

# An Examen of Avarice

As you contemplate these questions, consider especially the past day or week.

\* Required

1. Email address \*

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2. I have difficulty letting go of things because of the FIRST hindrance Aquinas identifies: they are MINE; I worked/ sweated for them; they say something about who I am. \*

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

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not much                  a lot

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3. I have difficulty letting go of things because of the SECOND hindrance Aquinas identifies: my experiences with poverty/ lack lead me to fear and worry when I don't have "enough." \*

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

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not much                  a lot

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4. My greed/ avarice is most easily seen in ... \*

Check all that apply.

My GETTING - the way I take possession of things, spaces, emotions, others, etc.

My GIVING - the way I reluctantly let go of things, spaces, emotions, others, etc.

5. When it comes to possessions, places, people, experiences, etc. ... how do I define "enough"? \*

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6. If someone diagnosed my idol by noting how I spent my free time or what I imagined myself having, doing, being or what makes me angry when it is denied me. that idol would be ... \*

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7. Rebecca DeYoung writes, "At its worst, however, greed also incites in us the obstinate refusal to meet even the demands of basic justice, as we opt instead to keep more than our share. The greedy acquire and hold on to possessions even to the point of depriving others of what they deserve or need." In what ways is this true in my life? \*

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8. I hoard more than my fair share of possessions, experiences, places, etc. out of ... \*

*Check all that apply.*

- malice
- thoughtlessness
- OTHER:

9. Combatting greed, according to Rebecca DeYoung, requires a movement from using people to serve my love for money to using money to serve my love for people. Where am I on that continuum? \*

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

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Using PEOPLE to serve my love for MONEY      Using MONEY to serve my love for PEOPLE

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10. What does the following parable (from Mark Buchanan) stir in you? "There is an Indian parable in which a guru had a disciple and was so pleased with the man's spiritual progress that he left him on his own. The man lived in a little mud hut. He lived simply, begging for his food. Each morning, after his devotions, the disciple washed his loincloth and hung it out to dry. One day, he came back to discover the loincloth torn and eaten by rats. He begged the villagers for another, and they gave it to him. But the rats ate that one, too. So he got himself a cat. That took care of the rats, but now when he begged for his food, he had to beg for milk for the cat as well. This won't do, he thought, I'll get a cow. So he got a cow and found he had to beg for fodder. So he decided to till and plant the ground around his hut. But soon he found he had no time for contemplation, so he hired servants to tend his farm. But overseeing the labors became a chore, so he married to have a wife to help him with the work. After time, the disciple became the wealthiest man in the village. The guru was traveling by there and stopped in. He was shocked to see that where once stood a simple mud hut there now loomed a palace surrounded by a vast state, worked by many servants. "What is the meaning of this?" He asked his disciples. "You won't believe this, sir," the man replied, "but there was no other way I could keep my loincloth." \*

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11. Augustine explains that avarice/ greed is insatiable, because we cannot satisfy our deep, human need for an eternal good with temporal, imperfect goods. What deep need do you sense your greed/ avarice is an attempt to meet? \*

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12. Richard Foster recommends the following habits to defeat avarice. Which do you feel God inviting you to? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status
- Reject anything that is producing an addiction in you
- Develop a habit of giving things away
- Refuse to be propagandized by the custodians of modern gadgetry
- Learn to enjoy things without owning them
- Develop a deeper appreciation for the creation
- Look with a healthy skepticism at all "buy now, pay later" schemes
- Reject anything that breeds the oppression of others
- Shun anything that distracts you from seeking first the kingdom of God.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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