

Budget Starter Exercise

Category	Examples / Notes	Est. Monthly \$	% of Income
Giving	Church, charitable giving		
Housing	Rent / mortgage, utilities, insurance		
Transportation	Car payment, gas, insurance, repairs		
Food	Groceries, dining out		
Debt Payments	Student loans, credit cards, other		
Savings	Emergency fund, goals		
Healthcare	Insurance, out-of-pocket		
Personal	Clothing, personal care, fun		
Other	Subscriptions, gifts, miscellaneous		
TOTAL MONTHLY INCOME	Combined take-home	\$	100%

Financial Snapshot

Each person prepares a complete financial snapshot: income, debt (type and amount), savings, and monthly obligations. Share it fully with each other — no holding back, no minimizing.

Purpose

The goal of this assignment is to cultivate honesty, transparency, and unity in your financial life as a couple. Marriage requires trust, and finances are one of the most common areas where trust can either grow or break down. This exercise is designed to help you both clearly understand each other's financial situation.

Instructions

Each person should independently complete a full financial snapshot. Be completely honest and thorough. Do not minimize, hide, or estimate loosely—accuracy matters.

After completing your individual snapshots, schedule a time to share everything with each other openly. **Reminder:** This exercise is not about perfection—it is about honesty, trust, and building a strong foundation for your future together.

Part 1: Income

List all sources of income and their approximate monthly amounts.

- Primary job income: \$ _____
- Secondary job / side income: \$ _____
- Passive income (investments, rental, etc.): \$ _____
- Other income: \$ _____

Total Monthly Income: \$ _____

Part 2: Debt

List every debt you currently have. Be specific.

Type of Debt	Total Amount Owed	Monthly Payment	Interest Rate
Student Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____ %
Credit Cards	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____ %
Car Loan	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____ %
Personal Loans	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____ %
Other: _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	_____ %

Total Debt: \$ _____

Part 3: Savings & Assets

List all savings and assets.

- Checking account balance: \$ _____
- Savings account balance: \$ _____
- Emergency fund: \$ _____
- Retirement accounts (401k, IRA, etc.): \$ _____
- Investments: \$ _____
- Cash on hand: \$ _____
- Other assets (car value, property, etc.): \$ _____

Total Savings/Assets: \$ _____

Part 4: Monthly Expenses & Obligations

List your average monthly expenses.

- Rent/Mortgage: \$_____
- Utilities: \$_____
- Groceries: \$_____
- Transportation (gas, insurance, etc.): \$_____
- Phone/Internet: \$_____
- Insurance (health, life, etc.): \$_____
- Subscriptions/Entertainment: \$_____
- Eating out: \$_____
- Giving/Tithing: \$_____
- Other: \$_____

Total Monthly Expenses: \$_____

Part 5: Reflection Questions

Answer these honestly before sharing with your partner.

1. What are your biggest financial concerns or fears?

2. What financial habits are you most proud of?

3. Where do you tend to struggle most (spending, saving, planning, etc.)?

4. What did your family teach you about money growing up?

5. What are your short-term (1–2 years) financial goals?

6. What are your long-term financial goals?
