

Remember the first time that you heard about FOMO? Well, you know that it's an acronym for "Fear of Missing Out," and when you learned that, you didn't need to hear any further explanation, did you? That's because the "fear of missing out" is a universal experience in some way or another! But the reality is, how everyone looks at FOMO, how they respond to circumstances evoking a strong FOMO in them—well, that can vary a whole lot! And it can be for the better or for the worse! So, let's explore some of that...

Here's the thing: FOMO essentially revolves around *transactions* of various stripes. Transactions, you ask? Yep...let's look at a few. How about FOMO on *information* transactions? Have you seen rampant screen-addiction to cellphones in your workplace...in your home...even with your nearby drivers on the highway? Users cannot seem to turn off their phone for even a few minutes for fear of missing out on some bit of information. It isn't getting just the information itself...it's about *getting it now, instantly!* That's FOMO!

How about the social transaction of attending a Taylor Swift concert, an "event" transaction with limited in-person seating? For many, attendance is driven in large measure by FOMO of a big-time happening... just look at those ticket prices! The Superbowl? Same thing. Yes, the scarcity of exclusive seating at a unique event drives desire for many—they've got to be there...and the nearer to the action, the better!

And how about life decisions? Can't imagine living without that person you're dating? Well, there's a bit of intense FOMO going on there! Dreams of playing a professional sport for a living requiring years of training for just a few hundred positions available? How about your career choice? What enterprise you're going to start work with? What city are you going to live in? Hey...you're driven by at least one FOMO!

Then there are investments! Did you miss investing early in Amazon? Microsoft? Nvidia? Or did you have serious FOMO and invested big in Blockbuster Video years ago and lost a big hunk of money because you *did* invest? FOMO can beget folly...or wisdom! You see, there are a whole lot of choices out there in a big world and countless options to spend your time and resources on! And FOMO is a core dimension of marketing those options! Always has been. Sometimes it can be folly...yet other times it can be quite wise!

Take airline travel in America. Say you need to travel from Denver to Dallas on a particular day next month. You need availability for an important meeting and, as a good steward of the money entrusted to you, you want the lowest price possible. So, you get on airline websites and find that Southwest Airlines has just one seat left in exactly the right time frame for \$75...and United's flights are full that day and American's seats are much more expensive. Your FOMO kicks in for all the right reasons: you are appointed by the Lord to be a good steward of your employer's resources! Ticket bought!

Next, take back-to-school shopping for new clothes for your growing child—yeah, he's grown out of last year's garments. Happily, Old Navy has a three-day sale for 50% off its already competitive prices for everything in their store. So, being a good steward of your son's needs and your resources, you don't want to miss out on those timely Old Navy bargains! For sure, FOMO can result in very good stewardship!

Of course, it does depend on the definition of fear...is it a healthy fear, an awareness, an alertness that pushes to the forefront of your thinking? In these types of cases and in many billions of transactions each year around the world, FOMO can be very healthy! You see, *what's really going on here is the fruitful alignment of stewardships!* Let's take a look again at Southwest Airlines. So, why did Southwest offer that airline seat for such a low price? Because Southwest is a good steward of its customers' resources *and its company resources!* Southwest offered that seat for \$75 because it could collect \$75 for renting an open seat on a very full plane that was *already* committed to going to Dallas! If it offered that seat for \$500 and nobody rented that seat, that would be \$500 that would not be going to Southwest employees or stockholders! And—at that \$500 price—there was no FOMO for the customer! So, surprising to some folks, *Southwest also had its own fruitful, company-level FOMO in this transaction: the FOMO of a plane being completely full!* So the \$75 price created fruitful FOMO for *both you as the customer and Southwest!*

Likewise, the Old Navy example. When that company meticulously plans for a very low cost, high quality offering of clothing to its customers for their fruitful stewardship—and stimulating their awareness with

marketing of low prices during back-to-school shopping—well, then, the company itself and everyone participating in its supply chain benefits...from garment makers to truck drivers to clerks to managers!

Both Southwest and Old Navy are emblematic of how free markets have generated wealth for most everybody up and down the supply chain. *Yes, mutually-beneficial betterment is the heart of stewardship!* And it's self-adjusting—if the airline ticket price is too high, then FOMO doesn't kick in for the customer. That in turn causes Southwest to respond with its own healthy version of FOMO in filling an empty seat—yes, Southwest drops its price! The lesser competitor here, American Airlines, loses its stewardship battle due to its lack of filling their empty seat—that was revenue lost for *its* employees and owners to share.

So, is FOMO good or bad? Well, is each transacting party a good steward of their resources in the transaction? If so, then good stewardships are aligned and working! But just what is good stewardship? Well, everyone is different! Is it Old Navy clothes? A Superbowl ticket? A great financial investment? You be the judge—and take the consequences of your choice, good or bad!

A lot of times in these podcast episodes I refer to *God's economy*. That's an omnibus term I like because it covers everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen as documented and promised in the Bible—from Satan's fall from heaven "like lightning" all the way through to the events documented in the Revelation to John. And God's economy has *transactions*—the most notable to us is, of course, Jesus' substitutionary death on the Cross, His resurrection, and the resulting benefits to any person worldwide who will receive God's offer of grace and mercy and reconciliation, all available through His Son's offering!

But what about *transactions happening this very day* in God's economy. As marketing ambassadors for Christ, are we good stewards of the message? God's grace is a gift—yes, Jesus our Savior paid the price for the remission of each person's sin and reconciliation to our Father! That's a much better deal than Southwest Airlines or Old Navy ever could offer! Seriously, do you know Christians who are excited about offering great flights or good garments *or whatever* at very good prices—but they are seemingly ashamed of God's love and the Gospel of grace—yes, God's free offering, a transaction of incredible eternal value!

Listen, Jesus *commanded* His disciples to go forth and make disciples worldwide! Many Christians would not dream of flagrantly ignoring one of the Ten Commandments. So, then, where's the FOMO attitude of Christians as to vibrant missions activity with measurable results worldwide—*you know, like Jesus commanded us to do?* What? *There's no FOMO in your church as to missions activity that changes others' lives?* Sadly, many young Christians seem to return from foreign trips indicating how much *their* lives were changed...but often little to no indication that *others' lives* were changed for Christ! *Very one-sided FOMO!*

Again, why no FOMO on the joy and rewards of substantive missions activity on behalf of others—not just sending of missionaries but *also our personal actions of love and grace in our workplaces?* But...there *does* seem of be no shortage of Christians condemning unbelievers for their behaviors! Is that condemnation fostering a FOMO for unbelievers as to a loving, sacrificial God and His grace unto eternal life? Hey, are Southwest's employees more intense about filling up all the seats on a flight to Dallas than Christians are about filling up all the seats in God's economy with the received gift of grace? *Just who has more FOMO?*

Hey, the Apostle Paul very astutely utilized FOMO for the Kingdom! Here's Romans 11:13-14 (ESV): "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them." *That's FOMO...in action!* Paul is deploying FOMO both in making Jews jealous of believing Gentiles as well as aligning his own FOMO as a disciple with appointed stewardship for God, who Himself desires all people in the world to be saved!

Yes, FOMO *can be* immature and destructive...but FOMO also can be mature, healthy, rightly-manifested stewardship for every person and enterprise—especially the Kingdom of God! Our joy as Christians is to embrace what Jesus said to His disciples, "the fields are white unto harvest and the laborers are few." (Matthew 9:37) That's not condemnation for us, that's great FOMO in our generation—the privilege of launching into action for FOMO benefiting a dying world! Amazing. *Hey, don't miss out!*

A&A: Application & Action

1. The modern tool of a cell phone is utterly remarkable, isn't it? The access. The reach. The versatility. The connection. So, do you have a great handle on utilizing the FOMO that cell phones can bring for your good stewardship...or for your susceptibility to fruitless distractions? Discuss.

2. Consider the examples of Southwest Airlines and Old Navy in this episode. Does your workplace enterprise effectively structure its relationships with customers, employees, owners, and supply chain partners such that the FOMO facets it generates are positively and mutually beneficial for the routine betterment of all participants? Discuss.

3. This paragraph is reproduced from the closing of this episode: *Yes, FOMO can be immature and destructive...but FOMO also can be mature, healthy, rightly-manifested stewardship for every person and enterprise—especially the Kingdom of God! Our joy as Christians is to embrace what Jesus said to His disciples, “the fields are white unto harvest and the laborers are few.” (Matthew 9:37) That’s not condemnation for us, that’s great FOMO in our generation—the privilege of launching into action for FOMO benefiting a dying world! Amazing. Hey, don’t miss out!*

Discuss this paragraph and its opportunities and implications for you personally, especially in light of Jesus’s command embedded in the Great Commission.