

PRUDENT PRINCESS

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The Gift of Thrift

Cheap-Chic: Building A Recession-Proof Couture

Brought to you by the Women's Ministry

BridgePoint Bible Church

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Call it what you like! But I have to say my favorite is "The Gift of Thrift" penned by Sue Stewart. Not only is it a gift to me, for the fun and variety it brings me, or the pleasure it brings my husband for the money I save, but also for the glory it brings God for the good use of His many blessings.

First, let me thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share with you a life-long pursuit of mine... frugality and simplicity. I think I can cover it best with the inductive approach... Who, What, When, Where, Why & How!

WHY?

1. Sharing – Acts 2:44-45 *"And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had... and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met."*

2. Stewardship

We live in a consumer society. A lot of us have a lot of stuff. Look at any department store!

Stewardship is expected of us...

"A steward is not an owner, but a manager. God is always the owner and we are always the managers of the many and various stewardship roles He has given to us... The areas of good stewardship that He requires of us are almost limitless. They would, of course, include life itself, the gift of children and the stewardship of His creation. Additionally, we would include the stewardship of our communication, the stewardship of time, the stewardship of truth and the stewardship of talents or giftings. Discovering and developing our spiritual gifts and natural talents for the purpose of blessing others and glorifying God is our duty." (richbrott.com)

3. Fun!

Who doesn't love a bargain? Thrift Store shopping = a treasure hunt!

WHAT?

All styles (especially "vintage"), seasons. Even holidays! Clothing, shoes, etc.

WHO?

Thrift shopping doesn't discriminate! Any gender, age, size, ethnicity, income!

WHEN?

Half-priced / %-off days, Mondays, Tuesdays < crowded

Strong economic times, weak economic times

WHERE?

See list of stores in the Houston area (my favorite – Family Thrift Store)

HOW?

With **PEACE!**

Prioritize – Know what you have. Otherwise you're not likely to be a good steward of God's provision. Organize like items. Get help, if necessary. After washing an item, hang it backwards to easily see what hasn't been worn yet. Plastic hangers=cheap, and keep your clothes in better shape.

Eliminate – Get rid of it after a year or **WEAR IT!** Place items in a bag or box in a designated place for donation. Choose a day/month to drop it off.

Apply – Tips for shopping at Thrift & Discount Stores:

- * Many thrift stores don't have restrooms. Go before you leave!
- * Take an experienced "thrift store shopper" along if you're new at it or feel overwhelmed at the thought of it.
- * Have knowledge of style you're looking for. I look for longer shirts, so I can eyeball that.
- * Have an item and/or color in mind. Larger thrift stores are organized by item and color, but not size. Smaller stores usually are sorted by item and size, not color.
- * Start on the end of the clothes with them facing you, and quickly scoot each hanger along.
- * Check for stains, missing buttons, working zippers, tears/holes or defects in material.
- * Some still have price tags on them, often making the selling price higher. May be worth it, may not.
- * If you don't REALLY like it, or can't decide, **DON'T BUY IT!** Better yet, ask a friend, but not one that likes "everything" or has trouble being honest!
- * Look for unique pieces. Eyeball the clothing from a distance and pick out a special fabric or style.
- * Mix and match! Best use of all pieces, extending your wardrobe.
- * Add a purse, belt, jewelry or scarf to dress it up.
- * If it doesn't have a price tag, they won't sell it to you. Don't waste your time!
- * **DON'Ts:** colors that don't compliment your skin and hair, denim jacket with jeans, clothing too short/too tight/too big, faded fabric, outdated style that's not chic (includes buttons), jacket lapels too wide/too narrow (depends on current style), not appropriate to your age, dry-clean clothing, be discouraged if you don't find anything. You can come back!
- * **DOs:** know your best colors, fits properly, covers all critical body parts, makes you smile when you look in the mirror, spend a little more for that really nice piece or one you'll get a lot of use out of (i.e. leather coat) "The best color in the whole world is the one that looks good on you." ~ Coco Chanel

How many of us have noticed fashion trends come & go? RealSimple online listed 10 trends...

10 Fashion Trends w/Staying Power (from realsimple.com - details on next page)

Leather Bomber Jacket	Peasant Skirt	Ankle Boots	Wedges
Baby-Doll Dress	Tie-Neck Blouse	Patent Leather	Animal Prints
Platform Shoes/Boots	Leggings/Skinny Jeans		

Celebrate – Take home your new purchase, and wash & wear it! Be sure and let everyone know the bargain you found when they ask! Donate the savings to a missionary family, pay a bill, put it in savings, or treat yourself out to a fun evening with what you saved!

Evaluate – Keep your closet lean and mean! After a year, check those hangers that are facing the same way you put them a year earlier. Get rid of them, or wear them! Truly consider if you should hold on to a piece you "hope" to get back into. Give yourself a time limit and stick to it. Can be a good motivator!

"Use your time well... Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is." ~ Ephesians 5:15-16

Fashion Trends with Staying Power –<http://www.realsimple.com/beauty-fashion/clothing/wardrobe-basics/fashion-trends-staying-power-10000001709685/index.html>

Leather Bomber Jacket

Why it keeps coming back: Strictly for the cockpit set when it debuted during World War II, the bomber jacket, which saw plenty of action on terra firma after it caught on with 80s-era trendsetters, like Madonna, is "chic and a little tough at the same time," explains Valerie Steele, director and chief curator of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, in New York City.

Keep it if: The cut flatters you and the style sticks as close to the original as possible, as any major variations tend to look passé. Take stock of the cuffs, too: "Leather cuffs are more classic than the ones with the knit ribbing," says Kathryn Finney, author of *How to Be a Budget Fashionista* (Ballantine Books, \$13, amazon.com).

Toss it if: It's exaggerated in any way. "No tight sleeves, loose bodies, or belts," cautions Robert Verdi, a fashion stylist based in New York City. "And if it's red with an embroidered eight ball on the back, ditch it."

Baby-Doll Dress

Why it keeps coming back: Ubiquitous in the 60s, the 80s, and even just recently, the Empire-waisted wonder "always returns because it's very forgiving," says Rebecca Taylor, a fashion designer in New York City. "People from thin to not-so-thin can wear these dresses, so no one wants to part with them," says Nicole Miller, a fashion designer in New York City.

Keep it if: It is made from a long-wearing fabric, like silk or wool, and has a trapeze or A-line shape - but no more voluminous than that," says Finney. The most recent iteration was positively billowing, bordering on maternity gear, and it probably won't be trendy again. Instead, store the subtler shapes that gradually flare away from the body.

Toss it if: The color (like an over-the-top hot pink), embellishments (ruffles and rosettes), or length (Shirley Temple—short) make it too youthful looking. "The age limit on looking good in this style is lower than you'd think," says Steele. "If you're not sure it's right for you, then it probably isn't."

Platform Shoes and Boots

Why they keep coming back: Platforms have made a footprint on almost every decade of the last century—arguably no more so than in the 70s, when they graced the feet of Stevie Nicks wannabes and hustled the night away under disco balls. "For a heel, they're easy to walk in, and they have a slightly funky edge," says Finney. Adds Trina Turk, a fashion designer in Los Angeles, "Hey, it's a powerful feeling to be taller!"

Keep them if: The shoe is sophisticated (you don't want to look like a mall-prowling teen) and at least somewhat practical. "A 4" heel and a 1" front platform is the max," says Nicole Miller. Any higher will look a little RuPaul—and be tough to walk in.

Toss them if: "Anything about them is too extreme—like design, material, or thickness of heel," says Carson Kressley, the host of Lifetime's *How to Look Good Naked*. In that case, what goes around definitely won't be coming around again.

Peasant Skirt

Why it keeps coming back: This floaty, feminine style has been a favorite of Summer of Love hippies, carpooling moms, and everyone in between. Who doesn't groove on an elastic waistband?

Keep it if: "It's unique looking, interesting, or hard to find—anything very ethnic, printed, or embellished, for example," says Verdi. Adds Rebecca Taylor, "Eyelet peasant skirts always look fresh."

Toss it if: "It's a bright color or neon," says Kressley. Most likely, those skirts won't come back; and if they do, you should be able to pick up a new one at low cost. Also, anything that's overly costumey—making you look like an extra in *Pirates of the Caribbean*—has got to go.

Tie-Neck Blouse

Why it keeps coming back: "It's a way to communicate sexy femininity without being revealing," says Trina Turk. Which is why power dressers from the hard-charging Gordon Gekko 80s to today have tied up deals in them.

Keep it if: "It's well made by a big-name designer, because they tend to use better proportions. Or if it's dramatic, with an extra-long tie, so it is a statement piece, not just that season's fad," says Verdi.

Toss it if: It's a cheapo, mass-produced take on the look, in which case it's bound to bear signs of its era (a too-boxy cut or a synthetic material that won't age well). And, says Taylor, "get rid of anything that's too reminiscent of *Tootsie*."

Leggings and Skinny Jeans

Why they keep coming back: Ultra-fitted bottoms—veterans of Debbie Harry’s style era and Debbie Gibson’s, too—are a recurrent trend for a reason. “Skinny jeans can be dressed up or down,” says Charles Malka, the founder of the Charles David line of shoes and accessories, while “leggings are a great way to show off your legs without showing skin—and perfect for layering in the winter,” points out Taylor.

Keep them if: You’ve invested in high-quality leggings, “because they’re charging more for them each time around!” says Valerie Steele. Any pairs in dark colors and free of lacy trim are worth stashing; they can stand in for tights during times when leggings are not au courant. As for skinny jeans, keep yours if they’re figure-flattering and made from “a pure, classic denim,” says Verdi.

Toss them if: Era-specific details—such as a distinctive wash, zippers at the ankles, or prominent embroidery—decorate the denim. “And get rid of any leggings in bright, all-the-rage colors or patterns—they’re not going to work again,” advises Kathryn Finney.

Ankle Boots

Why they keep coming back: Said to have been inspired by the footwear of 19th-century soldiers, ankle boots are “easy for women of all calf sizes to wear—and you can get the look and the height of a boot without having to go full-length under trousers,” says Robert Verdi.

Keep them if: They’re “made from fine leather in classic colors, like black, brown, and dark blue,” says Finney, and any necessary rehabbing can be done easily at a shoe-repair shop.

Toss them if: They have an obvious faux finish, like lizard, which can make the boots seem cheap, or if “the toes are too pointy, which makes your feet look a bit funny,” says Charles Malka. And retire boots with studs, fold-over flaps, or other touches that scream of-the-moment fashion.

Patent Leather

Why it keeps coming back: Since its invention in the early 1800s, the high-gloss finish has been hot (think Jazz Age Mary Janes and swingin’-60s go-go boots), not, and then hot again—repeatedly. “Patent leather gives your outfit an instant wow factor, but it’s still an approachable and wearable trend,” says Verdi.

Keep it if: It’s an accessory in a timeless style, such as a clutch or a simple handbag, skinny belt, or pumps, “especially in a basic color that will always resurface, like black, nude, red, or Bordeaux,” says Malka. Also a keeper: a patent trench coat with a classic cut.

Toss it if: It’s used in conjunction with another fad, like “a shiny shrunken jacket with shoulder pads,” says Kressley. “Joan Collins gave hers away, and you should, too.” The odds that two trends are going to be popular again at the same time are slim to none.

Wedges

Why they keep coming back: Generations of high-stepping women have loved these shoes since Italian designer Salvatore Ferragamo crafted the first pair from wine-bottle corks in the 1930s. “Wedges give women the psychological feeling of great height—but with much more comfort than typical heels,” explains Verdi.

Keep them if: They’re in pristine condition. Wedges are often made from materials—like cork, natural sisal, or Lucite—that are vulnerable to wear and tear. “This trend comes back in almost exactly the same way, so hang on to the ones that have that vintage look,” says Kressley.

Toss them if: “They don’t have an open toe; closed-toe wedges tend to be uncomfortable, and you’re never going to want to wear them again,” warns Nicole Miller. Says Charles Malka, “Chuck the winter ones, too. This is a style mostly worn in the summer.”

Animal Prints

Why they keep coming back: “Animal prints play off the idea of women being vixenish, wild, and fierce,” says Valerie Steele. So it’s no surprise that fashionistas have been spotted in the prints since the cave-dwelling days—though the trend is most strongly identified with the 50s and 60s, when it was favored by sultry pinup girls, like Bettie Paige and Ann-Margret.

Keep them if: The pattern is in the “large cat” family (cheetah and leopard prints) or black-and-white zebra zigzags, which have the most staying power. Accessories like handbags, belts, and ballet flats hold up well, as do blouses and basic sweaters, like cardigans and V-necks. And stow coats and dresses with enduring silhouettes, such as wrap and A-line designs.

Toss them if: “The print is really bold—giraffe or spotted pony—or in unnatural colors, like lime green or pink,” says Carson Kressley. Also ditch larger-than-life patterns that aren’t true to scale.

Fashion Trough the Decades – <http://www.realsimple.com/beauty-fashion/clothing/fashion-through-the-decades-0000000025059/index.html>