



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

I can expect to hear it at least once; I - like you - still run across people who encounter their world through the use of stereotypes. Here's the question: "Where have you *been*?" This week, I'll answer: "Hong Kong." Then, here is the stereotypical response: "What were you doing *there*? Christmas shopping?"

Okay, Cheri did some Christmas shopping; the grandkiddos ALWAYS win when Bobo and Nonni are loose for a few hours on a trip. But, no, Christmas shopping wasn't our reason to be there. Franklin Graham was asked to conduct an evangelistic campaign in Hong Kong Stadium. Four days of events... with 423,335 people joining us. A total of 33,464 made commitments to the Lord Jesus, were counseled and referred to churches. *That's* what we were doing there...

But, it cost us to go to Hong Kong. Sure, there were the obvious expenses. Those can be easily calculated. What's not so auditable is the opportunity cost...

"Opportunity Cost" is a dry, theoretical term from the financial and investment world. You won't find it in Webster's treatment of the language. Take the term apart and you'll find the words as singles, but in Webster's world, the words don't join. Opportunity Cost? The best "layman's" treatment would be: "The cost of passing up the next best choice when



making a decision." The opportunity cost of something is what you sacrifice to get it; what you sacrifice is the next best choice available to you...

We're dealing with Opportunity Cost right now, as we return home. We've sent hundreds of invitations to our **Master's** and **Barnabas** friends in Orange County for a Christmas evening, in our home, next week. We've heard from many, but we won't hear from some until hours before the caterers arrive. Reason? For some, they're waiting to see what their other options are before they say, "Yes." *Register an RSVP with Shanks, and then the White House calls with a dinner invitation: the Opportunity Cost would be too great.* Make sure you "keep your options open" is the social philosophy of our generation...

We could have been home this last week, doing the things that we would have been doing there. Did I have work to do, back

at the ol' **TMP** shop? Sure did. Weren't there some early, beat-the-calendar Christmas events to which we had to say "No, thanks?" We had to start our trek during Thanksgiving weekend: did we miss some family hang-time to make the journey to China? The answer was a resounding, "Yes." Was it worth it?

That's where Opportunity Cost rears its head. You calculate the value of the thing(s) missed, against the value of the thing gained. If the gain exceeds the "missed opportunity," you're deemed a smart investor. If you took the trinket and passed on the Hope Diamond, you're a fool.

Jesus knew how to compete in a world of options. Here's what he told his insiders, while he was here: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."* (Matthew 16:24-27)

He didn't mince words; was it going to cost them to pursue his agenda for their lives instead of their own? Undoubtedly! But, would it be a good decision? Unmistakably! What if the potential gain were the "whole world?" What if you could amass the entire holdings of the Forbes 400/World Edition, and put them all under your own, sole ownership?

Jesus said that his alternatives would always stand tall, measured against the most

discriminating standards. He never ripped anyone off: the martyrs from the Coliseum were welcomed into eternal abundance in payoff for their principled pain. No one will be at the customer service counter in heaven with a complaint...

Where have we been? Hong Kong. Was it worth it? Ask 33,464 people that question, when you see them in heaven...

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