

The Concurrently Companion



Episode 63: Housing crisis and finding contentment

Topic introduction

Today, we are looking at housing in the news. The 2023 State of the Nation's Housing Report produced an article in conjunction with Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. It has been much in the news: the rising costs of rental homes in the United States of America, how evictions are spiking, and the tension between the choice to own a home or rent a home. What do we observe? How does it affect our understanding of the world? And how do we, as believers, respond?

Key terms: housing cost burden, median home cost, debt-to-income ratio, median income, vocations, mortgage, redlining

Questions

We encourage you to print out the article, consider watching the video component linked in the show notes, and SOAR the media, using the following as supplemental questions:

Survey

What is the topic under review for today?

Observe

What do you notice about the topic area? How is the data sourced?

Who contributed? What does each contributor bring to the table in terms of expertise (education, training, experience)?

What do you notice about the numbers: ratios, percentages, income levels, etc.?

What do you notice in the data about families from diverse minority groups and socioeconomic situations?

What questions do they bring up for you?

Analyze

What does it take to procure a mortgage? What do banks consider?

How does debt come into the picture? How does vocation/occupation come into the picture?

What other sources and data do we need in order to understand the numbers we see in this report? What historical context do we need to have?

What goes into owning a home? Renting a home?

How does housing affect families/people who *want* to have a family?

How do changing attitudes towards (and understanding of) how to steward the environment affect the picture of housing in the U.S.?

What questions does this article raise that you can use to develop your understanding of people's experiences around the world? How does understanding the situation within North America help you discern contexts beyond your own?

Respond

How can we cultivate an abundance perspective? How would that transform our actions?

How are we using our vocations to love neighbor—to promote human flourishing in the world?

Where can we engage in making life better for those around us? What power has been put into our hands that we can use to serve?

Where do we have the privilege of engaging the world in which the Lord has placed us?

Scriptural anchors/provision

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. — Isaiah 65:21-22

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. — John 14:1-3

Not that I'm speaking of being a need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need, I can do all things through him who strengthens me. — Philippians 4:11-13

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