

Proverbs 22:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

Analysis

The rich 'ruleth over the poor,' and the 'borrower is servant to the lender.' These are observational statements about economic reality. Debt creates obligation and servitude. While not explicitly condemning lending or borrowing, this proverb warns of debt's relational consequences. Reformed theology values economic freedom as aspect of Christian liberty. Debt reduces freedom and creates dependency. This counsels caution in borrowing and encourages contentment with what we have rather than enslaving ourselves through debt.

Historical Context

Debt slavery was common in ancient economies. Those unable to repay debts could be forced into servitude (2 Kings 4:1). This proverb's warning reflected harsh economic realities of the ancient world.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Are you in financial bondage to lenders? How does debt limit your freedom to serve God?
2. What changes in lifestyle or spending might be necessary to avoid or escape debt's servitude?
3. How does this proverb inform Christian perspectives on consumer debt and financial stewardship?

Interlinear Text

לֹא וְשָׁ	מְלֹוה:	בְּרִשָּׁ יִם	וְעַזְבָּד	וְמַשְׁׁ וְלָ	בְּרִשָּׁ יִם	וְעַזְבָּד	לֹא וְשָׁ
The rich	over the poor	ruleth	is servant	and the borrower	to the lender		
H6223	H7326	H4910	H5650	H3867			H376

מַלְוָה:

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 18:23 (Parallel theme): The poor useth intreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

Proverbs 22:22 (Parallel theme): Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate:

Proverbs 22:16 (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

James 2:6 (Parallel theme): But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

2 Kings 4:1 (Parallel theme): Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

