

Case Studies

This is the all-too-common story of a young couple that gets their life priorities wrong. It is the kind of thing that faithful young people can decide to prevent before it happens. Read the problem and discuss the questions.

A Matter of Life or Debt A Case Study in Life Priorities

Problem

Brother and Sister X are in their mid-thirties. He is a successful businessman and she works in the health care field. Their combined salaries come to well over six figures (way over \$100,000 a year). They are also in deep financial trouble.

After their daughter was born, Bro. and Sis. X decided to move out of their modest apartment and buy a house. They wanted to live in a nice neighborhood, and the house they bought turned out to cost more than they really wanted to pay. Their monthly mortgage payments are now almost twice what they used to pay for rent.

The house needed a facelift. The kitchen was outdated and the appliances were old, so thousands of dollars were borrowed to modernize the kitchen. Meanwhile, hundreds more were spent eating at restaurants while the kitchen work was being done. To this was added other redecorating costs throughout the house, some new furniture, a home entertainment system, and a large new deck in the back – all bought on credit.

Bro. X has to meet business clients around town so he decided to get a more impressive car. The new car added a few hundred more to the monthly bills. Then, all of a sudden, the price of heating oil went up and their utility bills saw a sharp increase.

Today Bro. and Sis. X are tens of thousands of dollars in debt, not counting their mortgage and car payments. They have “maxed” several credit cards and cannot even meet the minimum monthly payments on some of them.

The debt just gets deeper and deeper. It is possible they will face foreclosure on their home. Bro. and Sis. X quarrel bitterly with each other about who is responsible for the mess they are in.

Questions

- 1 – Can Christadelphian families get themselves into financial problems like this? Is it justifiable?

- 2 – What do you think are some of the reasons that people get into financial problems the way Bro. and Sis. X did? Does it speak well for their priorities in life? Does it speak well for their understanding of Bible principles? What principles?
- 3 – Identify as many things as possible in this story that indicate that Bro. and Sis. X are not facing life or themselves realistically, let alone faithfully.
- 4 – What have Bro. and Sis. X done to their spiritual life? How do you know? How does Matthew 13:22 apply in their case?
- 5 – How can any Christadelphian avoid getting into a mess like this? (Here are a few Bible references that help: Proverbs 8:18-21; 11:4; 11:28; 13:7; 23:4-5; Luke 12:15; 14:28-30; 16:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11. Can you think of others?)
- 6 – What would you do to get out of a financial mess like this? What *wouldn't* you do?
- 7 – What alternatives did Bro. and Sis. X have to:
 - a. Purchasing the expensive house they did?
 - b. Borrowing thousands to remodel the kitchen?
 - c. Running up restaurant bills?
 - d. Redecorating and purchasing expensive things on credit?
 - e. Getting a fancier car?
 - f. Being caught off guard by the rise in oil prices?
 - g. Getting additional credit cards and “maxing” them (i.e., using the cards to their credit limit)?
 - h. Quarreling over who is at fault for the mess they are in?
- 8 – Why do you think Bro. and Sis. X did not choose some of these alternatives in the first place?
- 9 – Do you think it is possible for you to get into a financial difficulty like this? Why?
- 10 – Based on this case study, identify:
 - a. One thing that contributes to bad decision making.
 - b. Two principles of good decision making.