

Rebuilding *for* God's People

*A Study of Nehemiah
and 2 Corinthians*



Lesson 6: Jody Harrington



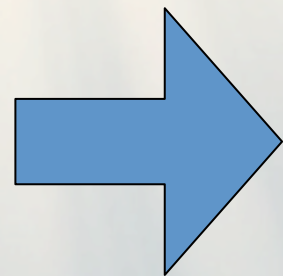
We wait in hope for the Lord;
He is our help and shield.
In Him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in His holy name.

Psalm 33: 20-21



Concern (Ch 1)

Construction (Ch 2–3)



Conflict (Ch 4–6)

Consecration (Ch 7–12)

Cleansing (Ch13)

Outline of Nehemiah



Economic Meltdown Threatens Rebuilding

- FAMINE
- INFLATION
- TAXES
- WORKER SHORTAGE
- USURY

NEHEMIAH 5





Following the Money



CAUSES OF THE FAMINE

- Population increase in area due to rebuilding
- Food supply inadequate for new demand
- Food costs increase
- Area-wide drought



INFLATION CAUSED BY IMPERIAL MONETARY POLICIES

- Taxes were paid in gold and silver to the king
- Coins were melted down into bullion and then stored, taking it out of circulation in the economy
- Scarcity of coined money caused inflation
- Persians acquired land and took it out of production, contributing further to rise in price of agricultural goods.



TAXES

- Exorbitant taxation and inflation forced many to mortgage their land to pay taxes.
- Imperial tax collectors kept part of the taxes to pay themselves.



Worker Shortage

- Members of families used as collateral when debtor unable to repay loan and interest.
- Worked for creditors instead of on family land.
- Fewer workers were available to work the land and produce food, further contributing to the food shortage.



USURY

- Charging of interest on loans not condemned in the Bible, but profiting at the expense of the unfortunate is.
- Interest could be charged on a loan to non-Jews:
Deut.23:20
- Jews were not to charge interest on loans to poor Jews:
Exodus 22:25
- Interest being charged was “the hundredth part”= one percent/month.



Based on Mosaic Law

Return usurious interest to the poor

Restore their land

Refrain from taking interest

Nehemiah's Economic Stimulus



And most importantly--personal example

“Moreover I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let US stop this taking of interest.”

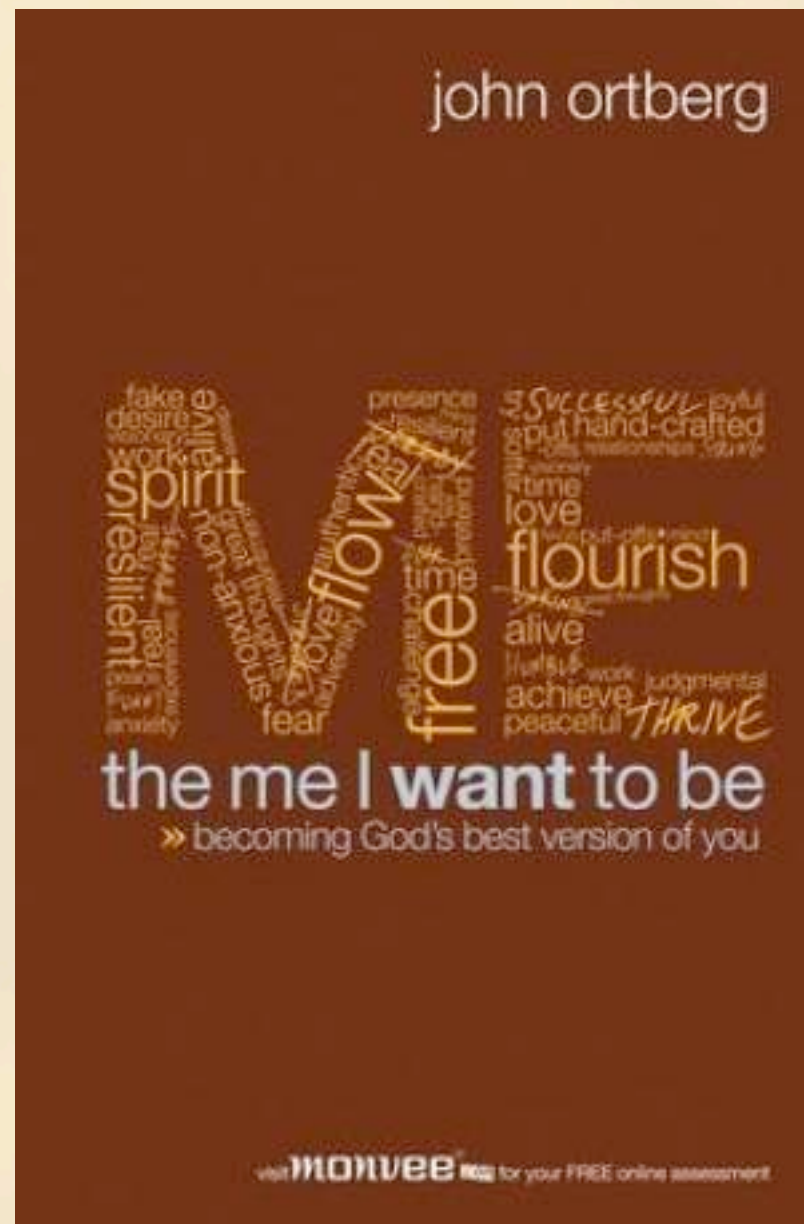
Nehemiah 5: 10 (NRSV)



“Why do you see the speck in your neighbor’s eye but do not notice the log in your own eye? “

Matthew 7: 3, Luke 6: 41





How self-serving bias blinds us to our sin

from chapter 14





Mistakes were made
(but not by me)



Fundamental Attribution Error

Bad behavior in you = your flawed character

Bad behavior in me = extraordinarily trying circumstances



CONFIRMATION BIAS

- Paying attention to experts who agree with our opinions.
- Ignoring or discounting contrary evidence.
- We connive with each other not to see sin.

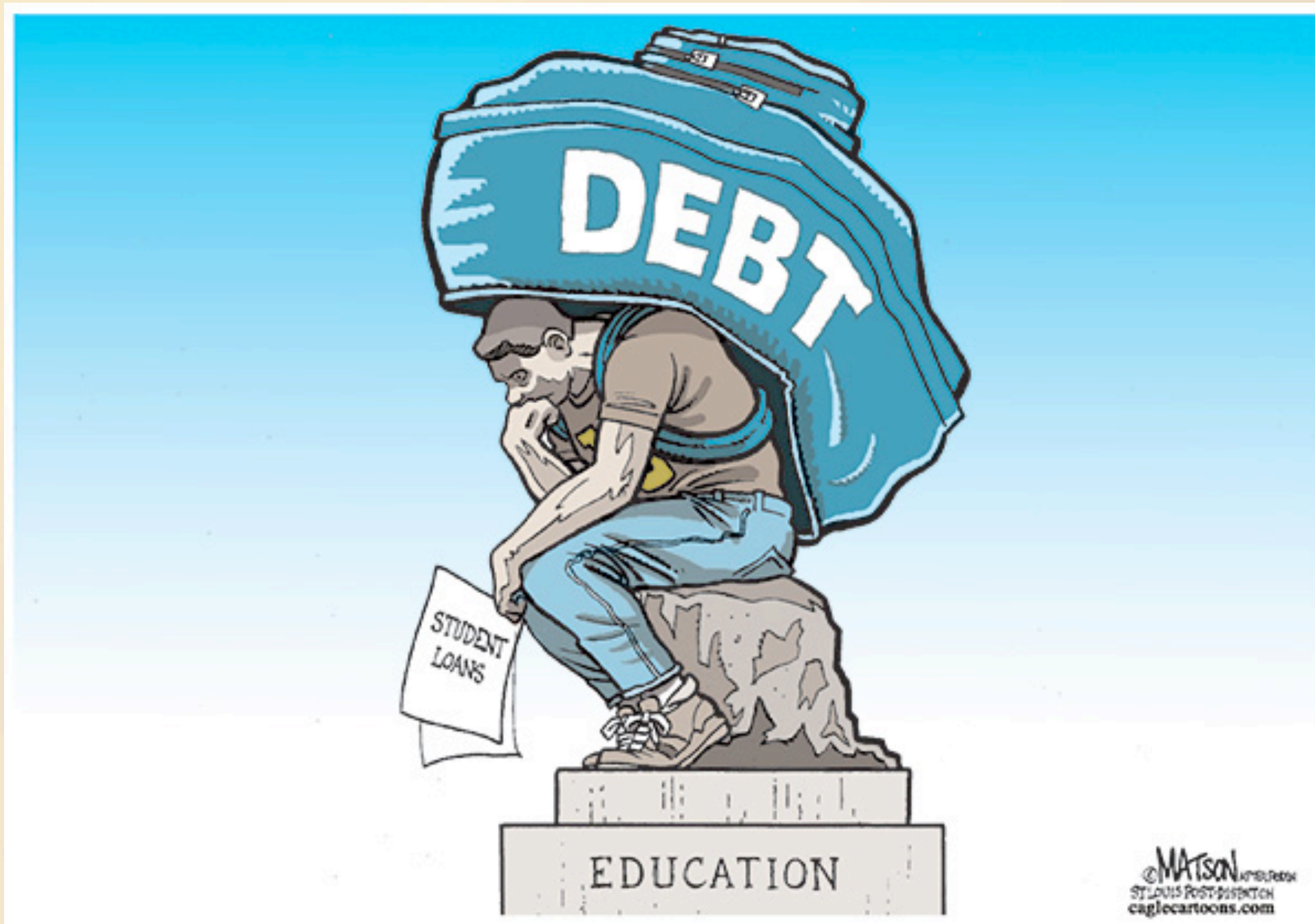


But who can detect their own errors? Psalm 19: 12a



A CONTEMPORARY NEHEMIAH





Applying the Lesson in Your Life

What beeping alarm have you chosen to ignore?

Is this beeping a Holy Nudge?

What should you do about it?



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