

November 2018

You've likely heard the phrase, "retail therapy." If someone is having a difficult season or feeling depressed, heading out to a retail store and buying something is supposed to make things better as the blues are chased away and euphoria sets in. My cousin would often say, "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping."

Sounds like that treatment can get pretty expensive!

On those days when I need a pick-me-up, and even on occasions when I'm actually feeling really good, I like to engage in what I call "detail therapy." It doesn't cost me anything except a little bit of time. Not only do I save a lot of money but the benefits last a long time and there is no risk of overdoing it.

Here in our Mission:Dignity office we have a file drawer full of letters from retired pastors and their widows we assist through the ministry. While some of the notes are rather brief, there are others that are several pages long. A widow shares the story of her husband's 40-plus years of preaching and tells of some of the humorous events that took place in a few of those small churches. An 80-year-old pastor lets us know about all the things he and his wife of six decades can now do because of the extra check that is sent to them every month. Someone relates how life has changed since they have been able to purchase a long-needed set of hearing aids or a pair of eyeglasses.

Even the words of thanks to God and our Mission:Dignity donors can take a paragraph or two to express. This letter from Joyce Paul, a widow in Kentucky, is one example:

Dear friends, I personally want to thank those who donate to Mission:Dignity and want you to know, as a recipient of those generous gifts God has laid on your heart to provide, that it has been a blessing to me and made my life less stressful.

My husband was in the ministry over 40 years and we raised six children. Our salary was never sufficient in and of itself, but God, as He always does for His own, provided many needs through His people such as good hand-me-down clothing for our children. We had several vehicles given to us when people traded in their cars for new ones and many other things. My husband and I

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learned that God sees our needs and provides for them from whatever source He chooses.

However, there was never enough to invest in life insurance or to plan for one of our deaths. Jim was the most generous man I ever knew in spite of how little we had. He trusted God to take care of us no matter what happened, and people like you who give of your resources have proven he was right.

I wish I could express how grateful I truly am and I pray daily for God to richly bless each of you and return many times over what you have unselfishly given. Thank you seems inadequate but it still best expresses how I feel.

That's just one of hundreds and hundreds of letters we get each year and I never tire of reading them. I try to share some of these through our monthly thank-you letters that go out with receipts and we post more on our website and Facebook page.

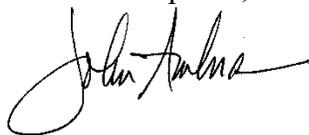
We've even compiled and published two hardcover books of these letters over the years through funds that were donated so we could share them with others. Our latest has 100 notes and four recipient stories. If you haven't received a copy and would like one, just let me know and I'll send it to you free of charge.

As you share your gift this month, and continue to do so in the future, you're not giving to a program, you're giving to people. And the individuals and couples on the receiving end use those funds to pay for specific things that make an enormous difference in their lives day by day. For them, it's not retail therapy — it's just plain survival.

I trust you feel good about giving to this great work and also knowing how your monies are being used for the good of others and for the glory of God.

Thanks once more for sharing so generously this month and for joining me in a little bit of detail therapy. I appreciate you!

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Ambra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Ambra".

John Ambra
Director of Development

P.S. 2018 is our 100th anniversary at GuideStone as we celebrate a century of caring for pastors and their families at the crossroads. Giving Tuesday, November 27, will be our BIGGEST single day ever as we join together in generous online giving to help God's faithful servants in need. Gifts made on that day will be DOUBLED thanks to \$250,000 in matching gifts made available to us. You can find out more information by visiting our website at www.MissionDignity.org/GivingTuesday or checking out our Facebook page at www.Facebook.com/MissionDignity. Save the date and encourage others to join you in sharing a Centennial Celebration gift for Mission:Dignity on November 27!