

FIND BREATHING ROOM WITH YOUR \$

#adulting



Guide's Workbook

Session 3

FIND
**BREATHING
ROOM** WITH
YOUR **\$**
#adulting

Session 3 **Needs Shmeeds**

#winning

Money, money, muh-NAY. MUHNAY. It's everywhere. But there's never a dime to spare. BTW, who even uses change anymore? You've done a great job so far. Keep gridnin'. Last session you and your partner eliminated at least one item from your 30% Want category — which wasn't easy. So how can you possibly save more? Certainly not by addressing your Needs, right? You NEED them. We know. But let's keep the conversation rolling and see what we can do.

Materials Needed:

- Play-Doh® (or pen and paper). Preferably Play-Doh® though.
- Ask participants to bring their completed Family Bill Tracker Take Home assignment
- Extra pens or pencils for participants who don't have one
- Participant Workbooks (includes Work From Home assignments)
- Ground Rules of Engagement sheet
- TV, Laptop, or iPad/tablet screen to play video links

Session 3 At A Glance

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check-in with budgeting tools being used, and any eliminated Wants | <input type="checkbox"/> Play Video 2: Comparing costs for Needs Values-Based Budgeting Questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play Video 1: Family of Origin | <input type="checkbox"/> Couples identify Needs they want to cut down costs on |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play-Doh activity: Sculpt earliest influential memory of money | <input type="checkbox"/> Group Discussion Questions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Discussion Questions | <input type="checkbox"/> Record Breathing Room gained |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Work From Home Assignments |

GOD'S MONEY STORY

God's Money story is simple. Everything is a gift from God and Christians are called to be good stewards of those gifts. We'll continue to reflect on "What does this mean for me?"

SECTION 1: GETTING STARTED (10 MINUTES)

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator Notes: Welcome the group, ask how their weeks went, etc. Once everyone gets situated, you can start asking about the Work From Home assignments (see questions below). Couples can write down their answers on their worksheet.

Section Description: Check in on 50/30/20 budgets, Family Bill Tracker, and whichever budgeting app you've decided to use. Was it easier than you thought to make a budget? Harder?

Ground rules reminder:

Facilitator Notes: Remind the group of the Ground Rules of Engagement. You don't need to read through the rules again, but remind the group to keep them in mind during your discussion time together. We recommend printing out the Ground Rules and placing them in a location where the group can see them.

Which budgeting tool did you and your spouse choose? How has it been cutting out Wants? How successful at getting to 30% were you?

In this session, we're going to take a dive into our families of origin and the households we grew up in. This will help us gain awareness. Fortunately, there's a long-standing biblical precedent for how our families and households are all part of God's plans for the world.

All throughout Scripture, the people of God operated in a barter economy. They traded and sold in a system of give and take. This economy was a community of people who sought the distribution of goods and services with integrity and creativity. Everyone contributed their portion. Seems far-fetched nowadays, doesn't it? But it's true. Back then, business was a sacred, ancient profession, and today we're invited to continue in that tradition with trustworthy and productive relationships.

Scripture speaks of shalom. A future state and time of wholeness, completeness, and peace that writers of Scripture sometimes called "a new heaven and a new earth." To describe this new reality, the prophet Isaiah spoke of Oikos, the Greek word for "household." Read Isaiah 65 for more context. Over the years, Oikos became the basis of a more modern word that we're all familiar with – economy. In essence, this means that a household plays a vital role in God's bringing shalom to the world through economic activities. It also means that you should eat more Oikos Greek yogurt. We'd like to thank Oikos™ for sponsoring this paragraph (no, not really).

Related to oikos, the biblical word for steward is oikonomos; someone who acts on behalf of their master to manage a household they don't own. The household, which includes our families, our work, and our homes, is an essential part of God's new heaven and new earth. And God is looking for stewards to bring shalom to the world.

SECTION 2: FAMILY OF ORIGIN (5 MINUTES)

GROUP VIDEO LESSON | DISCUSSION

Facilitator Notes: Play the video. The purpose of this section is to gain awareness around our family of origin as it relates to our relationship with money and our relationship with each other. Video script below.

Section Description: Here's the meat and potatoes for this week's session. By looking into our pasts, and the household we grew up in, we can learn about the experiences that shaped our perspective on money.

Play Video

<http://bit.ly/br-six>



Video script provided below for reference:

When we look back over the course of our lives we see the huge role money has played. When we explore the past we can see how our attitudes and assumptions about money and material possessions was developed. To help us do that, we're going to dive into our family of origin, the household we grew up in. Our parents were huge contributors to building the values we have today. In the area of money, as well as other things, this verse rings true, "Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their life" (Proverbs 22:6 NIV).

Growing up we learned more from our parents than we might be aware. Our families of origin are where we learned how to spend (or not spend) and save (or not save). Spoken or unspoken, we learned values around where and how to allocate our finances. For instance, buy used or buy new? Did you get an allowance because you did chores or just because or did you not get an allowance at all? We observed over the years how our parents talked about money with each other and with others outside of the household. Usually, these values are "caught" rather than "taught".

Were your parents big spenders? Or were they savers? Did your parents ever talk about money with you? Do they talk about money with you now? What about your in-laws' spending habits? Are they different from the ones you grew up with? Does your spouse have the same money traits as his/her parents? Except for the kingdom of God, Jesus speaks more about money than any other topic. More than prayer, than grace, than sin, even more than salvation, love, and forgiveness. Jesus teaches

and preaches about our relationship to money. Jesus understood just how critical it is for us to understand how we should relate to money because it affects so many areas of our lives.

Here are a couple things Jesus had to say about money:

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21 NIV).

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24).

“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48 NIV). This last verse speaks to stewardship, managing what has been entrusted to you. We all have been entrusted with relationships, people, possessions, responsibilities, jobs, and of course money. For many of us we rely on our instincts in how to handle those things. You probably found this to be true in your marriage. Not all of your instincts are necessarily good ones. Even if you had wonderful parents, they were still human and not perfect. So while you may have had a dad who was really attentive, he could have had a spending problem. While your mom may have watched every penny, maybe her practicality trumped her generosity. It takes effort, intention, and God’s guidance to unlearn some of the things that we’ve learned. Whether it’s how we respond when we’re stressed out about bills or how we manage a trip to the grocery store, our defaults from our family of origin (this is good news) can be reset.

Facilitator Notes: Transition to next section.

SECTION 3: SCULPTING YOUR PAST? (20 MINUTES)

GROUP ACTIVITY | SHARING

Facilitator Notes: As the leader, you can sculpt your story and share with the group first as an example. Walk couples through this activity. Instructions below. If you don’t have Play-Doh® available, you can provide pen and paper for couples to complete this activity.

Section Description: Time to play with Play-Doh®. Take a few minutes to channel your inner artisté. Or your five-year-old self. That works too. Ruminant on your past. You may be surprised by what you learn.

Now grab a tub of Play-Doh®.

Everyone. Seriously.

This is not per couple, either. Each person gets their own tub. If you don't have Play-Doh®, use pen and paper.

Take the Play-Doh® out and smell it. Take a good, loooong whiff. Remember that smell? Squeeze it until it mushes between your fingers. Yeah, there you go. While you mush, travel back to your childhood. Think about your earliest, most powerful memory of money. Once you've thought of it, use the Play-Doh® to sculpt something that represents that moment. It could be anything. You don't have to be Donatello – the Italian sculptor or the mutant turtle – to do so.

When your shape has taken shape, take turns showing off your sculptures and sharing the stories behind your memories. If you have pen and paper, draw your first memory and do the same thing.

SECTION 4: HOW'D THAT GO? (10 MINUTES)

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator Notes: After everyone is given the chance to share their earliest money memory, you can ask the following discussion questions below to the group. Give anyone who'd like to share the opportunity to.

Section Description: Let's discuss sculpting the past and follow-up with a little group chat.

Discussion Questions

Share your memory and sculpture.

1. In what ways did the experiences from your childhood impact how you relate to money as an adult?
2. Did how you were raised impact the roles you play in your relationship (spender, saver, breadwinner, etc.)?

YOUR MONEY STORY

Look within to align your values and spending needs with God's Money Story, so you can create your own money story informed by your faith, heart, and habits.

SECTION 5: COMPARISON IS THE THIEF OF JOY...OR IS IT? (5 MINUTES)

GROUP VIDEO LESSON | DISCUSSION

Facilitator Notes: Play the video about comparison and shopping around.

Section Description: Learning when it's actually a good thing to compare. Other companies and providers that is. Not ourselves. Stop it. Stop comparing yourselves. We want to increase breathing room, not get suffocated.

Play Video

<http://bit.ly/br-seven>



Video script provided below for reference:

My friend, Jeff, he says: Where comparison starts, contentment ends.

In other words, comparing ourselves to others is one of most devastating things we can do emotionally. Comparing ourselves to others leads to self-blaming and regret. Unfortunately there are more ways than ever to compare ourselves to others - financially and otherwise. We hope that your small group has been a comparison-free zone.

However, there is one place where we want to encourage you to compare. We encourage you to compare prices on the items you are paying for on a regular basis, especially the items in your must have category. You probably have at least one item that you might feel like could be cheaper.

Are you paying too much for car insurance?

For groceries?

For internet access?

For pet insurance on your 8 year old Iguana?

The good news about price wars is that they benefit us as consumers. But it's up to us to find the better deal. Automating your

payments and savings is a great idea - but it also means that when it's out of sight, it's out of mind - and it can be easy to lose track of payments that are on auto-pilot.

So, our invitation is to take a few minutes to find a better deal on the things you are already buying. We invite you to shop around and find a better deal.

Facilitator Notes: Transition to next section

SECTION 6: VALUES-BASED BUDGETING (15-20 MINUTES)

COUPLE BREAKOUT | ACTIVITY | DISCUSSION

Facilitator Notes: Introduce this activity to help couples find out what they really care about. What do they value as a couple?

Ask couples to take out their Family Bill Tracker (Session 2's homework) OR they can access their online budgeting app on their phones (if they decided to use one) to complete this activity. Have couples break out and discuss and answer the following questions together.

Section Description: Now that you have a budget, ask yourself if it totally reflects your values. You're spending all that money on artisan-roasted coffee, but is the milling and drying of raw, hand-picked beans at origin important to you? Maybe it is. Okay, let's talk about it.

1. What did your family spend money on this past year that seems wasteful? When you review your spending, does anything surprise you in a bad way? Maybe you spent \$500 on movie-theater date nights, but only remember two of the films. Or maybe you bought clothes you don't wear. Or maybe you're tired of us projecting hypotheticals on you. Just learn from your mistakes, whatever they are, and consider how you can avoid them this year.

1

What did your family spend money on this past year that seems wasteful?

2. What did your family spend money on that makes you feel joyful and proud? Did you regularly donate to a local charity? Maybe you ticked another country off your travel bucket list. Or bought plane tickets to visit your grandparents. Take note of the expenses that feel worth it and you wouldn't hesitate to do again.

2 What did you spend money on that makes you feel joyful and proud?

3. What does your family most value? Prioritize as much as you can. Hone in on the things you value most, like your relationship to God, family and friends, travel, or a meaningful hobby. Understand what brings you and your spouse the greatest fulfillment. Then make a big deal out of it.

3 What does your family most value?

4. Where would your family like to give more of its time and money? Identifying your priorities will create clarity. This helps you figure out where you can cut back on some Needs spending. A nice, big house is important if you value hosting, but it isn't as valuable if travel is at the top of your list. Dig in here. What's really important to you?

4 Where would your family like to give more time and money?

5. How can your family adjust spending to reflect these values? Okay, it's crunch time, folks. Look at your spending and run everything through your freshly articulated values filter. If your top priorities are God and family, consider reducing or eliminating spending that doesn't directly support your values. If an expenditure doesn't, is it really something you want to be spending money on? Be scrupulous.

5

How can your family adjust your spending to reflect those values?

SECTION 7: DOING WORK (5 MINUTES)

COUPLE ACTION

Facilitator Notes: Encourage and help couples identify which of the suggestions below they would like to tackle. Do any couples have suggestions of their own that they're planning to try out?

Section Description: Now that you've put some thought into what's most important to your family, let's take cost-eliminating a step further and pick some Needs categories that'll impact in your budget.

Read through the list below. Select all the categories that you'd like to try out.

1. Groceries: Set a food budget
2. Groceries: Buy Generic vs. Name Brand (save 15-50%)
3. Commuting: Bike, walk, or ride one of those electric scooter things (Calculate your savings)
4. Insurance: Bundle your home + car (Save around \$97/year)
5. Insurance: Ask for a discount if you don't drive much (Save 5-10%)
6. Employee Benefits: Research your employee benefits to learn which providers/partners offer discounts. (potentially hundreds of dollars a year for just car insurance)
7. Babysitting: Team up with friends to start a nanny share
8. Utilities: Prevent air leaks from windows and doors...and barking spiders

SECTION 8: LET'S ALL TALK (10-15 MINUTES)

GROUP DISCUSSION | SCOREBOARD | GROUP CHALLENGE | GOODBYE

Facilitator Notes: After couples have decided how they can cut down on some costs, open up the time for group discussion. Discuss the questions below.

Section Description: Let's discuss our experiences saving money on Needs.

1. What unique value did everyone identify today?
2. Has anyone actively tried to buy generic vs. name-brand groceries? What was your experience like?
3. Has anyone found discounts through employee benefits that surprised them? What was your experience like?

Has anyone discovered other tips and tricks for saving money on Needs? Asking for a friend.

Challenge (5 minutes)

Facilitator Notes: Read through the Challenge together as a group.

Section Description: Take this session with you and take action.

So far you've eliminated Needs, learned what you both value, and made a gameplan for how to tackle some Wants. What Needs stood out to you as something to look into? Is there more than one? Do some Googling/Bing-ing and see what you can find. There are a ton of great tools out there.

Here we are again. At the end of each session, pause to record how much Breathing Room you've gained. Record how much you're saving (or making) in the box below, and see your progress come to life.

Total Breathing Room To Date



Facilitator Notes: The Work From Home assignments are an additional resource to help couples continue this conversation at home. Encourage couples to make time and plan space to work through the Take Home assignments together during the week.

Let couples know that you'll review the group's progress at the beginning of your next session together.

GUIDE EXPERIENCE CHECK-IN POST SESSION 3

DEBRIEF ON THE DRIVE HOME

Digging into our families of origin can be tough and confusing work. Without a foundational understanding of your own financial family of origin stories, leading a group through this exercise can feel really tough and a bit exposing. Take a moment to consider your family of origin and how that has affect your journey as a couple. There have likely been ups and downs that have led to where you are as a unit today and the values you both hold together.

1. What are you are grateful for about your spouse's upbringing and how those core values began to shape who they are today?
2. Are your underlying family of origin story's similar or different?
3. How did those similarities or differences lead to the values you hold as a unit today?
4. Is there anything from this week's session that surprised you about your family of origin?
5. Will that affected the way you view and communicate finances with your spouse?

As this experience comes to an end, what is one thing you hope to pass along to each journeyer? This can be specific to an individual or an overarching theme.

Email or Text Reminder to Keep Them Hooked

Facilitator Notes: After each group session (within 2 days or so), send an email or text to your group to keep them engaged. A couple of things you can follow up on:

- A quick thank you for their participation this week
- Encourage them to keep working on their Work From Home and Extra Credit
- Remind them about the details of next session

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Quotes, Downgrades, and more Breathing Room

Work From Home Materials

WORK FROM HOME

Keep the convo going at home. Expenses in the Needs category are some of the more complicated items. Especially the ones that rhyme with “shimshmurance.” Mortgages can be a bear, too. Sometimes it’s worth making a phone call or doing more research if a particular category aligns with something you value. What are the Needs that felt the most frightening to tackle? Write them down.

What is Your Enough?

It’s a question worth revisiting from time to time. Your answer will help ground you and pull you out of the loop you may have gotten stuck in. What a powerful answer to have for ourselves, to know when we can rest our endless pursuit of more and turn to someone else to help them with our extra.

Watch Mark’s story about defining his enough

<http://bit.ly/wfh-enoughstory2>



Take a moment to fine tune your “enough”

EXTRA CREDIT

Taking Care of Those Pesky Needs

Last session you and your partner eliminated one or more items from your 30% Want category. *Air five*. How can you leverage what you’ve learned about family of origin and value-based budgeting to save even more on your Needs?

If you’re really up to the challenge, try one or both of our Needs-based activities: Is Comparison Really the Thief of Joy? and Generic vs. Name Brands. These two activities plus all the other hard work you’ve put in could help you bank hundreds, if not thousands, of Breathing Room each year.

EXAMPLE ONLY:

<i>Type of Product</i>	<i>Name Brand</i>	<i>Amber Value Rating</i>	<i>Mike Value Rating</i>
<i>Cereal</i>	<i>Special K</i>	4	7
<i>Ketchup</i>	<i>Sir Kensington's</i>	8	6

YOUR TURN:

<i>Type of Product</i>	<i>Name Brand</i>	_____	_____
		<i>Value Rating</i>	<i>Value Rating</i>

SECTION 1. NAME BRAND VS. GENERIC

Section Description: When thinking through ways to save, we doubt buying generic is the first thing on your list. May not even be the 7th. But we think savings are on the horizon for those that bargain shop.

Some heroes fly, some heroes respire underwater. And some use coupons. A lot. Becoming a Super Couponer could save you more money than buying generic and score you a spot on a cable TV game show. But ain't nobody got time for that. For our purposes, just buying generic will suffice. Generic brands have come a long way since your mom brought home Puffed Chocolate cereal. She was obviously not coo-coo for Cocoa Puffs. Yet most of us still assume there's something weird about generic brands. There's gotta be a reason they're so much cheaper, right??? Not really.

Here's what to do:

1. Add your name to the table below
2. Think through all the Name Brand products that you buy for your family on a recurring basis. Write those down in the first two columns.
3. Rank how important it is for you to keep using that Name Brand product. Which ones would you be okay with buying generic instead?

A few things to consider before making the switch:

1. Is generic really cheaper? Based on a comparative shopping study done at Kroger (King Soopers), the average person can expect to save just below 50% on staple family dinner dishes such as spaghetti, chicken casserole, and loaded tacos. Let's say you make three meals a week that average \$20 a meal with name-brand ingredients. You can expect to save nearly \$10 a meal. Cha. Ching. Overall generic brands stack up and on average cost a lot less.
2. Don't name brands taste better? This really comes down to personal preference, but based on a Consumer Reports blind taste test, most people either can't tell the difference or have no preference.
3. Aren't generics cheaper because they're lower quality? The marking and packaging of products play a huge role in perceived quality. A recent survey conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that professional chefs are more likely to buy generic than name brands.
4. What about organic generic goods? Most big-box stores see the writing in the clouds and know how important organic food has become. So it isn't unusual to find grocery stores with their own organic brands.
5. Can buying generic really make an impact on a budget? Well, you have to weigh it against a lot of factors. Like time, personal preference, and getting to double down on name-brand coupons. But try the math for yourself. Read the labels and compare price per ounce/lb. You might be surprised by what you find.

One of the easiest ways to dramatically cut your grocery budget is to buy generic. It's not sexy, but it requires no added time or effort on your part. You could save 15%-50% on every purchase, which adds up to nearly \$1,000 a year.

SECTION 2. IS COMPARISON REALLY THE THIEF OF JOY?

Under most circumstances, the old chestnut, "comparison is the thief of joy" is a pretty accurate statement. But when it comes to your budget, contentment doesn't need to end where comparison begins. In fact, with a little comparison shopping you can reduce your Needs and carve out even more Breathing Room.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Providers know they are a Need: Utilities, phone providers, insurance, internet, childcare, etc. All these companies understand that they are vital to almost every household. Because of this, they realize people are more willing to pay whatever they ask for.
2. We pay more than we have to: We typically leave money on the table and end up overpaying on Needs. We go with the first quote we get, over-purchase on coverage, or we have some strange Family of Origin connection to a certain provider. Just because your parents, and their parents, and their parents parents, used the same company doesn't mean you should.
3. More isn't always better: Just because a service costs more doesn't mean it's better. There's plenty of comparative providers at more competitive prices.
4. Sometimes it only takes asking: There are some providers that may actually offer superior services. In which case, it may simply take asking for a lower price to get a lower price. Imagine that. Providers usually won't play ball unless you step up to the plate. You may be a loyal customer, but they're not in the business of giving money away.

To gain a better understanding of how much money comparison shopping can save you, let's take a look at car insurance. Most people have car insurance. Fact. Most people who have car insurance can also save hundreds of dollars a year by completing a 15-minute comparison search. Also fact.

Here's what you can do:

1. Look at your Family Bill Tracker. Identify your car insurance provider and how much you pay each month for coverage.
2. Contact other car insurance providers from the list below. Either by phone or online. Or look up insurance comparison websites, and in a few clicks you can compile multiple coverage offers (Important Note: preferred sites won't sell your information to providers).
3. Check it out at insurify.com
4. If that doesn't feel like the right move, no worries. Top providers like Progressive offer comparative pricing.
5. After you've compared prices and received a few rates, discuss potentially switching providers with your spouse.
6. Switching providers is a much easier process than people realize. It usually only takes two phone calls – one to your new provider to start services and another to your previous provider to cancel (as long as you're not locked into a contract).
7. Now that you've done it in one category, try it in another. And another. And ANOTHER. AND...okay, we're chill. We're chill. Start with one. Feel it out from there.

Potential Providers To Contact And Compare Next

1. Trash service: Republic Services, Waste Management, Local Trash Providers
2. Internet: AT&T, CenturyLink, Xfinity, Viasat Verizon Fios, Time Warner, Charter
3. Phone provider: Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, Straight Talk, MetroPCS, Cricket
4. Auto/ home insurance: Amica, Travelers, State Farm, Progressive, Nationwide, Allstate, Geico, MetLife, Farmers Insurance
5. TV Provider: Youtube TV, Sling, Hulu, Directv Now,
6. Health Insurance or primary care provider
7. Childcare
8. Lawn service
9. Grocery store/market

Things To Consider

Instead of switching providers, maybe you just need to downgrade your service plan to save money and increase your Breathing Room each month.

1. What is the lowest tier of service (cheapest rate) that your provider has available? If it's sufficient, switch.

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