

GRACE CLASSICAL ACADEMY

... Κατανῶμεν ...

Let us consider...



The Greatest Story— Never Old

Jedidiah Moss

Christmas time is such a magnificent time of year! It is first and foremost a time to remember a gift that was delivered in a manger, a gift sent to make redemption not only a possibility but also a reality. Never has a gift been given to so many and had such far-reaching and long-lasting results. (What other gift can last for eternity?) I love how C.S. Lewis describes the incarnation by saying, "...a stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world." What a gift! As we sing the Christmas hymns, I love how I am reminded of this—"No more let sins and sorrows grow...He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found," "Jesus, to Thee be all glory given," "O come, o come, Emmanuel...from the depths of hell Thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave." Don't miss the Gospel message as you sing and listen to these Christmas treasures. Christmas without Christ is not Christmas.

The mission of Grace Classical Academy is to provide an education designed to help our children know the love, grace, truth, and holiness of our glorious God and, from this understanding, strive for excellence in knowledge, wisdom, and service.

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... Κατανώμεν ...

If you do not
see a living
and active God
concerned
with every
aspect of your
life, you are
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hard enough.

Just because The Greatest Story Ever Told is familiar to us, I pray that it never become commonplace. I pray that we continue to see it with hearts and minds full of wonder at what Christ has done, and what He continues to do on a daily basis in the hearts and lives of His creation. If you do not see a living and active God concerned with every aspect of your life, you are not looking hard enough.

It is also an amazing thing to see the overall warmth and generosity that people exhibit this time of year. From the offering that was given to our teachers at the Christmas concert to bless them to the handmade cards and pictures that the students give their teachers, there is no shortage of love both given and received. And this gift-giving should be a reflection of or a pointing to a God who knows how to give good gifts to His children. Just look at the sky on your morning drive to school, study the coordination and construction skills of the termite, listen to your kindergartner quote Scripture, or listen to Beethoven's "Piano Sonata 8" and tell me He hasn't given us many great gifts from so many different sources.

Although as fallen man, if we are not careful, materialism and the consumerist mindset can take over this season. It is a topic that is great to ponder and makes for great discussion in the classroom. In our college prep writing class, the students read an article from *The Atlantic* titled "Buy Experiences, Not Things." Although this was not written from a Christian perspective, it presents a lot of good points to consider, and one of our students, Samantha Sellers, did an excellent job in her response paper to this article. I hope you enjoy seeing not only how our students are thinking but also how well they are able to communicate those thoughts. It was an encouragement to me and just one of many in a long line of daily blessings that I have the privilege to experience as headmaster of this school. Thank you for your part in making this school what it is! Enjoy!

Mr. Moss

PS—The original article can be found at www.theatlantic.com.

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Editor: Luke Shawhan

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A Confirmation of *Buy Experiences, Not Things*

Samantha Sellers



In this day and age, material possessions are abundant. People believe they must have the latest and greatest technology, the nicest houses and cars, and the best fashion styles. However, in recent years, there has been a push to “simplify” life. This is a lifestyle known as “minimalism,” and the people who adopt the lifestyle are known as minimalists. These people pare down their material possessions in order to spend their time and money on experiences because they believe in experiences over accumulation of stuff. When they do make purchases, they believe in quality over quantity. This lifestyle is seen through, yet not explicitly stated in, the article by James Hamblin titled “Buy Experiences, Not Things.”

The author of the article, James Hamblin, MD, is a writer and senior editor for *The Atlantic*, author of the book *If Our Bodies Could Talk*, and the host of the online video show of the same name. He attended and received his degree in medicine from the Indiana University School of Medicine, completed a three-year residency after med school, and joined the *Atlantic* to write for their health section. He has spoken at Harvard Medical School, Wharton Business School, and Columbia Mailman School of Public Health. He is primarily known for preventive healthcare and bioethics in the medical world and his creative nonfiction writing style in the writing world. James Hamblin has been published by reputable publications such as *The New York Times*, *Politico*, *NPR*, *The Guardian*, *Elle*, *The Washington Post*, *The Awl*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Marketplace*, and others have featured his writings and videos.

In addition, throughout the article, the author cites credible individuals’ scientific studies. These individuals are Matthew Killingsworth, Daniel Gilbert, Thomas Gilovich, and Amit Kumar. Matthew Killingsworth earned his Ph.D. in psychology at Harvard University and is a Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholar who studies the nature and causes of human happiness. Daniel Gilbert is a Professor of Psychology who has won awards for research and teaching, presented TED talks that have reached over 15 million people, and is interested in social psychology. Thomas

Get wisdom;
get insight;
do not
forget, and do
not turn away
from the
words of my
mouth.
...The
beginning of
wisdom is this:
Get wisdom,
and
whatever you
get,
get insight.
Proverbs 4:5,7

Gilovich is a Stanford University graduate who is now a Professor of Psychology at Cornell University who has conducted research in social psychology, decision making, and behavioral economics. Amit Kumar received his Ph.D. from Cornell University and was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Chicago. He is now the Assistant Professor of Marketing and Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Understanding who these individuals are in terms of education and experiences reinforces that they are credible sources for the author to use.

The author is very clear throughout the article that spending money on material possessions is inferior to spending money on experiences and the anticipation of those experiences is more significant than the anticipation of buying material possessions. He does not deviate from the main point, yet enhances the point with information from scientific studies on happiness with purchasing both possessions and experiences by Matthew Killingsworth, Daniel Gilbert, Thomas Gilovich, and Amit Kumar. Using learned and credible individuals as sources for scientific studies not only clarifies and reinforces the main point of the article, yet also strengthens the author's credibility.

It is probable that there are two groups of people that will react to this article: 1) those who could not imagine giving up buying possessions, yet could give up experiences, and 2) those who fully agree with buying experiences and not possessions.

While I enjoy material possessions, I would be one who fully agrees with buying experiences and not possessions due to the experiences with which I have been blessed thus far in life. The article points out that “looking back on purchases made, experiences make people happier than do possessions” and “spending money on experiences provides more enduring happiness.” I would agree with these statements because material purchases satisfy for a time, whereas experience memories last forever. There are countless material possessions that I have bought and enjoyed during the course of my life that are now long gone—sold in a garage sale or donated—and I don't think about them anymore. In contrast, I have memories of experiences and vacations I have had—good and bad—that have stuck with me longer than those old possessions that have been forgotten. These reasons support what the author says in the article is true.

The article points out that “experiences tend to make people happier because they are less likely to measure the value of their experiences by comparing them to those of others.” This is plausible because material possessions are all the same and each experience is different. It is evident that an iPhone is an iPhone is an iPhone. While an iPhone is a great piece of technology, you know what you will receive when you are buying the phone and everyone's iPhone of that style is the same, yet with an experience, you will not know what to expect and no one else will be able to copy your experience since it is unique to you.

A message that the article conveys is “even a bad experience becomes a good story,” and in my personal experience, that is true. The article says “even if it was negative in the moment, it becomes positive after the fact. That’s a lot harder to do with material purchases because they’re right there in front of you.” On our last family vacation to Florida, I became sick with three different infections, which was no fun at the time. In pictures from the vacation, I look miserable, yet that vacation holds fond memories despite my being sick. Some of those memories include playing on the beach, driving down the coast, staying on a Naval Base, and watching the sun set below the ocean in the evenings. Today, when I think of Florida, I remember being sick on the last vacation we took there, which is not so sad now, but rather, a good memory to share.

There was another vacation when we were in Italy and were kept awake at night by frogs in a pond outside the window of where we were staying. At the end of the vacation, a friend who travelled with us bought little glass frogs for us as keepsakes in order to remember the annoying frogs from outside the window. At the time, the frogs were frustrating and sleep was scarce, yet it is a good story to tell whenever someone asks about the little glass frogs on our shelf.

The author is very consistent throughout the article—reinforcing the main point that spending money on material possessions is inferior to spending money on experiences. This is seen through excerpts such as “experiential purchases like trips, concerts, movies, et cetera, tend to trump material purchases because the utility of buying anything really starts accruing before you buy it”; “looking back on purchases made, experiences make people happier than do possessions”; and “[purchasing experiences creates opportunities] to connect with other people.” These are just a few of the excerpts that demonstrate the main point of the article that spending money on material possessions is inferior to spending money on experiences, yet they give a clear and consistent insight on the central idea. This demonstrates the author’s consistency throughout the article.

As previously stated, the author has done an excellent job of stating and demonstrating throughout the article his point that people should buy experiences and not things, discussing people’s happiness with experiences versus possessions, and encouraging social interaction with experiences that are hard to have with material possessions. This is seen in the excerpt “...buy this and you can talk about buying it, and people will talk about you because you have it.” The author is correct in his assertions throughout the article.

Today, when I think of Florida, I remember being sick on the last vacation we took there, which is not so sad now, but rather, a good memory to share.

This article targets a broad audience—individuals who are looking for happiness in their lives and individuals who have adopted the minimalist lifestyle and are in full support of the article’s message. This is an important topic to think of in the day and age we live in where possessions are all around us and at our fingertips—in advertisements, stores, online, the list goes on. It is fitting to make the connection between experiences and possessions in correlation with the happiness they bring people. The author makes the statement “It turns out, those sorts of stories [people pepper-spraying each other while waiting in line in order to get a material possession] are much more likely to occur when people are waiting to acquire a possession than an experience. When people are waiting to get concert tickets or in line at a new food truck, their moods tend to be much more positive.” Overall, the article is expedient because it addresses an important topic that presents itself in our world today.

The article sheds light on an important dilemma that people encounter today—spending money on material possessions is inferior to spending money on experiences and the anticipation of those experiences is more significant than the anticipation of buying material possessions. The author used scientific studies in which research showed that experiences bring more happiness than possessions from credible individuals, such as Matthew Killingsworth and Amit Kumar, which in turn, strengthened his credibility and clarity when explaining his position. Overall, the article was well-written and the content thoroughly explained and demonstrated to be true.

There are countless material possessions that I have bought and enjoyed during the course of my life that are now long gone—sold in a garage sale or donated—and I don’t think about them anymore. In contrast, I have memories of experiences and vacations I have had—good and bad—that have stuck with me longer than those old possessions that have been forgotten.

Staff Birthdays

December

12/5—Robin Harrison
12/26—Tracy Mercer



January

01/06—Judy Daugherty
01/20—Lisa Loyd
01/30—Jedidiah Moss

February

02/01—Jeanette Johnson
02/04—Phil Mendenhall
02/15—Dustin Bush
02/24—Janelle Schriver

First Semester Pictures



9th and 10th graders enjoying a game of archery tag capture the flag



Kindergarteners feeding the giraffe at Wild Animal Safari



Charlotte and Ragyn trying to capture the first snow of November



Left: 7th grade girls showing excitement for the Frisbee tournament

Right: Mr. Bush prepping the K-3rd grade choir for the Christmas concert



OPPORTUNITY:

A GCA grandparent has generously put forth a matching gift challenge for the 2018-2019 school year. Every dollar given will be matched up to \$10,000 and will allow GCA to receive \$20,000 total if another \$10,000 is given by the end of the current school year. If you feel led to give to this cause, please let me know or put "PAY DOWN DEBT" in the memo of your check.

All of the blessings received by the school, we acknowledge as coming from the gracious hand of our Lord Jesus through His faithful and obedient servants. We offer our praise and thanksgiving to Him and pray His blessings on those who obey His leading. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this great adventure!



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Return Service Requested

January 2019

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| 1 | Tuition Payment Due |
| 1-8 | Christmas/New Year's Break — No School |
| 7-8 | Teacher Training |
| 9 | First Day of 2nd Semester |
| 21 | MLK Jr. Day — No School |
| 24 | High School History Day: 9am |
| 25 | Pajama Day |

February 2019

- | | |
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| 1 | Tuition Payment Due |
| 11-12 | Optional Parent/Teacher Conferences 4-6pm |
| 18 | President's Day — No School |
| 21 | Skating Party: 6—8 PM |
| 22 | Lively Locks and Lids Day |

March 2019

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|-------|---|
| 1 | Tuition Due
Last Day for Reenrollment Discount |
| 7 | Last Day of 3rd Quarter |
| 8-17 | Spring Break— No School |
| 18 | First Day of 4th Quarter |
| 21 | Tri-Math-A-Lon: 1:00 PM |
| 28 | Battle Grammatica (3rd-7th grade) |
| 28-29 | Intramural Soccer Tournament: 4:00 PM |