

## **Guest Opinion Article Published in the Loveland Reporter-Herald 12/28/2024**

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A gift for future generations.

In recent weeks, the daily drama around budgeting, fiscal responsibility, and economic well-being have intensified in national, state and local governments. Chronic deficit budgeting has finally emerged as a significant concern. Many view these issues through a purely economic lens, it can be argued that chronic deficit budgeting is fundamentally a spiritual issue as the allocation of resources often poses profound moral questions. The choices made in budgeting not only reflect financial strategy but also reveal the ethical values held by those in power. When governments engage in chronic deficit spending, they undermine economic stability and neglect the moral obligation to promote the common good.

At its core, fiscal responsibility echoes a deeper spiritual truth: stewardship. In the biblical context, stewardship is about taking care of resources entrusted to us by God. In the parable of the talents

(Matthew 25:14-30), Jesus illustrates the expectation that each servant responsibly manages whatever is given to them. The servant who buries his talent instead of investing it is reprimanded. This narrative highlights the importance of using resources wisely, not just for individual gain but for the benefit of all.

Debt devalues financial resources as debt payments are a drain on revenue impacting the true cost of future expenditures. Debt is the gift from the government that just keeps taking! Further, debt jeopardizes financial health and reflects an aversion to accountability to make sacrifices for the greater good.

Debt is a recurring theme in scripture, often associated with enslavement or hindrance. Proverbs 22:7 reads, "The borrower is slave to the lender." This enslavement to debt can hinder future generations' opportunities, limiting their potential and freedom. The moral implications of burdening the populace with debt are profound and long-lasting.

Overspending can also lead to social injustice. In Micah 6:8, it is stated, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Governments must pursue policies that are just and be in a financial position to fund.

Spending prioritization is making choices that align with a set of values. Governments hold a responsibility to ensure that public funds are allocated in a manner that serves the best interests of society. When leaders fail to consider the moral implications of their spending decisions, they risk neglecting the needs of their constituents, particularly the most vulnerable.

What we must do to reduce the financial drama and begin working on addressing the problem. First, there must be a renewed call for stewardship that adheres to the divine principle illustrated in Matthew 25:14-30, the Parable of the Talents. Governments, as institutions of authority, hold a similar responsibility in managing public funds. Overspending without accountability can be seen as neglecting this sacred duty.

Furthermore, Romans 13:8 implores, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another.” This verse highlights that love—an essential spiritual principle—should be the basis for all financial transactions. Chronic deficit budgeting reflects a departure from this command by prioritizing self-interest over communal responsibility. Saying no to instant gratification is required otherwise future generations will be enslaved.

Fostering a culture of transparency, honesty, and cooperation within societal budgeting processes can restore faith and trust within communities. Ephesians 4:25 reminds us to “put away falsehood” and speak truthfully. In budgetary contexts, this translates to open discussions about resource allocation and recognizing the collective responsibility of both leaders and constituents.

Chronic deficit budgeting is not merely a fiscal issue; it is a moral one. Scripture provides timeless wisdom on stewardship, justice, and the consequences of foolishness. Leaders are called to act responsibly and justly for the welfare of the people. Recognizing the ethical dimensions of government spending can guide us toward a more sustainable future. In this endeavor, it is vital for citizens to hold their leaders accountable, fostering a culture of responsibility and integrity in governance. Balancing the budget, reducing debt, practicing moral prioritization might just be the solution the problem demands as the current process is not. And, doing so might be one of the best gifts we can give to future generations.

