

AMERICANS LIVE IN ONE OF THE MOST CONSUMER-DRIVEN SOCIETIES IN THE WORLD.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT BAYLOR FACULTY MEMBER JAMES ROBERTS, 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 on 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 current consumer culture that few have stopped to think how this mad material dash has impacted 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.

"SOME 70 PERCENT OF AMERICANS LIVE PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK," ROBERTS SAID. "OVER 1.5 MILLION AMERICANS FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY IN 2010, AND BY EARLY 2011, THE AVERAGE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD CARRIED NEARLY \$10,000 IN CREDIT CARD DEBT. AND YET WE THROW AWAY 150 MILLION CELLPHONES EACH YEAR AND SPEND OVER \$41 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 CBS' "The Early Show" and Yahoo's "Daily Ticker."

"I wrote this book to help readers examine their day-to-day behavior, offering tips and tools to make the necessary changes," he said. "My book reveals the key to reversing the devastating and ever-increasing effects of materialism in modern culture, and I show readers how to actually increase well-being by scaling back."

ROBERTS POSES IMPORTANT QUESTIONS LIKE:

- ★ Do you have an emergency fund of at least \$2,500 for that proverbial rainy day?
- ★ Do you have at least six months' worth of living expenses in the bank in case you lose your job or become ill?
- ★ Are you regularly making investments to a retirement account?

"If the answer is 'no' to any of these, *Shiny Objects* offers the lessons needed to change spending habits, develop smarter saving strategies and cultivate lives of real value," Roberts said.

THE BOOK IS AVAILABLE FOR SALE AT
AMAZON.COM AND BARNES & NOBLE
(\$25.99; ISBN 9780062093608).

bbr.baylor.edu/breaking-the-cycle