

## Advent Conspiracy: Spend Less

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*[1] I said to myself, "Go ahead, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy what is good." But it turned out to be futile. [2] I said about laughter, "It is madness," and about pleasure, "What does this accomplish? " [3] I explored with my mind the pull of wine on my body -- my mind still guiding me with wisdom -- and how to grasp folly, until I could see what is good for people to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. [Ecc 2:1-3 CSB]*

*[4] I increased my achievements. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself. [5] I made gardens and parks for myself and planted every kind of fruit tree in them. [6] I constructed reservoirs for myself from which to irrigate a grove of flourishing trees. [7] I acquired male and female servants and had slaves who were born in my house. I also owned livestock -- large herds and flocks -- more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. [Ecc 2:4-7 CSB]*

*[8] I also amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I gathered male and female singers for myself, and many concubines, the delights of men. [9] So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; my wisdom also remained with me. [10] All that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. I did not refuse myself any pleasure, for I took pleasure in all my struggles. This was my reward for all my struggles... [Ecc 2:8-10 CSB]*

*[11] When I considered all that I had accomplished and what I had labored to achieve, I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind. There was nothing to be gained under the sun. [Ecc 2:11 CSB]*

Our desire for significance will not be satisfied in our stuff.

"What spoils [the things of life] is our hunger to get out of them more than they can give." – Derek Kidner, *Ecclesiastes*, pg. 35.

*[19] "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. [20] "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. [21] "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [Mat 6:19-21 CSB]*

*[22] "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. [23] "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness! [Mat 6:22-23 CSB]*

"Having a 'good eye' (*ayin tovah*) is to look out for the needs of others and be generous in giving to the poor. But to have a 'bad eye' (*ayin ra'ah*) is to be greedy and self-

centered, blind to the needs of those around you.” – Lois Tverberg, *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus*, pg. 70

[24] “No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. [Mat 6:24 CSB]

[25] “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? [Mat 6:25 CSB]

Accumulation is a reflection of misdirected worship, a mistaken treasure of our hearts, that cultivates a life opposed to the life of Jesus.

“Only about 5 percent of what we do in a given day is the outcome of conscious, deliberate choices we make”... and the other 95 percent of our actions and behaviors “are managed below the surface, by all sorts of learned yet now unconscious ways of intending and navigating the world.” – James K.A. Smith, *You Are What You Love*, pg. 35.

### Consumerism Statistics

- In America, we consume twice as many material goods as we did fifty years ago. Over the same period, the size of the average American home has nearly tripled.
- The average American home contains about 300,000 items.
- The average American home contains more televisions than people.
- 25 percent of people with two-car garages don’t have room to park cars inside.
- Home organization is a \$8 billion industry, growing at 10 percent each year.
- One out of every ten American households rent offsite storage.
- Off-site storage is the fastest-growing segment of the commercial real-estate industry over the past four decades.
- Storage units are a \$38 billion industry in the US.
- American has 2.3 billion square feet of storage unit space, enough for every single American to have over seven feet to themselves.

“Consumerism surrounds us like the air we breathe, and like air, it’s invisible. We hardly even know how much we are influenced by the philosophy that we must buy, buy, buy if we are to be happy.” Josh Becker, *The More of Less*, pg. 44

“It is now clear that a primary threat to true Christianity in America is consumerism - not liberalism, fundamentalism, Darwinism, secularism or any other -ism that happens to achieve some level of influence and power.” – *Advent Conspiracy*, pg. 33

What is the good news we are preaching with our lives?

### Countercultural Practices

1. Declutter more.

2. Scroll less.
3. Give better.
4. Practice gratitude.