

# My Money Story part 2 of 2

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We all have a Money Story, no matter how much we love or hate money, and no matter how much of it we have. In part 1 we learned that discovering our own Money Stories helps us to become aware of how our experiences have shaped us. It gives us **permission to be who we are**.



**Sharing our stories-** Learning and then sharing Money Stories is a remarkable way of helping husbands and wives and others in close personal relationships to explore their different approaches to money. It can resolve some of the tensions that money can bring. It can be helpful to discuss the different priorities or attitudes we have towards money. Then we know why our husband hates opening bills, or why our wife always keeps cash on her even though most places take card; she'd hate to be caught short. We understand why our brother insists on picking up the restaurant bill or why we, ourselves, never discuss our salary with our parents. We begin to see why it was much harder to sign on than we expected, and why we feel we should be seen to donate so much to charity. Our Money Stories hold the key.

**What the Bible tells us-** Money Stories help us understand one of the most challenging Bible stories about money. Let's look at the story of **The Rich Official, Luke 18:18-25 (The Message version)**

*One day one of the local officials asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to deserve eternal life?" Jesus said, "Why are you calling me good? No one is good—only God. You know the commandments, don't you? No illicit sex, no killing, no stealing, no lying, honour your father and mother." He said, "I've kept them all for as long as I can remember." When Jesus heard that, he said, "Then there's only one thing left to do: Sell everything you own and give it away to the poor. You will have riches in heaven. Then come, follow me." This was the last thing the official expected to hear. He was very rich and became terribly sad. He was holding on tight to a lot of things and not about to let them go. Seeing his*

*reaction, Jesus said, “Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who have it all to enter God’s kingdom? I’d say it’s easier to thread a camel through a needle’s eye than get a rich person into God’s kingdom.”*

How could a rich and religious man not do what simple fishermen did: leave everything to follow Jesus? This young man is not the hoarder in barns, the prodigal playboy, or one who disregards the poor in Luke’s other stories (Luke 12:13-21; 15:11-32; 16:19-31). He has kept the law from childhood, yet he walks away from Jesus with a broken heart, knowing full well what he is leaving behind. Alongside faith his Money Story is shaping his attitudes and ultimately compromising his faith.

Did he learn early on that wealth was a sure sign of blessing? Did family wealth isolate him from his community or make him hard of heart towards the poor? Did he come to believe that his identity and status lay in his wealth? We don’t know. But what we do know is that he is the only person in the gospels to turn down a direct invitation to follow Jesus. His Money Story was so powerful it even took priority over his faith. We mustn’t let our hidden money messages and inherited attitudes come between us and following Jesus.

**Over a period of time, consider the following questions and maybe do this exercise with a friend or partner.**

1. What are your earliest memories of money as a child? Are they funny or sad? Does they make you angry, resentful, or grateful?
2. Was money talked about at home or was it a taboo subject? Was money a cause of anxiety to you as a child? Does one memory stand out for you?
3. Did you have pocket money? Did you earn it or was it given to you?
4. Did you work before leaving school? A Saturday job? A paper round? What did you like to spend your money on?
5. What was your first job when you left school? How much did you earn? Do you remember what you spent the first week’s wages on?
6. Have you ever been given money? How did that make you feel?
7. In a relationship (a marriage, with a friend, or a sibling for example) do/did you and your partner have similar or different attitudes to money? What are/were the causes of tension and disagreement? How were they resolved?
8. What have you heard in church about money? Has church been important in shaping your Money Story?
9. Excluding a house, think of one big item you have bought. What was it and how did buying it make you feel?
10. Have you ever regretted buying something? What made you do it?

### **A Prayer for Money Stories**

**Loving Father thank you for all that you have given me. All that I am and all that I have is a gift from you. Please help me to remember this and to follow your Son Jesus Christ. Help me to understand how my Money Story affects how I live my life. If my attachment to money is preventing me a good relationship with you God, please give me strength to change. Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer. Amen.**