

5 Dealing with DEBT

4 Feb. 23



Ice-Breaker: *How happy would you be if there was no such thing as money?*

1 John 2:7-17 cev ⁷⁻⁸My dear friends, I am not writing to give you a new commandment. It is the same one that you were first given, and it is the message you heard. But it really is a new commandment, and you know its true meaning, just as Christ does. You can see the darkness fading away and the true light already shining. ⁹⁻¹¹If we claim to be in the light and hate someone, we are still in the dark. But if we love others, we are in the light, and we don't cause problems for them. If we hate others, we are living and walking in the dark. We don't know where we are going, because we can't see in the dark. ¹²⁻¹³Children, I am writing to you, because your sins have been forgiven in the name of Christ. Parents, I am writing to you, because you have known the one who was there from the beginning. Young people, I am writing to you, because you have defeated the evil one. ¹⁴Children, I am writing to you, because you have known the Father. Parents, I am writing to you, because you have known the one who was there from the beginning. Young people, I am writing to you, because you are strong. God's message is firm in your hearts, and you have defeated the evil one. ¹⁵⁻¹⁷Don't love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you cannot love the Father. Our foolish pride comes from this world, and so do our selfish desires and our desire to have everything we see. None of this comes from the Father. The world and the desires it causes are disappearing. But if we obey God, we will live for ever.

- *Why do you think love is the first commandment?*
- *From this passage, what happens when we walk in the light?*
- *Why is it important that forgiveness should be taught firstly to children?*
- *What do you take away from verses 12-14?*
- *How would you describe the underlying values of the world?*

Proverbs 22:1-9 cev ¹⁻³A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold. The rich and the poor are all created by the LORD. When you see trouble coming, don't be stupid and walk right into it— be clever and hide. ⁴⁻⁸Respect and serve the LORD! Your reward will be wealth, a long life, and

honour. Crooks walk down a road full of thorny traps. Stay away from there! Teach your children right from wrong, and when they are grown they will still do right. The poor are ruled by the rich, and those who borrow are slaves of moneylenders. Troublemakers get in trouble, and their terrible anger will get them nowhere. ⁹The LORD blesses everyone who freely gives food to the poor.

- *From this passage which proverb stands out most to you?*
- *What does this passage teach us about God: and about humans?*
- *In what ways is verse 9 true?*

Deuteronomy 15:1-11 cev ¹⁻³Every seven years you must announce, “The LORD says loans do not need to be paid back.” Then if you have loaned money to another Israelite, you can no longer ask for payment. This law applies only to loans you have made to other Israelites. Foreigners will still have to pay back what you have loaned them. ⁴⁻⁶No one in Israel should ever be poor. The LORD your God is giving you this land, and he has promised to make you very successful, if you obey his laws and teachings that I'm giving you today. You will lend money to many nations, but you won't have to borrow. You will rule many nations, but they won't rule you. ⁷⁻¹⁰After the LORD your God gives land to each of you, there may be poor Israelites in the town where you live. If there are, then don't be mean and selfish with your money. Instead, be kind and lend them what they need. Be careful! Don't say to yourself, “Soon it will be the seventh year, and then I won't be able to get my money back.” It would be horrible for you to think that way and to be so selfish that you refuse to help the poor. They are your relatives, and if you don't help them, they may ask the LORD to decide whether you have done wrong. And he will say that you are guilty. You should be happy to give the poor what they need, because then the LORD will make you successful in everything you do. ¹¹There will always be some Israelites who are poor and needy. That's why I am commanding you to be generous with them.

- *How good would it be if the opening 2 verses were acted upon today?*
- *Why do you think this form of credit isn't available in our culture?*
- *Why do rich people look down upon poor people?*
- *What do we think having read verse 11?*
- *Putting everything together, what do we take away from today's study?*
- *What challenges do you feel from our discussion?*
- *What will you share with others?*