

# STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

*Guiding You Through Life's Transitions*



March/April 2020

## What an opportunity to . . . .

The headlines all seem straight from the outlandish scenarios of pandemic novels. But right now, they represent reality as coronavirus grips the world.

There have been many extraordinary actions taken by our national and local leaders to counter the serious communicable nature of COVID-19. All these, in addition to the constant reminders about personal hygiene along with “social distancing” and self-quarantine, have significantly disrupted our regular family lifestyles, work lives and ultimately our culture and economy.

Yet could this be an opportunity of a lifetime? Perhaps this crisis is challenging us to react and think in a different way this time. A moment when we replace fear with faith in something other than our investment portfolio and intentionally invest love into our family and community. A time that we will look back on as a seminal moment in all our lives.

We believe it is such an opportunity. And we'd like to suggest some simple ideas and thoughts on how we all can leverage this unexpected opportunity to transform our own lives and the lives of those who are in community closest to us:

- ◆ Let's choose to make a phone call for every hand that we don't shake. Many are at home alone. Think of one person now and make a call.
- ◆ Pray as a family for our leaders who have been tasked with responding to this crisis; the medical teams; those infected; those at high risk and the elderly.
- ◆ Share stories with your family (instead of another streaming video) about how your own family and our nation has responded to past crises.
- ◆ As you have free time invest in things that will have a lasting impact like relationships and faith.
- ◆ Let's choose how we might be of help to another for every inch and every foot that we physically place between ourselves.
- ◆ Consider our fragility, which reminds us to not take our lives on this earth for granted.
- ◆ Discuss your perspective with family and friends on what really matters in your life; what's meaningful and meaningless.
- ◆ Let's choose patience with the restrictions and inconveniences we will face and be an encouraging blessing to others.

Following the health experts advice over the next few weeks will have a significant impact on how much longer the virus will be a threat to our daily lives.

But seizing this time as an opportunity to love our families, neighbors and communities well will have an exponentially greater impact upon our nation and how we will all face the next crisis.

**“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1 NIV**

#### Sources:

Mark Oden, 8 Things the Coronavirus Should Teach Us, The Gospel Coalition, March 11, 2020, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/things-coronavirus-teach-us/>

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- Advisors offering wealth management advice and services with excellence
- Creating close relationships with our clients on a long-term basis
- Encouraging the charitable and stewardship aspirations of our clients for the wealth that has been entrusted to them

## Staying the Course

The market's current unpredictability can make even the most experienced investor worry. If you're having doubts during a downturn, here's a guide to maintaining perspective.

### 1. Consider the Big Picture

Most investors may be surprised to hear that the market has dropped 20% every three-and-a-half years or so. That's based on the unmanaged Dow Jones Industrial Average dating back to 1900. Having that historical context can strengthen your resolve to stay invested, which can be key to long-term success. After all, pulling out of the market at a high point and buying back in at the bottom is almost impossible to do once, let alone a number of times during your life as an investor.



### 2. Avoid Sudden Movements

A survey by financial research firm Dalbar determined that over the 20 years ended December 31, 2017, the average stock investor's return trailed that of the broader market as measured by the Standard & Poor's 500 Composite Index by nearly 2% per year. Put another way, while the market gained about 7.2% annually, the average investor's portfolio realized only a 5.3% yearly gain. Much of this difference can be attributed to the fact that many investors sold near the bottom of the market and stayed on the sidelines — missing some of the market's best days. Remember it's not timing the market that matters, but time in the market.

### 3. Don't Follow the Herd

Investing during a downturn may go against your instincts. However, stock and bond funds have been a good way to meet long-term financial objectives, and purchasing shares during a decline is like buying investments at bargain prices. As markets become less emotionally driven, stocks and bonds generally return to something closer to their average, so investors who "buy on the dip" can benefit. While regular investing doesn't ensure you'll make money, staying the course through market fluctuations and buying additional shares at lower prices when the opportunity presents itself can increase your portfolio's ability to provide income.

### 4. Avoid Distractions

Fixating on daily or even weekly market returns can lead to rash decisions that ultimately impede our long-term success. One strategy for curbing the emotional impact of market volatility is to review the value of your investments only at regularly scheduled times. Focusing on the long term makes you less likely to make constant changes in response to day-to-day market swings.

### 5. Let's have a talk

We understand how you can feel fearful and anxious when events like these occur that you have no control over. We have personally spoken with many of our clients about their concerns, nearly all of whom have found it helpful to express their emotions. So please don't hesitate to call us as we are privileged to serve as your guide through life's transitions.

## Using Resources to Make Friends for Eternity

In Luke 16:1-13 Jesus tells a parable of a rich man firing his business manager for wasting his possessions. In hearing that he will be fired, the business manager goes to the people who owe the rich man and substantially reduces their debt causing these people to look favorably on him. His hope is that by being generous to them they will be generous to him once he is fired. In verse 9, Jesus tells us the lesson He wants us to learn:

“I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:9)

What Jesus is saying here is quite exciting! Let’s dive in to understand more about how we can use the wealth God gives us to impact others and ourselves for eternity!

### Use worldly wealth to make friends

Jesus does not condemn wealth. Wealth is morally neutral. It can be used to help others and spread the name of Jesus or it can be spent in other ways. Jesus is saying it’s wise to prioritize using wealth to help others and further God’s Kingdom . Randy Alcorn in his book Money, Possessions, and Eternity says this:

“Jesus tells us that after we die, when our present assets of money, possessions, time, and life are gone, we may be welcomed by friends into eternal dwellings. Clearly this welcoming will be contingent upon the wise use of our resources on earth to impact these “friends”. But who are these friends? The reference appears to be to believers in heaven who are there as a result of our ministry or whose lives we have touched in a significant way through the use of our material assets. (page 143).”

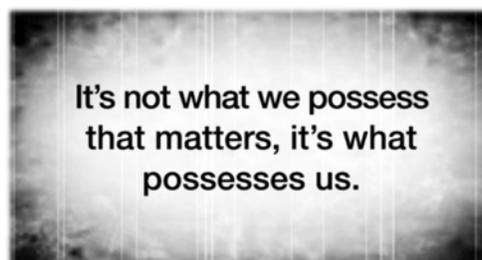
### Eternal dwellings

Believers having their own place to live in heaven is substantiated by a number of texts like Revelation 21:16, Revelation 21:2, and John 14:2-3. Randy Alcorn weighs in further by saying:

“If we take these passages at face value-as the weight of the evidence suggests we should-we must conclude that each of us will have a specific individual location in heaven, and address of our own. We will live there, invite people in, and be invited to other places. We know that we will have actual bodies in heaven (Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:42-54), and that we will be recognizable (Matthew 17:3). We will have a place at a table to eat and drink (Matthew 8:11; Revelation 19:9). We will experience literal pleasure in heaven, just as those in hell will experience literal pain (Luke 16:22-31). Given the physical nature of our resurrected bodies, why should we be surprised to find that we will also have places to live, or that having such places we will be able to welcome others into them?”

### Time is short

James 4:14 says that our lives are but a mist. They are here today and gone tomorrow. More the reason to use the resources today to help grow the Kingdom of God. The more we give of our time, talent, and money the more friends we can make for eternity!





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## CARES ACT

- **Direct Payments to Individuals**  
\$1200 per adult  
\$500 per child  
with some restrictions for incomes above \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for joint filers
- **Additional Unemployment benefits for up to 4 months**  
Applies to 1099 and Gig workers also
- **2020 RMD Waived/Suspended**  
You won't have to take a distribution for 401(k), 403(b), 457(b), or IRA
- **Student loan payments temporarily suspended through Sep 30, 2020**
- **Extension of payroll tax payments**
- **Charitable Contribution limits suspended for individuals**
- **Tax favored "coronavirus-related" distributions**  
allowed from retirement plans up to \$100k without 10% early withdrawal penalty and option to spread income over 3 years
- **Loans to small businesses (SBA)**  
Under 500 employees, portion used during first two months for wages, rent, utilities, mortgage payment may be forgivable



Give us a call at Strategic Stewardship if you have any questions about how these provisions might apply to you. Since the act just passed on 3/27/2020 we are still learning about how each of these provisions will play out and look forward to helping each of our clients during this difficult time.

## To all of our Strategic Stewardship Investment Clients ~

As a reminder our investment portfolio committee meets every quarter to assess each of the investment model portfolios that our clients own. And while there are usually minimal or no changes made to the portfolios, we did want to share with all our investment clients the results of our most recent meeting in light of the current market volatility:

- ⇒ reallocating some international stock positions to US based stock positions for recovery
- ⇒ replacing funds across our models due to their over-weighting in adverse risk positions
- ⇒ increasing the portfolios toward a more growth-oriented investment style

We have begun implementing these changes in each of your respective portfolios with the objective of providing you the greatest likelihood of meeting your long-term financial goals with the lowest amount of risk. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you to steward well your financial investments.