

I. INTRO

- a. You can't believe everything you hear.
 - b. Think about it for a second: Who taught you that borrowing money was a good idea?
 - i. Was it your broke finance professor?
 - ii. That's like taking advice from a shop teacher with missing fingers!
 - c. Marketing tells us that borrowing money is something everyone does and that it's something we need to do to be happy—that it will help us get ahead.
 - i. But when surveyed, 75% of the wealthiest people in the world said the most important key to winning with money is getting out of debt and staying out of debt.
 - ii. Have you ever heard anyone say that the reason they "made it" was that they got into debt?
 - iii. I've never met a millionaire who made his fortune with cash-back points!
 - d. Society tells us otherwise. Our broke family and friends tell us otherwise.
 - e. The truth is that if you tell a lie often enough, loud enough, and long enough, the myth becomes accepted as truth.
 - i. People are believing the lie and spreading it.
 - ii. They're not doing it to be mean—they've just bought into the lie themselves and accepted it as truth.
 - iii. So, good men and women just start repeating the same old lies.
 1. You need to build your credit score.
 2. You need a safe car, so you should buy new or lease.
 3. You need a credit card to buy anything.
 4. Nobody pays cash for a car, let alone a house!
 - f. SPEAKER: Instruct everyone in the room to stand up and close their eyes.
 - i. Tell them that you're all going to play a little game, and play it up with some enthusiasm.
 - ii. Instruct each person to guess which way north is and point that direction.
 1. Tell them to keep their arms up, pointing north, and have them open their eyes and look around the room.
 2. Then, show them which way true north is by a compass.
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- iii. A lot of people got it right. That's great! A lot of others got it wrong, though. And they weren't lying or stupid; they weren't trying to mislead anyone. They were sincere in their answer; they were just sincerely wrong.
 - 1. Explain: You and I have a compass; it's the Word of God.
 - 2. It doesn't matter how you feel. North is north.
 - 3. No amount of marketing or misdirection changes that fact. The fact is, that's north (pointing).

II. A PARADIGM SHIFT

- a. Debt has been marketed to us in so many forms that to imagine life without it requires a paradigm shift.
- b. Take the FICO score, for example.
 - i. We act like a good FICO score is a magic key that will unlock any financial door, but that's a lie.
 - ii. A FICO score is nothing but an "I love debt" score.
 - 1. The calculation for the score has absolutely nothing to do with your income or your potential for success.
 - 2. It is 100% based on your debt—what kind of debt you have, how long you've been in debt, how much debt, etc.
 - iii. We give debt and that little credit score way too much power in our lives.
 - 1. We worship at the altar of debt as our provider instead of realizing that God is our provider.
 - 2. Debt is a way of saying that God didn't give you enough.
- c. SPEAKER: Prepare the following slides on your overhead screen if one is available. Tell the congregation that they're going to participate in a little grammatical exercise.
 - i. SLIDE: A woman without her man is nothing
 - 1. Ask the congregation to supply the missing punctuation in their minds.
 - 2. After a few seconds, continue as so:
 - ii. Now, most of you men probably read that sentence like this:
 - 1. SLIDE: A woman, without her man, is nothing.
 - 2. Right? Let's see a show of hands. Be honest!
 - iii. Okay, that's about what I expected. Now, let's see what many of the women see when they read that statement.
 - 1. SLIDE: A woman: without her, man is nothing.
 - 2. How about it, ladies?
 - iv. You see, it could go both ways. The words didn't change at all. The only thing that's different is the perspective. Sometimes, we need a fresh perspective.

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- d. Here's a fresh perspective on debt. It's some new information, only about 3,000 years old:
 - i. Proverbs 22:7: "The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the SLAVE of the lender."
 - ii. Let's be clear: The Bible says that debt is slavery.
 - 1. It's like wrapping yourself in chains.
 - iii. SPEAKER: Consider telling a personal debt story, using chains to illustrate the bondage you were in. Or, you can use Dave Ramsey's testimony of going bankrupt from the Breaking the Chains of Debt video provided.
 - iv. Regardless of how you feel, debt is slavery.

III. THREE WAYS TO BREAK THE CHAINS OF DEBT

- a. Get Gazelle Intense
 - i. Proverbs 6:1, 4-5: "My son, if you become surety for your friend, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, give no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."
 - ii. SPEAKER: Show the Discovery Channel clip from the video explaining that we are the gazelle and the cheetah is the lender. Or explain:
 - iii. If you've ever seen a cheetah chasing a gazelle on TV, you know what I'm talking about!
 - 1. The cheetah is the fastest animal on earth, and he chases gazelles to eat them!
 - 2. The second that gazelle notices a cheetah running after him, you better believe he runs! His life depends on it.
 - 3. Well, the cheetah is the lender, and you are the gazelle!
 - a. They try to trick and attack us:
 - i. "Here kid, I'll give you a free t-shirt if you open this credit card."
 - ii. "You deserve a new car."
 - iii. "Come here, come here! Everybody borrows money. It's the only way to 'get ahead.'"
 - 4. Proverbs is telling us this is not a plan! You're putting yourself in danger. The cheetah is after your family. Run!
 - a. You've got to get gazelle intense! If you're not running full speed, that cheetah could catch and eat you!
 - b. You've got to bust it!
 - c. You've got to go, go, go, go, go!
 - d. Your life depends on it. Your family depends on it.

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- iv. Proverbs 13:22: "A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children." You can't do that if you're in debt all your life!
 - v. You can change your family tree by breaking the chains of debt for good.
 - vi. Before you know it, you'll be chasing the cheetah!

b. Get Out of Debt

- i. People say, "But debt is just a normal part of life, right?"
 - 1. Wrong.
 - 2. "Normal" in North America is just another way to say "broke"!
 - 3. If normal is broke, I don't want to be normal. I want to be weird!
- ii. Steps out of debt
 - 1. Quit borrowing money.
 - a. You can't get out of a hole while you're digging out the bottom.
 - b. Emergencies are going to happen. Plan for them with an emergency fund and don't rely on credit.
 - 2. Prayer really works.
 - a. Your heavenly Father is crazy about you.
 - b. If you haven't talked to Him in a while, He's not mad at you. He's waiting to talk to you about your life.
 - c. Tell Him what you need help with.
 - 3. Sell something.
 - a. Sell so much stuff the kids think they're next!
 - b. Name the cat "Craigslist" and the dog "eBay."
 - c. Find the stuff in your life that's just cluttering up the house and get rid of it. Most people could have a \$1,000 beginner emergency fund tomorrow if they'd just sell the stuff they aren't using.
 - 4. Take a part-time job.
 - a. Increase your income to help you get some traction.
 - b. I'm not saying you should become a workaholic, but if you have debt, then you're sitting in a mess. You're going to have to work a little harder to clean it up!
 - c. Remember, this is a temporary thing. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.
- iii. Attack your debts using Dave Ramsey's debt snowball.
 - 1. List your debts from smallest to largest balance.
 - a. Now, some of you will say that it makes more sense to pay off the debts with the highest interest rates first.
 - b. That may make sense mathematically, but here's the deal. If we were really doing math, we wouldn't be in debt, would we?

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2. Put minimum payments on everything but the smallest one, and pay that one off as quickly as you can.
 - a. Personal finance is 80% behavior; it's only 20% head knowledge.
 - b. You need to knock out some debts quickly so that you'll have some quick wins.
 - c. If you've got 10 debts and it takes you a year to knock out the first one, you're going to lose your momentum.
 - d. Go for the quick wins!
 3. After you knock out the first debt on the list, you take all that money you were throwing on it and move to the next one.
 - a. Every time you pay off a debt, you have more money to put toward the next one.
 - b. That's why it's a snowball—as the snowball rolls over, it picks up more snow.
 - c. By the time you're a few debts down your list, your snowball starts to look more like an avalanche!
 4. That snowball will keep rolling and rolling until you knock out every one of those debts!

c. Save Money

- i. Before you attack your debt snowball, save up \$1,000 as a beginner emergency fund.
 1. Remember this is your “Murphy repellent.”
 2. This is your padding between you and life.
 3. If you don't have a dime in savings and the car breaks down while you're paying off your debts, what do you think you'll do? Answer: You'll use your credit card. Don't do it!
- ii. Proverbs 13:4 tells us that the diligent prosper.
 1. Be diligent with your effort and ask God to bless it.
 2. Don't just sit around whining to God about it. Get to work and ask God to get involved.
 - a. He won't get involved with your whining.
 - b. He will get involved with your actions.

IV. CONCLUSION

- a. Debt is slavery, but it is for freedom that Christ set us free. (Galatians 5:1)

- b. You can't get ahead financially by staying a slave to debt.

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- c. Think about it: How much could you give, save, and blow if you had no payments?
 - d. Dave Ramsey asks the question, "What could the people of God do for the Kingdom of God if they were debt-free?"
 - i. That's a good question.
 - ii. Make the question a part of your prayer life this week and see what God may want you to do, if only you were free to do it for Him.