1st & 10 - Money is Expensive

August 20, 2026

Do you ever have those months where your spending seems over the top? And not that you are out buying a Rolex and eating steak dinners every night? Earlier this month my wife and I were having a conversation about the "outflows" from our bank account (for all good things of course), and then it popped into my head. **MONEY IS EXPENSIVE**. Kind of a funny saying, but really what it gets at is that life and daily living IS more expensive that ever before. And sometimes it feels that our income/investments aren't keeping up. Of course there are seasons more demanding than others, and our August-mania that I mentioned last month is our example. Is Money Expensive to you?

1. Inflation has been a pain in our backside since 2022. What is your favorite inflation example? Mine right now is the cost of coffee. $4 at nearly every shop. Was $2 pre-COVID…and I drink a lot of coffee! (for those who don't know, the Panera Sip club is an amazing budget hack) On the flip side, I am also amazed at the cost of TVs. When I was in Costco a few weeks ago just browsing before grabbing toilet paper and eggs, I saw an incredible looking 65" TV for $350! I'm sure those were priced at $3,000+ ten years ago. One of the rare cases of deflation we can enjoy these days.
2. I'm tired of the Iran war, so we are not going to talk about it. But what about the economy slowing? We saw a recent Triple Whammy – lower inflation, falling income, slower consumer spending. One month does not a trend make (thank you Yoda), but something to keep an eye on for sure.
3. The Mid-term elections are around the corner…and should be very interesting. Some democrats are turning socialist (do they really know what that means – and is that what we want in America?). Republicans supported by Trump flailed in the primaries to no one's shock. Trump's approval ratings are falling fast, and no one, and I mean no one approves of Congress. Of all the issues concerning Americans, my guess is that old reliable will win the day – it's the economy stupid.
4. Have you been following the stock market? It has been maddening. But in the world of investing, emotions should be treated as passengers and not drivers or navigators. *That's why you have (or should have) an advisor.*
5. Do you own traditional bonds? I'm sorry. But the pain may be ending. FYI - our fixed income portfolios are doing just fine thank you…with very little exposure to traditional bonds. ***Generating retirement income is one of our core competencies.***
6. Precious metals – here we go again! Enjoy the ride! (I'm not convinced it will get as crazy as Michael Oliver predicts, but there is a strong case to be made for significant new all-time highs)
7. The Panera Sip Club is my personal favorite budget hack. $100/yr for unlimited drinks. Speaking of budget hacks, are your home insurance premiums out of control? I review mine every year and switch companies every 2-3 years. This can save you **THOUSANDS** for just a little work. We can even help you shop it around if you need.
8. Debt is future consumption pulled forward in time (read that again). Many times debt feels benign. You need the cash today and pay for it tomorrow. No biggie. But what if your income tomorrow wasn't strapped with debt payments? Wouldn't life be easier? And heaven forbid

your income is lower in the future - that would really hurt with debt payments. All that to say, **be careful with your debt decisions.** With interest rates continuing to rise, the cost of that debt gets more expensive every day. We have some great tools to help with debt analysis and planning. Let me know how to help!

9. Another personal finance tip this month: Proactive tax mitigation takes the surprise out of April 15th every year. Do you have a proactive tax plan? Or just reactive tax frustration? Here is simple guide, but you can contact us for a custom plan.
10. August-mania is nearly over (thanks for asking). We take our last and youngest to college in Michigan this weekend. People keep asking…are you ok? Sad? Ecstatic? What will you do without the kids at home? Are you going to throw a party? We are certainly going to miss them, but in truth, we are looking forward to this next season. To watch them all make a difference in the world is something I am super excited about. IMHO our job as parents has been to impart our family values and give them as many tools and opportunities as possible so that they can discover meaning, success, love, service and growth as adults. That is my hope and prayer for each of them. But when we get back from Michigan, I am going to take a nap…and then start planning trips to go see my kiddos.

WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT I SHOULD KNOW? CAN YOU INTRODUCE ME?

Thanks for taking a minute to read this. Let me know how I can help YOU!

God bless,

Josh