

Hungry hearts

Fall 2008
Readers Guide

1. If you were to take the question literally (What's In Your Wallet?), how would you answer? (Examples might include: photos, cash, receipts, business cards, credit cards, driver's license, etc.) Take one thing out of your wallet and describe its importance to you and why you keep it in your wallet.
2. Have you ever lost or misplaced your wallet? What about the experience was most traumatic?
3. Sit quietly with the image from the cover of the fall issue (see right). What does it evoke in you?
4. On a scale of 1 – 10, how comfortable are you talking with others about money and spiritual practices related to giving? (1 = perfectly at ease; 10 = I'd rather repair a flat tire after breaking down on a freeway during rush hour.)
5. In light of the articles you read from the fall issue (What's in Your Wallet?) how would you describe the spiritual benefits (or pitfalls) of a tithing practice?
6. After taking some time to reflect, (and if you feel safe with the group) relate to others a personal story of stewardship taking into account questions such as these:
 - What role did your faith play?
 - How was Christ present with (or, absent from) you in the act of giving?
 - How did the experience make a difference in your life?
7. The debate raging in Washington these days concerns the form and extent of government intervention that will be required in order to restore stability to the financial markets. In a September 2008 issue of Christianity today, Al Mohler (President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY), wrote an article entitled "A Christian View of the Economic Crisis." While there are a number of theological and political issues over which Presbyterians and Southern Baptists tend to differ, Mohler's

comments on stewardship helpfully transcend denominational affiliations. The article reminds Christians that we "are not called to be mere economic actors, but stewards," His comments are worthy of further reflection and discussion. Here is an excerpt of the article:



"The free market is not perfect, but capitalism has brought more wealth to more people than any other system. It rewards investment, labor, and thrift and rises on innovation. Better ideas and better products push out inferior ideas and inferior products. Given the reality of human sin, we should not centralize economic control in the hands of the few, but distribute economic power to the many. A free market economy distributes power to multitudes of workers, inventors, investors, and consumers.

No economy is perfect, but the American economy remains a marvel. The present crisis is an opportunity to rethink some basic questions and restore trust. There are no easy ways out of a crisis like this, and no painless solutions. Yet, would you trade this system for any other? This current crisis should also remind Christians that we are not called to be mere economic actors, but stewards. Everything we are, everything we do, and everything we own truly belongs to God and is to be at the disposal of Kingdom purposes. This world is not our home and our treasure is not found here. We are to do all, invest all, own all, purchase all to the glory of God."

If you are interested in reading the full article, go to:
www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/septemberweb-only/140-12.0.html