



THE 30-DAY SPENDING CHALLENGE WORKBOOK

*Reboot your habits. Reroot your heart.
The spending challenge to jumpstart your next financial
goal and change the habits holding you back.*

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ONE

How to Start Your Own Spending Fast

Fill this out on your own, with a spouse, or with a friend.

It's easy for our spending to go unchecked in a culture of Apple Pay, Amazon Prime, and Instagram ads. But thoughtless spending leads to internal tension.

Whether you need to double-down on debt or build an emergency fund to get out from under living paycheck to paycheck, whether you want to jumpstart saving for a dream, you want to give more generously, or you just feel financially off and need a refresh. A spending fast will move the needle the right way, right away.

The financial impact of a spending fast is measurable and immediate, but the hidden impact plants seeds of contentment and peace for your future. What areas of your spending need rebooting?

For this challenge to be successful, it needs to be a challenge. It needs to feel uncomfortable, painful even. It's the tension in the struggle that will lead to transformation in your heart and habits. If the struggle is missing, you'll miss out. Let's build your challenge with this in mind.

STEP ONE. Define your why.

It matters why you're doing your spending fast. That first time you want to buy something new and don't, your why needs to be bigger than what you want at that moment. Use these prompts to define your why.

1. Why do I need to fast my spending?

Example: I spend money thoughtlessly and have trouble staying on budget. I don't want to waste money and look back and wonder where it all went. I want to be responsible and wise in all areas of my life - including with money - I think this will help me slow down and think about my spending.

2. On a practical level, what goal do I want to achieve with my spending fast?

(This should be a tangible financial goal)

Example: My goal is to start saving for our 10th-anniversary vacation. We need to work it into our budget and stay on budget.

3. On a personal level, what do I hope my spending fast will change?

(It's ok if the answer is "I don't know...yet")

Example: I think I rely on my circumstances and surroundings for comfort and security a lot. All of it is temporary, whether comfortable or uncomfortable, so I want to stop striving for empty securities.

STEP TWO: Set your terms

Define the nitty-gritty of your spending fast. You're in a store, virtual or otherwise, you're driving past the restaurant, you're scrolling past the ad. What do you do?

The end date of my fast is: _____

I will share my spending fast goals with _____ to support and keep me accountable.

1. Define what you will not buy:

Example: I will not buy any new virtual or tangible products for myself, my spouse, or my kids. (Don't worry, they won't be hard done by, and they will still get fun gifts on special occasions!)

2. Define your acceptable spending:

Think these through carefully. The shorter your fast is, the shorter this list should be. What will acceptable spending look like over the course of your fast from spending? I will still spend on...

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Examples - this list is based on my 365 day fast:

- *food/drink from the grocery store or a restaurant (but maybe you want to stop eating out?)*
- *household cleaning and personal hygiene products that need replenishment only. Think dish soap and shampoo, not a new mop and blow dryer.*
- *If someone gives me a gift card, I can use it on something new.*
- *A new gift for someone. (No buying gifts for myself, though. 😊)*
- *Creative supplies for my kids - think paints and pompoms, not new art easels and water tables.*

3. Define your spending exceptions:

Is there anything you know you will want or need to buy that would break the fast? Write it down here. The shorter your fast is, the shorter this list should be. If you can't think of it now, it's probably not that important.

- _____
- _____

Examples - based on my 365 day fast:

- *A new patio set that we missed out on last season when it sold out.*
- *A new bedding set once our youngest baby sleeps through the night in her crib to mark the parenting milestone!*

4. When I want to spend money on something, I will:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Examples - based on my 365 day fast:

- *I will think about what I want vs. what I need.*
- *I will look out for times when I feel like spending for comfort's sake.*
- *I will ask God to be whatever it is I'm really searching for.*
- *I will save money intentionally.*
- *I will give money intentionally*

5. When I need something, I will:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Examples:

- *I will borrow and share.*
- *I will make use of what I have more thoughtfully.*
- *I will purchase second-hand if there is something I need.*
- *I will mend and fix what is worn out or broken.*

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Date: _____

TWO

Your Spending Self-Study Guide

Pay attention to the spending habits holding you back.

Your habits matter and you might not notice them.

This guide will help you pay attention to your spending habits. This 5-10 minute self-study can reveal underpinnings of your spending habits you never knew were there.

If you already use an exactly zero budget, this exercise will be simple. If not, it might take you longer, and that's ok. If you're not on board with a solid budget, I strongly encourage you to start a budget and get in on some of the other resources IWBIN offers - but for now, your task is simply to observe yourself.

Observe Your Habits

Observe your recent habits from the last month. Print out your bank and credit statements. Look at your spending. Don't pass judgment; just notice.

Highlight the items from your statement(s) that were spontaneous or you didn't budget to buy ahead of time. It could be take-out, online purchases, memberships, clothing or gadgets, etc.

The goal of this is to help you study yourself - what are your existing habits? When and how does money leave your hands easiest?

Purchase: _____

Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- Where was I?

- What was I doing?

- Why did I buy it?

Purchase: _____

Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- Where was I?

- What was I doing?

- Why did I buy it?

Purchase: _____

Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- Where was I?

- What was I doing?

- Why did I buy it?

Look for repeat answers to those questions with different purchases.

If you want to do a deep dive (and I highly recommend it!), print out your statements for the last 2-3 months and repeat.

Observe Your Heart

Look at your bank and credit statements again. But this time, process purchases with a new lens.

Look at how you thought and felt about your spontaneous or unplanned purchases. This is the more difficult part of the process, but the most valuable. It requires more introspection and self-awareness, but it leads to more lasting growth and change.

Purchase: _____

Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- What did I *think*?

- How did I feel *before* I bought it?

- How did I feel *after* I bought it?

Purchase: _____Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- What did I *think*?

- How did I feel *before* I bought it?

- How did I feel *after* I bought it?

Purchase: _____Ask yourself, *when* I bought this:

- What did I *think*?

- How did I feel *before* I bought it?

- How did I feel *after* I bought it?

Look for repeat answers to those questions, also. Again, if you want to do a deep dive, print out your statements for the last 2-3 months and repeat.

Moving into you fast from spending, observe how you think and feel when you want to buy something.

Pay attention to how you feel when you refrain from buying something. You might not feel good, and that's ok. Just pay attention to that. Don't simply grit your teeth through the discomfort. Consider what is under it.

THREE

5 Ways to Capture Your Fast

Cultivate lasting change by capturing your spending fast experience.

Capturing your spending fast experience can keep you more engaged in the journey and more invested in long-term progress. You don't need to be into writing or journaling to do this. Tracking financial progress is simple when you can see hard numbers. Tracking personal progress is more challenging.

This process will help you identify opportunities for personal progress and reveal ways to reboot your habits, and reroot your heart for long-term change.

Record your personal growth throughout your spending fast to solidify the experience. Writing is a way of remembering. Whatever your spending fast experience is, capture it.

5 Ways to Capture Your Fast

Choose one, try them all, or create your own way to capture what you discover during your fast.

1. Write yourself a letter to open a year from the date your fast ends.
2. Build a bullet-point list of new things you notice about yourself or your surroundings.
3. Begin a journal with weekly entries and write what you think or feel at each milestone.
4. Create a blog or social media post about key questions or lessons as you go or wrap up.
5. Use the thought prompts below to write about your experience.

Thought Prompts

Use these questions to prompt observation, reflection and help you think through key lessons as you go through your spending fast.

As you begin, make sure to complete:

- How to Start Your Own Spending Fast
- Your Spending Self-Study Guide

As you go:

- What spending habits do you see in your past that you want to break?

- What do you think will be most difficult to stop spending on? Why?

- The first time you need to refrain from buying something you really want, how do you feel?

- Tell a story about how others are responding to your fast.

- How do you feel when you see people spending money?

- What do you think about buying most often?

As you wrap up:

- What was the hardest thing to stop spending money on? Why?

- What did you learn about the way you spend money during your fast?

- What did you learn about yourself during your fast?

- Tell a story about when you really wanted to buy something.

- Was there a point that your spending fast became easier?

- Moving forward, how do you want to think about spending differently?

Notes:

FOUR

Begin to Build New Spending Habits

Questions to prompt thought and reflection for your future spending

Before your fast from spending ends, take some time to build yourself new spending boundaries.

1. What did you learn?

2. What surprised you?

3. What did you discover about yourself that you didn't see before?

4. As you move forward, what do you want to do differently? Think about the self-study you did with your bank statements. What habits do you want to stay gone for good?

5. What healthy spending boundaries do you want to use?

6. Next time you're in a situation where you're tempted to spend thoughtlessly, what do you want to think instead? What do you want to do instead?

NOTES: