

The Good Life, or a Life with Goods? Resident Aliens in a Consumerland of Disordered Desire

One of the most prominent but least analysed features of the modern world is consumerism, and the way it has brought a level and lifestyle of prosperity to more people than ever before. Yet we Christians owe the Lord and our world a tough Christian critique of consumerism at many points -- above all of the way in which consumerism has replaced the vision of "the good life" with a vision of "life with goods."

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Introduction

1. Trace the contours of the rise of consumer culture
 - a. Emergence of fashion
 - b. Commercial revolution
 - c. Industrial revolution

2. Understand the key shifts in the advanced consumer culture
 - a. Production to motivation
 - b. Fordism to post-Fordism
 - c. Material to immaterial
3. Appreciate the significance for individual consumers
 - a. Self-creation
 - b. Reinforcement of sin
 - c. Production of junk
4. Appreciate the consequences for global consumer culture
 - a. Promotion of debt

- b. Production of waste
 - c. Crisis of sustainability
- 5. Be realistic about the effectiveness of different types of ethical resistance
 - a. Co-op movements
 - b. Consumer rights
 - c. Ethical consumerism
- 6. Take special note of the apologetic significance of consumerism
 - a. Revaluation of Good life

- b. False idols
 - c. Restless hearts
- 7. Make sure our general responses to consumerism are Christian
 - a. Gratitude for material
 - b. Contentment
 - c. Responsibility/generosity

Conclusion