



“Whatever”: Simultaneously the Worst and Best Word We Have

By Shawn McEvoy

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute... dwell on these things (Philippians 4:8).

On the one hand, it’s al-



Q & A, Why College Savings MS may be the perfect destination for your Child Tax Credit payments

Q&A with Treasurer David McRae | Why College Savings MS may be the perfect destination for your Child Tax Credit payments

I’ll be honest: the last thing on my kids’ minds right now is school. They are taking in every ounce of summer they can, and I wouldn’t change that for the world. But by the time summer ends, they’ll be a grade level higher – and a step closer to college. Are you ready? For most families, the answer is: Not even close!

This summer, however, I’m hopeful many families can use their federal Child Tax Credit payments to begin making progress toward their college savings goals. How? Well, we answer that question – and more! – below.

Q: What is the Child Tax Credit payment?

A: The latest federal COVID relief package expanded the Child Tax Credit and made it so a portion of that credit would be paid before Tax Day. As such, beginning July 15, families will receive \$300 per month for a child under six and \$250 per month for a child under 18. To qualify for the full credit, families had to have made less than \$150,000 in 2020 as a married couple or \$75,000 as a single parent.

Q: Will I get these payments forever?

A: No. The first payments will be issued July 15 and will go out every month after that until December 2021.

Q: If I want to use these payments to save for college, how much would that cost?

A: Just \$25 will get you started with a Mississippi 529 plan.

Q: Do I have to be a parent to start an account?

A: No! Just about any Mississippi resident can, including grandparents, aunts and uncles, and even family friends.

Q: There are two different types of plans in which I can invest, right? What’s the difference?

A: Yes, there are two plans: MACS and MPACT. A MACS account is just like a savings account. You can contribute as much or as little as you’d like. You then get to earn interest on anything you invest. These plans are also very flexible. You can use them for tuition, room and board, and even books. A lot of people don’t realize you can also use them for elementary and secondary school tuition or even an apprenticeship program. MPACT on the other hand, lets you lock in today’s tuition rates and protect your family from any future hikes. You then get set up with a payment plan, so by the time your child goes to college, it’s all prepaid.

Q: When do you recommend families start investing in a college savings plan?

A: As with most things, the earlier the better. My kids are 5, 6, and 10, and we have started plans for each of them.

Q: How do I learn more about a college savings plan?

A: You can visit our website, Treasury.MS.gov/CollegeSavings, or give us a call at (601) 359-3600.

I hope you found this short Q&A helpful! Please don’t hesitate to let our team know if we can answer any other questions.

Mississippi Treasurer David McRae is the 55th Treasurer for the State of Mississippi. In this role, he helps manage the state’s cash flow, oversees College Savings Mississippi, and has returned more than \$20 million in unclaimed money to Mississippians. For more information, visit Treasury.MS.gov.



ways good to get scientific affirmation for something you believe or suspect.

On the other, it’s never fun when you’ve been planning to write about that same belief or suspicion for over a year and someone goes out and steals your thunder.

But that’s okay - a Fox News report about a survey by Marist College on the most annoying words in American conversation just gives me the excuse to get around to it now.

The article states: 47 percent of Americans surveyed in a Marist College poll released Wednesday [found “Whatever” to be the most annoying word we use]. “Whatever” easily beat out “you know,” which especially grated a quarter of respondents. The other annoying contenders were “anyway” (at 7 percent), “it is what it is” (11 percent) and “at the end of the day” (2 percent).

“Whatever” — pronounced “WHAT”-ehv-errr” when exasperated — is an expression with staying power. Immortalized in song by Nirvana (“oh well, whatever, nevermind”) in 1991, popularized by the Valley girls in “Clueless” later that decade,

it is still commonly used, often by younger people.

It can be an all-purpose argument-ender or a signal of apathy. And it can really be annoying. The poll found “whatever” to be consistently disliked by Americans regardless of their race, gender, age, income or where they live.

I’ve felt that way for years. When someone uses “whatever” on me in a conversation or email, it’s a kick to the groin of non-importance. Beyond annoying, it’s rude and dismissive. It’s also ignorant, especially when delivered at the end of what was supposed to be a friendly debate or argument, because it illustrates that the person had no better retort and is now summarily ending the conversation with a parting shot connoting that nothing you just said mattered anyway. “Whatever!”

In a country sorely lacking in civility, manners, and conversation skills... and ripe with apathy and self-importance, “Whatever” is the motto du jour.

Then again... what a powerful word it can be for our walk with Christ.

It’s kind of like when you are reading a play, or prepar-

ing to act in one. You have the script before you. There are minimal clues for how any word in the text should be read. What inflection, what level of voice, what tone shall I use? What does the context and the setting and the personality of the character tell me in regards to how this word or line is going to sound? Ultimately, you and the Director decide.

And I’ve decided that “Whatever” can be, if we so choose, the defining word of the Christian life. Because while few other words carry the same potential for dismissive rudeness, no other word holds the same potential for all-out surrender and steadfast faith. As my mother-in-law is fond of saying, spiritual maturity for her has involved moving from a “What-If?” faith to a “Whatever” faith.

I find you guilty in your sins.

Whatever you say, Lord, I repent and accept the sacrifice of your Son who atoned for them.

This situation you’re in is going to hurt.

Whatever. I know my faith will be made strong through trials, and that I can do all things through your strength.

You don’t know what the future holds; only I do.

Whatever it is, you deserve glory and honor and praise. Bring it on!

I want you to [go to Africa / give to this homeless person / quit this job / plant this church / preach my Word]

Whatever!

I know you think this is unfair compared to that person’s situation, but do not let comparison steal my joy from you.

Whatever, God. Whatever!

The Apostle Paul was the master of “whatever.” To wit:

Phil. 4:11: I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

1 Cor. 10:31: Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Gal. 6:7: Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Eph. 6:8: Whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

Phil. 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

So... Whatever!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1) Inflatable lifesaver
- 5) California border lake
- 10) ___ Linda, Calif.
- 14) Slick with lubricant
- 15) Love, French-style
- 16) Common and Christian
- 17) Works Christmas eve?
- 20) Men and women
- 21) Mania
- 22) Letters for a toddler
- 24) "To Kill a Mockingbird" author Harper
- 25) "Erie Canal" mule
- 27) 2,000 pounds
- 28) Web-footed males
- 30) "Out," to an editor
- 31) Suffix for the very best
- 32) Munro's nom de plume
- 33) Brilliant
- 35) What a good weepie does?
- 39) Ore of lead
- 40) Ancient South American empire
- 43) Start to function?
- 46) Like some food orders
- 47) Well-seasoned stew
- 49) "What was ___ think?"
- 50) Female sheep
- 51) Charged-up atom
- 52) Tiny
- 53) Drummer Ringo
- 55) Refuse to take no for an answer
- 57) Has a long-awaited meal?
- 62) Frosts cupcakes
- 63) More sick
- 64) Opera feature
- 65) Button on a butcher's scale
- 66) Manicurist's board
- 67) Class ender

DOWN

- 1) One way to cross a river
- 2) Breathe it in
- 3) Griddle creation
- 4) Use an old IBM Selectric
- 5) Brownish grays
- 6) Abundant
- 7) Thing to never give up
- 8) "Days of ___ Lives"
- 9) Palindromic "before"
- 10) Look rudely
- 11) Showily adorned
- 12) Passover dumplings
- 13) Give the OK
- 18) Filet favorite
- 19) Cornea's companion
- 22) Classified things
- 23) One of Victoria's secrets
- 25) Nasal dividers
- 26) Nautical direction that avoids the wind
- 29) Card in a royal flush
- 30) "Beats me," slangily
- 33) Attack on a fort
- 34) Navy lockup
- 36) Steady twosome
- 37) Like a snail
- 38) Winter accessory in Buffalo
- 41) Give a signal to
- 42) Munched
- 43) Loner
- 44) Infamous New York prison riot site
- 45) Auto repair shop offering
- 47) Beads for the prayerful
- 48) Licorice-flavored liqueur
- 51) Conclude from the facts
- 54) Swell, as a river
- 55) Speck in the ocean
- 56) Pierce with a harpoon
- 58) Hotfoot it
- 59) Horrible Freddy's street
- 60) Shutout score, in soccer
- 61) Guy's go-with

OVER AND DONE WITH

By Timothy E. Parker

