



Spend Less - “The Hold of Consumerism”

The Big Picture

- Seeking to celebrate Jesus in tune with Him and not our culture through four themes: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All.
- Giving you permission to celebrate another way – it’s your choice

Spend Less:

- Means “Getting Less” and “Giving Less Gifts” – both mean sacrifices
 1. Sacrifice is the Way of Jesus
 2. Giving up something good for something greater
 - Proper Perspective: Giving clean water to 30 families for 20 years cost \$30. A nice shirt costs \$30. What’s a greater joy?

Swimming Against the Tide of Consumerism

- Something we face all year round
- The more we can un-mask it the better we can resist its hold

- *What is Consumerism?*

→ Happiness = consumption

William Cavanaugh in his book called “Being Consumed” says this, *“Consumerism feeds not on the pleasure of having stuff, but wanting it. Once we have obtained an item, it brings desire to a temporary halt and the item loses some of its appeal. Possession kills desire, familiarity breeds contempt. That is why shopping, not buying itself, is the heart of consumerism. The consumerist spirit is a restless spirit...because desire must be constantly kept on the move.”*

- **The Story of Stuff** – www.thestoryofstuff.com
- **God’s not upset with us** – but rather wants to lead us out of any hold consumerism has on us because it does not promote His values.

Five Problems with Consumerism

❶ **It Takes God’s Place**

- Our restlessness, emptiness, loneliness should lead us to God instead of stuff.
- It acts like a religion, promising transformation, ecstasy, identity and community

- Branding 101 – Marketers give less information about a product and instead try to connect with a feeling or emotion
- God is calling us out of this “religion” and into a relationship Luke 12:15 *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”*
- Stuff by itself is not bad but should point to and be used for God.

❷ **It Encourages the Degrading of Creation and People.**

- Consumerism values production and money over creation and justice
- Our current consumption trajectory (US and Canada make up 5% of population but consume 32% of its goods) is unsustainable if spread to the world.

❸ **It’s Unhealthy**

- Contributes to unhealthy relationships - especially marriages.
- Contributes to diseases and addictions

❹ **It Encourages Immaturity**

- Consumerism encourages childish behavior – “more and now”
- 1 Cor 13:11 - ¹¹ *When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.”*

❺ **It Promotes Self-Centeredness Instead of Others-Centeredness**

- Though our needs are met, instead of using our abundance to help others we are convinced that we have more needs – pseudo needs.
- 1 Timothy 6:9-11,17-19 – *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...¹¹ But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness”.... “17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”*

Entering a Different Story

God invites us to celebrate His Son by opting out of the story consumerism is telling us and instead joining His Story about a God of love who became one of us and called us to live sacrificial lives of love and generosity in communion with Him – life that is truly life.

Resources Used:

Being Consumed by William Cavanaugh, *Everything Must Change*, by Brian McLaren, *Christmas Can Still Change the World* by Rick McKinley and a sermon called “Christmas is for Giving” by Bruxy Cavey.