

Faithful Stewardship

From the sermon “Enriched in Christ”

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

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*Stewarding our lives together,
And stewarding our life together*

Some stats on our national economy

- We are at 4.1% unemployment, considered “full employment” and at historic lows.
- Federal Funds Rate is at 1.00-1.25%, again, at historic lows, meaning that our mortgage rate for a 30 year fixed loan is about 3.8%.
- Our current national debt is \$20 trillion.
- The GOP tax bill will cut corporate tax rate from 35% to 20%, giving “relief” to the super rich and paying back the political donor class.
- Our national debt will increase by \$2 trillion in the next decade, increasing interest rates and causing tensions around the globe economically and militarily (one and the same thing for USA).

What is the American Dream?

- 1) About two-thirds of US GDP (Gross Domestic Product) comes from retail consumption. (The Balance)
- 2) Americans spend more on shoes, jewelry, and watches (\$100 billion) than on higher education. (Psychology Today)
- 3) Shopping malls outnumber high schools in America. (Affluenza)
- 4) Americans now spend more money on dining out than groceries. (Fox News)
- 5) On average, an American between the ages of 18 and 65 has \$4,717 of credit card debt. (TIME)

What is the American Dream?

- 6) 63% of Americans do not have enough savings to cover a \$500 emergency. ([Forbes](#))
- 7) 96% of adults and 95% of teens admit they participate in some form of retail therapy. ([Yahoo](#))
- 8) More than a third of adults and teens said shopping made them feel better than exercising. ([Yahoo](#))
- 9) The average American throws away 65 pounds of clothing per year. ([Huffington Post](#))
- 10) The \$8 billion home organization industry has more than doubled in size since early 2000s & grows at a staggering rate of 10%/year. ([Uppercase](#))

What then is the meaning of life?

- Seek healing and be a healer, as Jesus is our Great Physician, for vocation is best discerned when we are healthy.
- Our vocation is to love our neighbor and make the world a better place through our God-given passions and our God-given abilities applied to God-ordained needs in the world.
- Our vocation is to adore our loved ones, and as a byproduct, be adored by our family (nuclear, extended, church, org, etc).
- Our vocation is to be a conduit of God's wealth, not quicksand that devours God's abundance.

Some practical steps?

- Check our entitlement index. Yes, of course we are victims of an exploitative economic system, but we must still act with agency in our personal lives. Feeling like a victim leads to coping mechanisms.
- Shop with purpose; no impulse buying. If we need to shop to feel better, try making friends instead, esp in the church!
- If possible, pay the entire credit card bill each month, using it effectively as a charge card.
- Pay your bills on time, fool.
- Spend less than you make, fool.

Some practical steps?

- Rather than purchasing a gift, write a note of appreciation thru card, letter, email, text, etc. Or make something, time permitting.
- If we really want to give a gift, give cash as it is easy to use or pass on. Plus, we do our tiny share to not further destroy the earth.
- The greatest gift is that of company. Invite someone to your home, treat them to a meal or to tea/coffee.
- Be aggressive w paying down debt, but not to exclusion of caring for others. Give freely, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:6-8).
- Recognize that consumerism is a society-endorsed coping mechanism that destroys. Let's not fall for it, family!