

Have you ever found yourself with too little cash and too many bills? The stress, worry, and restrictions that being unable to pay your bills brings can be simply overwhelming. Do you know this feeling?

- Have you received call upon call from debt collectors?
- Have you ever had to wonder what the landlord was going to do when your rent didn't make it on time?
- Have you ever had anything repossessed because you couldn't make the loan payment?
- Have you ever had car problems and you had no idea how you were going to pay to get your vehicle fixed?

Situations like these are simply no fun. Being in debt is like being locked up in chains. You can struggle and fight the chains, but they are stronger than you and they keep you tied up. You no longer have the freedom to do things you want to do because you are chained to your debt. You have become a prisoner to all the money you owe. Debt can lock you into your job, your apartment, and even a relationship. If you have a job you hate and another position opens up but the money is slightly less, you may not be able to make the move even if you really want to. Your debt closes off options and destroys your freedom. These are not uncommon situations—and it is because debt steals our choices. Many people believe that being able to borrow money is freeing, but in fact, you are just putting the shackles on and accepting the chains that debt brings.

What about You?

Have you ever wanted to do something important and not had the money to do it? Or have you ever had an emergency and not had the funds to cover it? Have you had to cancel or delay plans because your debt was too much? Do you feel like the monster of debt is eating you up? You can get rid of the chains of debt and be freer to make decisions without the monster of debt hunting you down and devouring you. But it isn't easy. Getting rid of the chains of debt is not complicated; it is just hard work.

First Step: Stop Spending Money You Don't Have.

The first step to getting rid of your debt is to stop spending money you don't have. Here are a few examples:

- Do you smoke? Quit. Get rid of two monsters at the same time.
- Do you have cable TV? Cut the cord. TV is wasting hours that you could be spending working to get out of debt, plus it costs money.
- Can you take public transportation to work? People often underestimate the cost of owning a car. But with gas, maintenance, and insurance, the price goes up drastically. If you are in a city or town with good transportation, get rid of the car.
- Do you really need the Oreos or chips? Cut your grocery bill down. That junk food really adds up, and it adds to your health care costs, too.
- Do you eat out? Stop. When you make your own meals, you are basically hiring yourself to do a job. You become the cook and the waiter, and the money that would have been used to pay them stays in your pocket.

Second Step: Make More Money

Okay, this is another no-brainer. Of course you want to make more money. The trick is, make more money AND pay off the debt you have. More money with less spending SHOULD EQUAL less debt. And less debt equals more freedom.

It is really easy to say, "Go make more money!" It isn't very easy to actually do, but it isn't complicated, either. Go find a second job wherever you can, such as:

- Start detailing people's cars or cleaning houses on the weekend.
- If you decide to keep your car, go and deliver food or sign up to be a part of a ride-sharing service.
- Find someone who needs yard work and go get it done. Let people know you are looking for work to pay off your debt and then take what they give you.
- If you have kids you need to watch at home, try to make money at home. Start a babysitting business. Help people list items online and take a percentage when it sells. Or take your kids with you and have them help clean cars or houses.

Third Step: Pay Off Your Debt.

That money you will be earning from extra jobs WILL BE a temptation to spend. Remember, though, you are having to work hard to get free of those chains that are binding you. And if you make the decision to do what is hard now, you won't have that monster hanging over you for the next decade.

Fourth Step: Repeat One Through Three.

Do that until you are done—even when it is hard and obnoxious and you just want to quit. Do it anyway. It is easy to spend money and much harder to pay it back.

Spending more money than you have becomes a habit, and that's what brought the monster into your life. Change the behavior that got you here, and SLAY that monster for good! SLAY THAT MONSTER!

Resources:

1. Houston, Melissa. "5 Strategies to Eliminate Personal Debt and End 2020 on a Higher Note." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 29 Sept. 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/melissahouston/2020/09/29/5-strategies-to-eliminate-personal-debt-and-end-2020-on-a-higher-note/?sh=6cd02a936e9a. Accessed 11/26/2020
2. Ramsey Solutions. "27 Ways to Get out of Debt." Ramsey Solutions, Ramsey Solutions, 24 Sept. 2021, www.daveramsey.com/blog/ways-to-get-out-of-debt. Accessed 11/26/2020
3. Ramsey Solutions. "How to Pay off Debt." Ramsey Solutions, Ramsey Solutions, 24 Sept. 2021, www.daveramsey.com/blog/how-to-pay-off-debt. Accessed 11/26/2020