

Living with Money

Overview

What is *Living with Money*?

Living with Money is an ecumenical adult education program for congregations that examines the subject of money—for persons of all backgrounds, races and economic status.

Living with Money challenges participants to examine money in the context of their Christian faith. We are beginning to understand that spiritual growth often starts with coming to terms with the myriad issues of money.

Living with Money is not a stewardship or fund raising program. It is a resource that enables participants to talk openly about the often-taboo subject of money within the context of a trusting community of faith.

The Importance of This Course for Individuals

Like it or not money permeates our lives, from infancy to death. It shapes our opportunities, colors our relationships, and defines our status.

Yet rarely do we talk about money, let alone reflect on the role that it plays in our lives. We live with money every day; we just don't talk about it. We are left adrift to react to the impact of money alone, whether we have little of it, or a lot.

How do we discover the power and impact of money in our lives? How do we avoid allowing money to take over our every decision? How much money is enough for us? How do we deal with debt,

the growing economic disparity, or inherited wealth? What are our personal values about money?

Living with Money encourages participants to examine their personal money life by responding to these and other questions in the context of their Christian faith. The goal is to help individuals understand the influence of money in their lives and to achieve a balanced, wholesome money life.

The Importance of This Course for Churches

There is as much conflict about money in the church as in the lives of its members. The church courts the rich for support, then prophesies against them for their prosperity. People of wealth are often called blessed; yet Jesus instructs us to give away all that we have and follow him.

Clergy generally do not know how to talk about money in their congregations. In a recent study of clergy in all 50 states, money was named as the subject with which they need the most assistance.

Next to idolatry, money is the second most mentioned subject in the Bible. Yet what does the Bible really say about money?

Living with Money will liberate the taboo subject of money from its hiding place and allow healthy, open dialog about money to emerge. You will be amazed at how eager members of your congregation are to talk about this subject.

Available from United Church of Christ Resources

1-800-325-7061

\$125.00 per set

SCI.WM

A Money Autobiography

What has formed your feelings about money?

What is your earliest memory about money?
What is your happiest memory in connection with money? What is the unhappiest?
What attitudes did your parents and other family members have about money?
Did you feel rich, poor or neither when you were growing up? Did you worry about money?
Where did your money come from as a child? (Allowance, jobs, ask parents for it)
Who gave you guidance on how to spend money, save money, or give to church?

What are your money values?

In what ways are you a saver or a spender? In what ways are you generous or stingy?
Although money can't buy happiness, what are some things it can buy that bring happiness?
What do you like best about money? Least?
What things in life are worth money? In what ways does your lifestyle reflect the importance of these things?
Do you think men and women look at money differently?
Which of the following words communicate your feelings about money? Why?
power security hope love pleasure
prestige dirty value anxiety identity
a tool freedom evil comfort fun
Reflect on a time you have given to meet the needs of another. How did you feel? Reflect on a time when you were on the receiving end of a gift. How did you feel?

Money Management

What ways do you see yourself as a good or bad manager of money?
How do you feel about talking about your finances with others? Why do you feel that way?
Do you use credit cards? Do you pay the monthly balance in full? How do you feel about credit?
How much do you wish you had in the bank/invested? How did you arrive at that figure? How close is this amount to what you have saved?
How much money do you give to church and charity? Do you tithe? How do you decide how much money to give? How do you decide where to give?
Do you have a personal budget? Why? How do you make decisions about what to spend, what to save and when to give?
What are your greatest financial concerns? How have you made decisions concerning retirement, insurance, drafting a will, etc. If you have not made these decisions, why not?

Lifestyle Questions

Does the fact that 2/3 of the earth's population live below the poverty line affect your attitude about money?
How do you respond when people approach you on the street asking for money? How do you respond to phone or mail solicitations for charitable contributions?
Which of these words best describe you and why?
affluent comfortable average poor
balanced struggling wealthy working class
What kind of legacy would you like to leave when you die? Of all your worldly possessions, what would you leave to whom, and why?
One strong theme of both the Jewish and Christian faith is that wealth is given for the common good of the community. Do you feel that anyone has a legitimate claim to your money?
How does your relationship with money affect your faith? How does your faith affect your relationship with money?
How is your relationship with money a spiritual issue? What does it mean to be a good steward?

What is Your Money Style?

Style	Motto	Description	What Money Means
SECURITY	"A penny saved is a penny earned"	True Savers - Often have a difficult time spending money on themselves and others. Save for "a rainy day" but many not enjoy the sunny days. Risk-adverse, worry about money, tend to lack spontaneity with money.	Having money means Security
REWARD	"All work and no play make Jack a dull boy."	Stockpile money, then spend it quickly. Often act out of frustration and stress, with a strong feeling of deprivation. Alternate between rigorous savings and rigorous spending, so are often in debt.	Money means reward for doing without.
HAPPINESS	"Diamonds are a girl's best friend"	Enjoy using money to bring pleasure to self and others. Difficulty with saving and setting priorities. Money is the means to happiness; every day is a sunny day and every day has some occasion to spend money.	Money means happiness.
SUCCESS	"The one who dies with the most money wins"	Focus on the accumulation of money, the more money saved, the better. Feel empty and not alive if not making large amounts of money. Risk oriented and driven, money is a measure of self-worth; the accumulation of money becomes an obsession.	Money means success.
PROBLEM	"Money is the root of all evil"	Would like to avoid dealing with money altogether if possible. Don't know how much money they have, or how much they spend, and don't want to know. Feel inadequate in dealing with money and view money as a necessary evil.	Money brings problems.
BALANCED	"Money is a means to an end and not the end itself"	Healthy balance of all styles, but no extreme in one. Sees money in perspective - as part of life. Money is a means of transaction, a medium of exchange, but money also has the potential of good or evil. How money is used reflects the value of the user. Take money seriously, but do not dwell on it.	Money is a both a necessary commodity and a constructive tool. It is both transaction and opportunity.

How do I write a Money Autobiography?

The format of this money autobiography is designed for a month of reflection – four weeks each with a unique theme and daily questions for reflection. However, you may choose to reflect on these questions in a more condensed format. In either case, it is highly recommended that you create a money autobiography in which to record your thoughts, reflections, feelings, and observations. Many people return to their money autobiography months and years after the initial experience.

Money Autobiography Questions

Week 1	Formative Questions
Day 1	What is your earliest memory of money?
Day 2	What is your happiest memory in connection with money?
Day 3	What is your unhappiest money memory?
Day 4	What attitudes did your parents and other family members have about money?
Day 5	Did you feel rich, poor, or neither growing up? Did you worry about money when you were a child? a teenager?
Day 6	Where did your money come from? (Did you work for it, receive an allowance, have your parents buy you things, etc.?)
Day 7	Who governed how you related to money – how you spent money, saved money, gave money to charity or church?

Week 2 Values Questions

- Day 1 In what ways are you a spender? A saver? In what ways are you generous? Stingy?
- Day 2 Although money can't buy happiness, what are some of the things money can buy that bring happiness?
- Day 3 What do you like best about money? What do you like least about money?
- Day 4 What things in life are worth more than money? In what ways does your lifestyle reflect the relative importance of these things to money?
- Day 5 How has your gender influenced your thinking about money? What differences do you observe in the way men and women relate to money?
- Day 6 Which of the following words best communicates your attitudes and feelings about money? Why?
- Money is...
- | | | | |
|------------|----------|---------|---------|
| power | security | hope | love |
| pleasure | prestige | dirty | value |
| anxiety | identity | a tool | freedom |
| protection | evil | comfort | fun |
- Day 7 Reflect on times when you have given to meet the needs of another. How did you feel? Reflect on times when you were on the receiving end of a gift? How did you feel?

Week 3 Management Questions

- Day 1 In what ways are you a good manager of money? In what ways are you a poor manager of money?
- Day 2 How do you feel about talking about your finances with other people? Why do you feel this way?
- Day 3 Do you use credit cards? Do you pay the monthly balances in full? How does buying on credit make you feel? Why?
- Day 4 How much money do you wish you had in the bank/invested? How did you arrive at this figure? How close is this amount to what you actually have?
- Day 5 How much money do you give to church and charity? Do you tithe? How do you decide how much to give? How do you decide where to give?
- Day 6 Do you have a personal budget? Why? How do you make decisions about what to spend, what to save, and what to give?
- Day 7 What are your greatest financial concerns? How have you made decisions concerning retirement, insurance, drafting a will, etc? If you have not made these decisions, why not?

Week 4 Lifestyle Questions

- Day 1 Does the fact that 2/3 of the earth's population lives below the U.S. poverty line affect your attitude toward money? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Day 2 How do you feel when people approach you for money on the street? How do you feel when you receive phone solicitations for charitable contributions?
- Day 3 Which of the following words best describe you and why?
- | | | |
|----------|---------------|--------------|
| affluent | comfortable | average |
| poor | struggling | wealthy |
| balanced | working class | impoverished |
- Day 4 What kind of legacy would you like to leave when you die? Of your worldly possessions, what would you leave to whom, and why?
- Day 5 One strong theme of both Jewish and Christian faith is that wealth is given for the common good of the whole community? What does this mean to you? Does anyone else have a legitimate claim to your money and possessions other than you?
- Day 6 In what ways does your relationship with money affect your faith? In what ways does your faith affect your relationship with money?
- Day 7 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?

How do I use a money autobiography?

Answering these questions for reflection is just one way to begin to reflect deeply on the place of money and material possessions in your life. The money autobiography is a tool for your benefit. No one else needs to see what you have written; however, many people have found that sharing the autobiography with a close friend, counselor, pastor, or teacher is particularly beneficial. Many of these questions are ideal for small-group discussions, Sunday school class discussions, or covenant group conversations. An objective set of eyes may see what we do not, and often the next, deeper level of exploration comes through the incisive and insightful questions of another person. Your decision to share this information is left to your discretion.