

Writing Your Money Autobiography

The purpose of this exercise is for you to have the opportunity to reflect on your habits and attitudes regarding money, as well as the connection between money and faith in your life. Your responses are private and will not be graded! (God knows anyway.)

Focus on just one question each day. Responses may be just a few sentences, or much more as your time and inclination allow. Write as honestly and freely as possible. Be sure to pay as much or more attention to your feelings as to thoughts. You may choose to begin or close with prayer.

1. What is your earliest memory of money? Of earning money? Of purchasing something with money you earned yourself? Of losing money?
2. What is your happiest memory in connection with money?
3. What is your unhappiest money memory? Did you worry about money as a child? As a teenager?
4. Growing up, who controlled the money in your household? What was their attitude toward money? Did the adults in your home view money matters in the same way?
5. As a child, what were you intentionally taught about money? Who taught you? What did you learn about money indirectly in your household?
6. Were there money rituals or traditions in your household? Are there rituals in your household today?
7. Were there rich people in your community? Poor people? How did you know? Did you feel poor, rich or neither growing up?
8. What is your earliest recollection of money in the church? As a child, what rituals surrounded money in the church?
9. How is your view of money similar to or different from that of family members – parents, siblings, spouse, children?
10. Has money ever hindered a family relationship? If so, why? Has money ever hindered a friendship? If so, why?
11. If you ever lacked funds, how did you feel when someone helped you financially? How did you feel when you helped someone else financially?
12. How is your present financial health? What do you expect it to be in ten years? Twenty five years? Do you have a will?
13. What does “enough” mean to you?
14. Do you have any fears about money? What are they?
15. In what ways are you generous, conservative or stingy? Do you treat? Tip? Do you tend to be on the giving or receiving end?

16. Do you feel guilty about your prosperity?
17. Would you say that you are a good manager of money? In what ways are you a poor manager of money?
18. What does the Bible teach about money?
19. How does your Christian faith influence your attitudes toward money? Your daily practices with money?
20. In what ways does your relationship with money affect your faith?
21. What money issues do you think are unique to the church? How has being a member of the church impacted your attitudes toward money?
22. What do you value most? How is your use of money influenced by what you value?
23. How do you determine how much money you will give to your church? To charitable organizations? What percentage of your income do you give? (If you're not sure, do the math now.) How do you feel about your giving?
24. Do you have any compulsive behaviors with money? Saving? Spending? Gambling? Accumulating? Giving?
25. What kind of legacy would you like to leave when you die? Of your worldly possessions, what would you leave to whom and why?
26. When has giving brought you joy? When did your giving bring obvious joy to another?
27. How do you feel about indebtedness? Welfare? Begging? Do you keep close track of how much money you have? Do you judge other people based on the way they manage their money?
28. What is the most difficult decision you have had to make regarding money? Where is there secrecy regarding money in your life?
29. What was your attitude toward giving five years ago? What questions did you have then? How have things changed in the past five years?
30. In what ways do you feel your relationship with money is a spiritual issue? What does it mean to you to be a good steward?

Resources: *Variations of the money autobiography concept can be found through these resources.*

Ronsvalle, John & Sylvia, with Milo Kaufman. At Ease: Discussing Money and Values in Small Groups. Alban Institute, 1998. (Recommended for possible use in your congregation.)

The Faith & Money Network (formerly Ministry of Money) - <http://www.faithandmoneynetwork.org> (Offers weekend retreats on faith and money issues.)

The Congregational Resource Guide (collaboration of the Alban Institute & Indianapolis Center for Congregations) - <http://www.congregationalresources.org/elca/index.htm>

United Methodist Foundation of New England - <http://www.umfne.org/Stewardshipautobio.pdf>

Unitarian Universalist Association - http://www.uua.org/documents/stew-dev/apf/money_autobiography.pdf

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship - <http://www.tens.org/docs/teaching-resources/AMoneyAutobiographyOutline.pdf>