



# RAYMOND JAMES®

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## A Closer Look



### MARKET SUMMARY

Investors were cautious for much of the month of January, likely waiting to see what President Trump would do during his first few weeks in office. After a slow close to December, equities picked up the pace during the early part of January. The market moved very little for much of the month until January 25th, when stocks surged. The Dow reached 20,000 for the first time while both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq reached all-time highs.

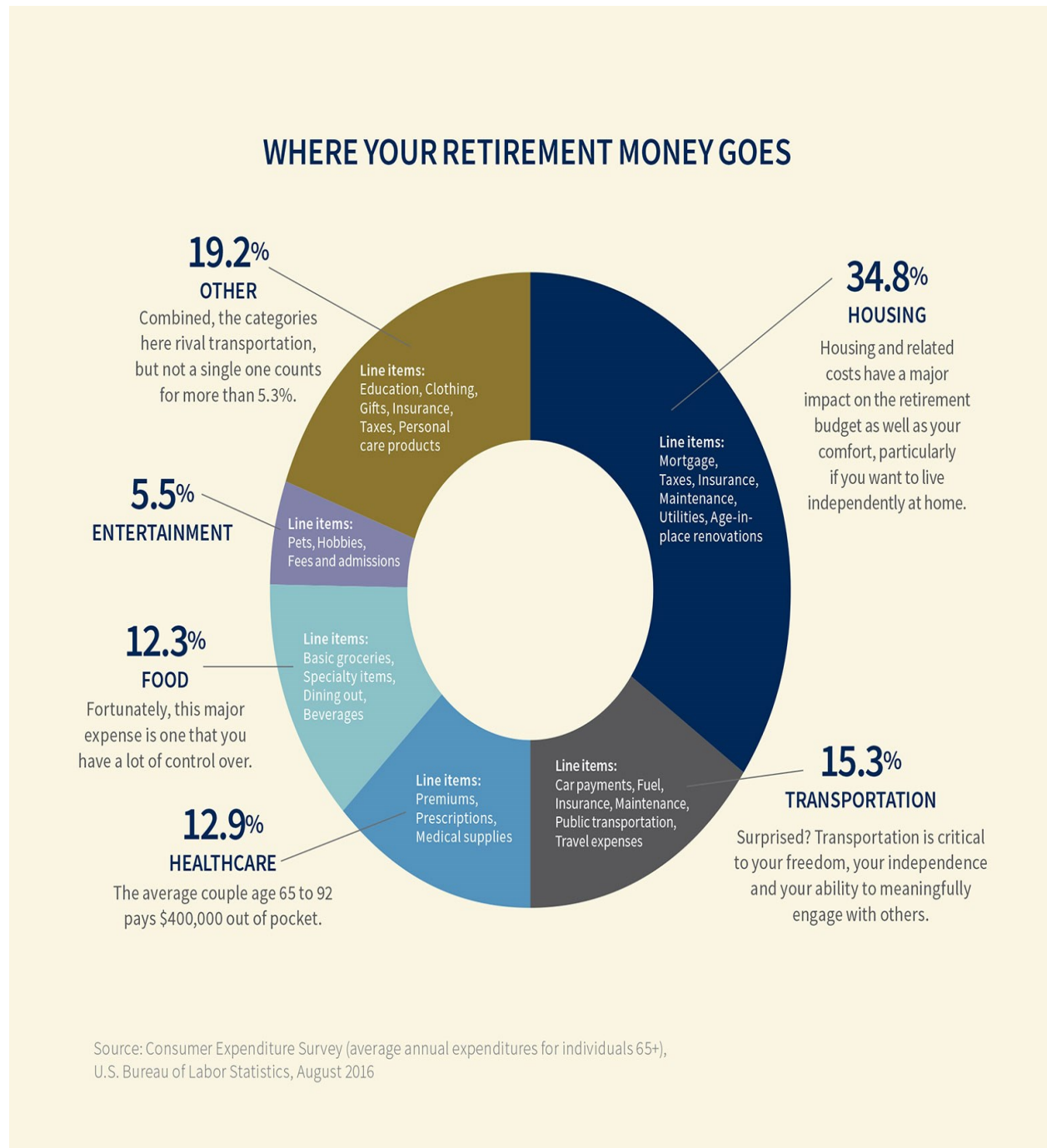
### MARKET OUTLOOK

The stock market climbed following the presidential election. January saw the Dow reach 20,000 for the first time in its history. The FOMC met during the first week in February and left interest rates unchanged. However indications are that rates will be increased throughout the year.

## WHERE YOUR RETIREMENT MONEY GOES

*As you consider a long, happy retirement, give some thought to the largest aspects of your budget. Where your money actually goes may surprise you.*

Wealth alone cannot buy a quality retirement any more than it can buy happiness – but having a solid financial foundation can make those years more enjoyable. As you consider a long, happy retirement, give some thought to the most expensive aspects – housing, transportation, healthcare and food – the effect of inflation and how to budget for it all. Entertainment should be included, too, since social activities enhance your physical and emotional well-being.



## IS DOW 20,000 A REASON TO CELEBRATE?



In many cases, the amount of attention something gets is inversely related to how important it actually is to the markets. In other words, the more the media and weekend investors talk about something, the less impact it generally has on stock prices. The Dow Jones Industrial Average hitting the 20,000 milestone is a perfect example of this phenomenon, and it likely will not matter much in the long run. It can, by all means, be celebrated, but it's hopefully just one threshold of many that will be hit along the way during the secular bull market that we believe is still fully in effect.

Dow 20,000 certainly sounds great, but there are a few things to keep in mind before putting too much emphasis on it. First, remember that the DJIA consists of just 30 U.S. stocks. It's not as representative of the broad market as it used to be, which is why the S&P 500 is more widely used for benchmarking purposes. Also, as the level of the Dow rises, each 1,000-point threshold represents a smaller and smaller percentage change; therefore, these milestones have less and less significance. As Bespoke Investment Group points out, "When people were focused on Dow 10,000 in 1999, 1,000 points represented 10% of the index. At 20,000, though, 1,000 points only represents 5%." In fact, the Dow hit 19,000 for the first time on November 22, 2016 – so the biggest surprise about hitting 20,000 is actually that it's happened so soon after 19,000.

There is nothing wrong with putting on your party hat to honor Dow 20,000, but it should be viewed as a stepping stone rather than a finish line. It likely will have no effect on the markets in the long run, and it shouldn't be something to be overly concerned or excited about



## WHY WORK WITH A CFP®

In life, it's important to find a financial planner you trust to provide sound, unbiased advice and professional services. Being CFP® certified means someone has voluntarily taken the extra steps needed to provide the highest possible standard of financial planning to those they serve.

How does working with a CFP® certified advisor benefit you? Certified Financial Planner™ professionals are held to the utmost standards of ethics and professional responsibility, which prepares them for a career-long commitment to provide truly personalized services to meet your needs; all while maintaining high levels of financial planning and professionalism. CFP® professionals maintain their professional edge through ongoing education and training in addition to the rigorous requirements to represent a high level of integrity, objectivity, competence, fairness, confidentiality, professionalism and diligence when working with you.



## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY'S ANNUAL "CHILI CHALLENGE"



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*Habitat for Humanity of Jackson County, Alabama was launched in 1998.*

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### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ...

Habitat for Humanity of Jackson County will be holding its annual "Chili Challenge" on Saturday, February 25th at Goosepond Civic Center from 11:00am to 2:00 CST.

Tickets are \$6.00 in advance, \$7.00 at the door, kids 6 & under free. Your ticket includes a chili hot dog lunch, free entertainment, and door prizes.... one of the door prizes being \$250. There will also be a Country Store, a Bake Sale, and a Silent Auction. One of the items on the Silent Auction this year is five tickets to Disney World! We will also have airline tickets, and other wonderful auction items. Come out and join the fun, and help support this very worthy organization that does so much good for the people of Jackson County!

Habitat for Humanity of Jackson County, Alabama was launched in 1998 with a Mission: "A world where everyone has a decent place to live." Habitat affiliates work locally in communities around the world to select and support homeowners, organize volunteers and coordinate house building and repair.

We are a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian ministry founded on the conviction that every man, woman and child should have a decent, safe and affordable place to live. We build with people in need regardless of race or religion. We welcome volunteers and supporters from all backgrounds.

Habitat builds a home in partnership with a family. The family helps with the physical labor of building the house. At the completion of construction, and satisfaction of partner requirements, the family purchases the home by borrowing money from Habitat. Habitat holds the mortgage. The loan is paid off over 15 to 20 years at no interest. There is a monthly mortgage payment consisting of principal (repaying the loan), taxes (real estate), and insurance (homeowners).

For more information about "Chili Challenge", or to apply for Habitat housing, call (256) 574-4138. [habitatjc@gmail.com](mailto:habitatjc@gmail.com)



### COFFEE CLUB!

Do you know about Thursday Morning Community Coffee Club? We meet every first Thursday of the month at Impact Learning Center from 9:30am to 10:30am. We always have a topic of discussion; usually related to the financial world, and current events. Coffee Club is an opportunity for us to gather with members of the community, whether they are current clients or not, to learn, discuss, to share ideas, and to fellowship. It's a very laid back atmosphere, we serve coffee and refreshments, and just enjoy being together. We welcome each of you to join us, and we would love for you to bring along a friend!



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