

# WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of Jan. 4, 2016

## THE MARKETS

Wall Street completed a turbulent 2015, due largely to the year's dramatic fall in crude oil prices. On the final day of trading, stocks dropped overall. The S&P energy sector was the exception, gaining 0.34 percent following an unusual increase in oil shares. For the week, the Dow fell 0.72 percent to close at 17,425.03. The S&P lost 0.80 percent to finish at 2,043.94, and the NASDAQ dropped 0.81 percent to end the week at 5,007.41.

Returns Through 12/31/15	1 Week	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Dow Jones Industrials (TR)	-0.72	0.21	0.21	12.66	11.30
NASDAQ Composite (PR)	-0.81	5.73	5.73	18.37	13.55
S&P 500 (TR)	-0.80	1.38	1.38	15.13	12.57
Barclays US Agg Bond (TR)	-0.03	0.55	0.55	1.44	3.25
MSCI EAFE (TR)	-0.27	-0.81	-0.81	5.01	3.60

Source: Morningstar.com. \*Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.

**Nothing for Me** — An early April 2015 survey (a total of 1,015 people participated) found one out of seven American workers (14 percent) do not believe Social Security will ever pay them a penny of retirement benefits (source: Gallup, BTN Research).

**Parents or Kids?** — According to a July 2014 survey, 31 percent of U.S. households are providing financial assistance to adult children, a larger number than the 21 percent of U.S. households that are providing financial assistance to elderly parents (source: American Consumer Credit Counseling, BTN Research).

**More Than Half the Gain** — The total return of the S&P 500 over the past five calendar years (2010-2014) is 105.1 percent (total return). The best 12 trading days during the five years (i.e., 12 days out of 1,258 total trading days) produced a 53.7 percent gain. Thus, 1 percent of trading days over the past five years was responsible for 51 percent of the index's total return (source: BTN Research).

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## WEEKLY FOCUS – Financial Resolutions for 2016

After Wall Street's bumpy ride in 2015, more Americans are expected to make financial resolutions for the upcoming year. In case you haven't identified yours, here are some to consider.

**Save more.** If you're still employed, go beyond your employer's match. Aim to put 10 percent (or more) in your retirement fund. If that is difficult, track expenses to find things to cut and create a strategic budget. Then increase contributions 1 to 2 percent every three months. If you don't have an emergency fund equal to six months of income, start one by putting aside current savings at the gas pump and on natural-gas utility bills.

**Reduce debt, safeguard credit.** Plan to eliminate debts before retiring, including your mortgage if possible. Consolidate credit accounts by closing a few and automate payments to avoid missing one. Sign up for credit monitoring to notify you when key information on your file changes.

**Create a long-range plan.** Go to [ssa.gov/myaccount](http://ssa.gov/myaccount) to estimate Social Security benefits you'd receive when claiming at different ages. Determine how much more you'll need to maintain your lifestyle. If you're married, project future expenses if you both live to 95 or either of you dies and the other lives to 95.

**Review investments, insurance and estate plan.** Make sure you know exactly what you're invested in. Assess your investment strategy and allocation to determine whether they reflect your goals and current life stage. Make sure your insurance coverage is adequate and beneficiaries are up-to-date. If you haven't reviewed your estate plan recently, you've moved or your assets or your family has changed, schedule a meeting with your estate-planning attorney.

**Invest in yourself.** Health care is expensive. Studies indicate the average 65-year-old couple will need around \$250,000 for medical expenses not covered by Medicare. Taking steps to stay fit may help you enjoy retirement and save money. Funds spent on healthy food, a gym membership or even a personal trainer could pay multiple dividends over time.

**Work with a coach.** Your odds of successfully implementing goals increase when you have a knowledgeable partner. Make an appointment to discuss your financial resolutions and how we can work together to make 2016 a happy and prosperous new year!



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\* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America. SA#1382147.1