encourage you to use your money wisely, because it is a difficult thing to do. The scripture tells us the love of money is the root of all evil, 1 Timothy 6:10. I would not ask you to do this by yourselves, for I and all of the other missionaries have for a long time, been doing this very thing in our stewardship of the money which God has given us.

I Pray that God will bless you in your efforts to be better stewards.

In the name of Jesus Christ,
Russ Lawson,

**WORK SHEET FOR
SAMPLE PERSONAL BUDGET
for one week**

(For One Week) **These monies may be too big or too small, it is only an example.**

Maize Meal	
Rent	
Milk	
Tomato's.....	
Onions	
Cabbage	
Sweet Potatoes	
Meat.....	
Contribution	
Savings	
School Fee	
Miscellaneous	_____
Total Per Week	/
Total Per Month	/

This gives you an idea of how much money you need to live the way you want to each week or month. Add to it the things which are really in your own personal budget. This is only an example of how a budget can be written.

Appendix

BORROWING AND LENDING MONEY

By David High

" Owe no man anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law." (Romans 13:8)

INTRODUCTION

Before beginning to look at the concepts of borrowing and lending money, one must first consider accountability. Money has often been the thing which destroyed relationships that once existed. Therefore, one needs to consider how God holds us accountable for what we do.

In Romans 14:10-12, Paul states that all of us shall give account to God. Again in II Corinthians 5:10, Paul states that each one shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ and will receive good or evil according to what he has done in his life. By these scriptures one can conclude that it is very important that we do those things which are righteous before God and mankind while we live so that we will receive a reward that is good.

In this study we will see what the Bible says about borrowing and lending money from both the Old and New Testaments.

Borrowing Money as Seen in the Bible

To borrow is "to receive something with the intention of returning it." Both lending and borrowing money were moral rather than economic concepts in the Bible. These means were one way in which God sought to take care of those in poverty among His people. In the Old Testament borrowing was not to expand one's business, it was thing done to allow people to survive during times of poverty. The regulations of the Old Testament emphasized helping one's neighbor who is in need. Therefore, when one sought to borrow from another it was of necessity.

When someone took a loan he was to give a pledge for a guarantee so that the covenant could be sealed. Many believe the pledge was given (usually a cloak) and taken to the local elders so the agreement would be registered as an official transaction. Upon the repayment of the loan, the borrower would receive his pledge back (unless it was his only cloak, then it was to be returned)... This process can be seen in **Deuteronomy 24:10-13**:

When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not go into his house to get what he has for a pledge. Stay outside and let the man to whom you are making the loan bring the pledge out to you. If the man is poor, do not go to sleep with his pledge in your possession. Return his cloak to him by sunset so that he may sleep in it, then he will thank you, and it will be regarded as a righteous act in the sight of the Lord your God."

If one was desperate he could bind himself for seven years as a servant to the one whom loaned him what he needed. After the seventh year the borrower was set free and the debt was considered paid in full. So, in the Old Law, provisions were made to protect the Jewish debtor. However, in later times the Law was ignored and the debtors were often treated cruelly (II Kings 4:1ff)

When one borrowed money it was to be taken seriously. Note the following passages found in the Old Testament: 1) Deuteronomy 28:12 - we are not to borrow from anyone. 2) Exodus 22:14 - if we do borrow something and it breaks or dies, we are to make restitution. 3) Psalm 37:21 - the wicked borrow and do not pay it back. And, 4) Proverbs 22:7 - the borrower becomes the slave to the lender.

By New Testament times, the same spirit of borrowing money was emphasized. In Matthew 5:42, Jesus stated that a borrower should not be refused. It is important to understand some basic concepts here. First, Jesus is speaking from what the Law emphasized. That is borrowing was only for survival during poverty. And secondly, that when one borrowed -- he paid back his debt (even if it enslaved him or his family. See Nehemiah 5:1-10). Also, we find Jesus using a common practice as an illustration in the parable of the debtors. It was a common practice by New Testament times that people who did not pay their debts were thrown in jail (Matthew 18:25-34).

Finally, Paul states in Romans 13:8 a very important principle. "*Owe no man anything but love.*" Many use this scripture to discourage buying on credit or borrowing money. Whether this is the case or not.... the point is clear. That is the instruction to fulfill all of our obligations whether they are civil or natural duties.

It is therefore safe to assume by these Scriptures, that we should only take a loan when it is needed. We must also have the attitude that we should pay it back. The loan should be for something we need (there is a big difference between something we need and something we want). The act of borrowing something should be something done with much consideration and thought and not done in haste.

Lending as Seen in the Bible

Giving has always been a fundamental concept within God's Word. God has set the example throughout the history of the universe as the supreme example. We should learn from what He has taught us. We have therefore been urged from the beginning to help those who are in need. The concept of lending definitely ties into this principle.

The concept of lending in the Old and New Testament has been consistent. The words used in the New Testament Greek are: 1) Daneizo - which is translated to lend, the basic idea of which is to lend on security or return. And, 2) Kichremi - which means to lend , the meaning being to furnish what is needful.

The principle is dealt with in Deuteronomy 15:7-10. Here God instructs His people to generously give without grudging to those who are in need. There are several other Scriptures that also instill this idea (note: Psalms 37:21; 37:26; 112:5). This promotes the idea of sharing by those whom God has blessed and helping those who are in need so that they might not become the recipients of charity.

God gave specific orders to the Jews regarding the lending of money. The Jews were forbidden in the Old Covenant to take interest from another Jew, but they were permitted to take it from foreigners (Exodus 22:25-27; Deuteronomy 23:19-20). It also discouraged charging interest to those who lived among them as well (Leviticus 25:35-37). The loan was also made on the basis of a pledge to insure a covenant (Deuteronomy 24:10-13). The Jews were never to take advantage of another when loaning money (Psalms 112:5; Deuteronomy 24:6,17).

In the New Testament, Jesus expands this principle. He speaks of lending money in Matthew 5:42 and

in Luke 6:32-35. In Luke 6, Jesus rebukes those who loan money and seek repayment. He goes on to state that money should be loaned even to our enemies without expecting anything back. In verse 36, Jesus ends by calling God's followers to be merciful, just as He is merciful.

Lawrence Richards, sums the principle of lending up in The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words with the following statement. "A believing donor is to give out of personal prosperity to meet other's needs - to supply those fellow believers who are in need - so that others' generosity may in turn show itself in the donor's need."

CONCLUSION:

From this study, we have seen one key word. That word is "need." The whole concept of borrowing is based upon this idea. The difference between a need and a want are definite. The idea of a need is that which is dependent for survival. A want is a desire. We have seen that borrowing in the Biblical sense has only been approved for those things that are a need. The second major concept seen in borrowing is that we are to repay what we borrow. And, if in any case we destroy or break what we borrow, we should make restitution. Borrowing should only be done after much thought and prayer.

On the other hand, lending is something we should do without grudging and without expecting to be repaid. It is the way a person can share what God has blessed him with to a person is less fortunate and has a need. Those who lend must not overcharge another and do this ministry freely. When one lends generously, God in turn will bless them for their service to others.