AMERICANS LIVE IN ONE OF THE MOST CONSUMER-DRIVEN SOCIETIES IN THE WORLD. IT IS NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT BAYLOR FACULTY MEMBER JAMES ROBERTS, JR., THE BEN H. WILLIAMS PROFESSOR OF MARKETING, DECIDED TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR OBSESSION WITH MATERIALISM, WHY WE KEEP SPENDING AND THE EFFECTS OF THIS CYCLE.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF OUR OBSESSION WITH POSSESSIONS

Roberts, a leading researcher and expert in consumer behavior, wrote Shiny Objects: Why We Spend Money We Don’t Have in Search of Happiness We Can’t Buy, published by HarperOne in November 2011. “My book documents the prevailing consumer ethos that more is never enough and that happiness can be purchased at the mall, online or from a catalog,” Roberts said. “Money and the accumulation of material possessions are such an integral part of our consumer culture that few have stopped to think how this materialistic approach has impaired their quality of life.”

Based upon the latest research on the topic of materialism and written in an easy to understand, upbeat style, with a touch of humor, Shiny Objects addresses how our obsession with possessions impacts our sense of self, the quality of our interactions with others, and our willingness to get involved in community affairs and social issues.

“70% OF AMERICANS LIVE PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK.” Roberts said. “OVER 15 MILLION AMERICANS FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY IN 2010, AND BY EARLY 2011, THE AVERAGE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD CARRIED NEARLY $12,000 IN CREDIT CARD DEBT, AND YET WE THROW AWAY 350 MILLION CELLPHONES EACH YEAR AND SPEND OVER $4 BILLION ANNUALLY ON OUR PETS.”

Roberts’ book has received extensive media coverage from various news outlets, such as The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The Huffington Post and U.S. News and World Report. Roberts has also appeared on ABC’s “The Early Show” and Yahoo’s “Daily Ticker.”

USA TODAY: “Social Security Payments Would Fall With New Inflation Gauge.” Article quotes Bill Reichenthin, professor of finance and the Pat and Thomas W. Powers Chair in Investment Management, about a new measure to calculate inflation that would have a big impact on how much cash is distributed by Social Security.

ACTSEED.COM: “Finding Angel Halos Within Higher Education.” Article quotes Kevin Castello, executive director of the Baylor Angel Network, about how university-affiliated angel investing groups are helping fuel startups while supporting higher education.

B试题 WEEKLY: “Time to Admit It: The Sales Relationship Is Over.” Article about a study conducted by Christopher Blocker, assistant professor of Marketing, about business-to-business sales marketing.

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT: “Abusive Boss May Harm Workers’ Home Life, Too.” Article reports on research conducted by Dawn Carlson, professor of Management and the H.B. Gibson Chair in Management Development, and Meredith Fergusson, assistant professor of Management, who found that employees who interact with abusive bosses are more likely to have strained romantic relationships.

COMMONWEALTH MAGAZINE: “The Casino Debate’s Achilles’ Heel.” Article quotes Earl Gribbs, distinguished professor of Economics, about the problem gambling and casino revenue.

RISNEWS.COM (RETAIL INFO SYSTEMS): “Cross-Channel Analytics Challenge.” Article quotes Jeff Turner, associate dean of Research and Faculty Development and professor of Marketing, about customers increasingly nonlinear shopping patterns that have businesses, like Cabo’s, integrating multiple data sources to pull in customers.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY: “It’s More Always Better?” Article cites a study conducted by James Roberts, the Ben H. Williams professor of Marketing, and Chris Manolis, professor of Marketing at Xavier University, that finds having more free time and/or stuff generally does not make a person happier.