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1 (56s):

Welcome to the Clark. Howard show our mission to serve and empower you. So you make better financial decisions in your life. Today. Walmart is turning up the heat as it competes with. Amazon also, if you want to sell your home, but don't want to deal with listing it. There's some new news from Zillow. I'm going to share it with you. So Walmart has been for the last two years, trying to figure out its competitive response to the enormous success of Amazon Prime. And so Walmart has Walmart plus which they keep tweaking.

1 (1m 39s):

And now I think it's a tweak worthy of mentioning and considering signing up for Walmart charges \$98 a year for plus. And what you get is you get unlimited free delivery of groceries in a hurry, and you get free delivery of any non food items in the store or many that are available@walmart.com. They can't be from third-party sellers. I got to be from Walmart where'd you get those delivered free, no minimum order in one to two days. Although, you know, I told this story recently about placing an order and I was so embarrassed because it is a special toothpaste.

1 (2m 27s):

My hygienist wants me to use and it showed up two hours later at the house. I thought, how much money did I cost Walmart for two tubes of toothpaste that they delivered in two hours, but that's not the design. The design is really for the non-food to come in one to two days. The advantage of Walmart over Amazon is the price as are generally a lot cheaper from Walmart than they are from Amazon, but what you don't get, well, let's talk about what you do. Get you get the groceries. Do you know, Amazon's grocery thing is not robust.

1 (3m 8s):

It's a very limited selection and generally very high prices just think of the whole paycheck influence on that. And that's why Amazon is trying to morph their groceries into Amazon's own grocery brand, separate from whole paycheck with more competitive prices. But it's a work in progress where with Walmart being pretty much in close proximity to 90 something percent of Americans, I guess it is the grocery prices are much cheaper than you're going to have from Amazon and much cheaper from the local traditional supermarkets figure, you know, to save about 20% on your grocery bill ordering through Walmart plus you are with the Walmart grocery delivery.

1 (4m 0s):

Tipping is expected with the Walmart non-food items. Tipping is not part of the system. So they're, there are nuances with it, the big advantage of Walmart plus over a Shipt. And what's the other, some of the Instacart and the other grocery delivery things is generally with those, you pay in a bubble, the market price for the groceries you're getting, when you order them through one of those apps at one of the participating grocery stores, your paying a different price, a higher price than somebody walks in the door to the store at those grocery stores.

1 (4m 47s):

Plus the delivery phase. You can join a membership with those, but you're still paying the higher price as for the groceries. So then the gap between getting groceries from Walmart plus and getting groceries through Instacart or any of its competitors like Shipt, which is actually owned by target, the price gap is even larger in that case, as far as what Amazon offers that Walmart plus does not have is the great Amazon prime video streaming service, the Amazon music service, there's a basic music service that's included in your Prime.

1 (5m 29s):

And then there's a fancy music service you have to pay for a lot of people who are just casual music listeners are thrilled and happy with the Amazon music service that comes with Prime. So those are Achilles heels for Walmart that even though it's cheaper than Prime, you're not getting the video or audio content, but I can't emphasize enough that day in and day out Amazon can be from to much more expensive than buying from Walmart. So if you are both convenience oriented and price oriented, that's where Walmart plus really can shine by the way that people have asked.

1 (6m 12s):

What's the latest with my saga, with the Amazon delivery disaster I had, which was so unusual because Amazon has such a good reputation for customer service. And I had ordered a, a, a platform box spring combination when it comes in a box that you build, and we had ordered one from Walmart and then my wife wanted one that was taller. So the Walmart one was nine inches high from Xenos. I think that's how you say that brand. Amazon for a \$55. More said theirs was 14 inches high.

1 (6m 52s):

So lane wanted the taller one. So I ordered it. It came well, no, it did not come. I ordered it. And it went last in space, disappeared in the shipping system, never came. So then they sent me a replacement that did come in four days. And so a belt the thing. And then I went and got a tape measure because it was the same exact height as the Walmart when the same exact one, just \$55 More did I feel stupid then? Like a wandering loss. So the original wind showed up weeks later and contacted Amazon said, what do I do?

1 (7m 37s):

And they said, well, you can keep it if you want. It is our compliments. I said, I don't want it. I wanted to send

it back. I don't need this thing. And so they sent me a ups prepaid label and I sent it back. And then yesterday I got a nasty gram from Amazon telling me they were charging me \$200 approximately for not having returned the item. So then I had another phone call with Amazon and they said that they were a not to worry about the bill. They were going to make it my gift. I said, but I returned it to you. Yes. Thank you. And we're just going to give to you this

2 (8m 17s):

I'm like really crappy Galatians to manage solutions for returning an item. There are going to give to me

1 (8m 22s):

My refund. So not my best Amazon story and unusual experience. I can't remember another time having such a customer, no service experience with Amazon. So that's the end of the story. I hope on my saga with Amazon. Well, listen to me,

2 (8m 44s):

Chitra and North Carolina wrote in about Clark. She said I have made an Amazon purchase. Recently. The product had a BOGO offer with an email address. I contacted the company via the email and got the second one for free promptly. The reply from the company asking for the Amazon purchase details. Also wanted to know if I'd be interested in testing their new products and to join a WhatsApp group of interested, which I did in the WhatsApp chat. I found out I need to first order the product to be tested via Amazon. And they would send the product cost. I paid on Amazon via PayPal in a few hours. Once they received the order ID and know the exact amount, this seems very suspicious to me.

2 (9m 26s):

Why not send me the product directly since they know my mailing address? What are your thoughts on this? I would like to bring this to the attention of the listeners. If it is indeed a scam,

1 (9m 41s):

Is that is something that I strongly recommend that you ignore. Don't do anything with that whole WhatsApp offer. They have about ordering this stuff. You pay for it. Then they're going to give you money back. I'm guessing it's about something I've talked about recently on the show a couple of times, which is how important it is for merchants to boost their sales rating on Amazon, you know, to be a verified purchase. And so they're essentially bribing you to give them a good rating is what I'm guessing. But that sounds just too hot to handle a lot could go wrong for you.

2 (10m 26s):

Kerry in Indiana says, Hey Clark, instead of using Coinstar or a service that charges money to cash in your change, I just bring my change to a store with a self-serve checkout. Most of them now have a change counter built in when making purchases, after you bring up my items, I dump all my change in first and then

pay the difference with bills or a card.

1 (10m 47s):

Okay. That is brilliant. And then I don't have to go through the whole thing and giving my wife, the Starbucks gift card from, from the Coinstar, where she then is encouraged to buy overpriced coffee. Like Krista has 18 inches from me. And do you go to Starbucks three or four times a day? No, not at all. So last phone call we had, you were,

2 (11m 13s):

I hated that you heard that they are like, see you tomorrow.

1 (11m 17s):

Wait, wait. It gets worse than that. They knew your voice. They knew your order before you stated it. They asked if they should make the one for your husband. Yes they did.

2 (11m 30s):

Clark what you heard was I do a mobile order, I guess that's not much better. I don't know why you even said that the, during the pandemic, I didn't order it all. I have my own machine at home, but now that I've started to come into the studio, I have been getting back in the habit, but it's no more than once a day, max, which is a lot.

1 (11m 49s):

I know, Hey, by the way, speaking of pandemic, now that we got the Johnson and Johnson shot approved and you've had Corona virus, it's probably going to be really appropriate for you to get just that one shot. Cause you will have the antibodies that you got that one and done for you, where it was too and done for me, that would be great. And it will be 'cause. You know, we are going to have wide availability of shots in the next, probably 30 to 45 days.

2 (12m 19s):

All right, listen to what's happened to Tom in Florida. He says, I, along with some other residents of my local County are having issues with our parks and recreation director and outside tennis company signed a contract with a director. And now this company, which isn't even located in our County is monopolizing the tennis courts and dictating when and who can play on the courts. Personally I've been hurt badly because I am a tennis instructor. The company has demanded that the township no longer issue permits to the other instructors and to other instructors. And they are trying to keep me off the court completely. I'm a tax paying citizen of the County. And I play with friends of mine as well as my wife, the tennis company knows I'm an instructor.

2 (13m 1s):

And that I, at one time worked as an independent contractor with this tennis company. In question, not only are they trying to keep me from making a living, but they don't want me to use the courts and to have even gone. As far as demand, I take my company magnets off my truck. Could you tell me what type of lawyer I need to fight back?

1 (13m 20s):

Alright, so you don't want to get into legal. You want to get into political, the political process. So I couldn't tell by your posts, if the decision-making body over the parks and rec director is the township or your County, whichever it is, that's where you need to apply political pressure. Everybody has been affected negatively by the parks director, citing with this third-party outside contractor. The politicians need to be brought and made aware of this and they need to be held accountable to make sure that taxpayers, citizens like you are treated fairly.

1 (14m 4s):

You go, the legal route is going to take years. The political route is how you can cut through this and try to get a fair resolution for you. And for others.

2 (14m 17s):

Phyllis in Washington says I was recently married. I sold my home to move to Washington, to be with my husband in five years, we'll build our forever home somewhere in Tennessee. How can I invest the proceeds from the sale of my home, \$55,000 to use towards a new home purchase in four to five years, do I keep a high yield it and a high yield money market savings account.

1 (14m 39s):

Boy, this one's tough. 55 grand using the money in four to five years is too short. A cycle two invest the money, especially how fully valued or potentially overvalued stocks are in the us stock market. So this is a case that calls for Dullsville you benefit from the increase in the value of the home. You sold. You have that 55,000 is better than it. Not really do a lot for you over these four to five years to keep it preserved and safe. So Dullsville is where it's at.

1 (15m 20s):

You put it in an online savings account. Interest rates eventually will become more normal. In the meantime, you'll just tread water and that's just good enough. And congratulations to you on your new marriage. Next, if you've been thinking about selling your home, speaking of homes, and you don't want the hassle of a listing Zillow is back in the buying business with a new special twist. I'm going to tell you about next,

0 (15m 52s):

This episode is brought to you by progressive saving money on your car. Insurance is easy with progressive. It's an average savings of over \$750 for customers who switch and Save in fact, customers can qualify for an

average of six discounts on their auto policy with progressive including discounts, just for starting a quote online or having multiple vehicles on their policy. Get your quote online@progressive.com and see how much you could be saving national annual average auto insurance savings by new customers surveyed in 2019 potential savings will vary discounts, very and are not available in all States and situations.

1 (16m 33s):

Over the years I bought and sold probably around Oh 1820 homes. And I've had every experience you could have as a buyer or seller. There is, I've had homes that have sold the day of listing. I had a home that took 14 months to sell. I had another, that took 21 months to sell in everywhere in between. And as a buyer, I've had pretty much every experience. You could have a good, bad and indifferent in buying a property and what the experience was like. And the way we bought homes has gone through just minor changes over the years till really the last four.

1 (17m 20s):

And over the last four, there's been an experimental area of real estate called iBuyers iBuyers that account for a meaningful share of the market in some cities across the South and Southwest make an offer to you for your home. And if you accept that offer, you pay them the equivalent of a commission subtracted from that offer price they've made to you. And then you move out on the agreed to date, whatever repairs need to be done to your property, or dressing it up to put it for sale. That's the problem of the eye buyer.

1 (18m 1s):

And you're just done with it. It makes selling a home is as close as it could ever possibly be to selling a stock or bond. In other words, removing the guesswork, guesswork the strangers coming in and out of your home all the time for showings and all of that. And you know, you have a sure thing, but there are times that the offer from the iBuyers fire is suspiciously low, and you got to know what truly would be a fair value for your property. And so what I recommend is that if iBuyers are active and your zip code in your area, that you get offers from all the iBuyers in your area that are willing to make an offer on your home.

1 (18m 56s):

And in addition to that, you can then decide not only which one of those is going to offer you the best deal, but whether or not you want to do a traditional listing. And so if an agent says, Oh, your house should be enlisted, blah, blah, blah. And you've already, you know, you've already been offered more than that by an eye buyer, then you're like, well, Hey, I think I'll go ahead and take the sure thing. Or if in reality, the offer is a low ball than you think. Well, that would be nice to just be done with it, but I want more money. I'm going to do a traditional listing, but now Zillow, which has been steadily increasing the number of markets that they're offering a offers by Zillow where they buy your home for you.

1 (19m 50s):

You sell to Zillow a Zillow in 20 Metro area is in the United States is now saying whatever we list is your

Zestimate on your home. That's what we'll offer you for your home. So you don't have to worry that the Zestimate is something they won't stand behind. It's kind of crazy, isn't it? Because estimates can be fairly inaccurate in neighborhoods where a lot of the homes are production built homes, you know, big builders building just a few different floor plans with a guy with a variety of facades, but basically a few different floor plans.

1 (20m 36s):

It's pretty easy based on the uniformity of the homes and the square footage and all that for something like Zillow Zestimates to be able to a pretty good accuracy within a percent or to, and they believe it enough that they're willing to stand behind it. And in markets where they're doing this, make you a firm offer on your home. Based on this estimate. Now I say firm offer because they still send an inspector to look at the house. And then if everything checks out like they expected, then you just agree on the closing date.

1 (21m 20s):

They give you the money you're out and it is a step up in the market place for Zillow versus the people that are competing against in this space, the two most well-known or Opendoor. And OfferPad, although there are other regionals and even some traditional real estate agencies Now that make offers where they list your home for sale, but guarantee you a floor price. If your home doesn't sell in a 60 to 90 day period, again, getting you the certainty that can help you so much with planning your life.

1 (22m 2s):

Krista

2 (22m 4s):

Clark James says I'm about to shop for a home refi and have seen that the online banks want personal info right off the bat. Is this safe also will this affect my credit score, which is above 800.

1 (22m 15s):

Okay, so fascinating. Double question. Yes. It's okay to give your personal information to an online lender it, and here's the thing on your credit score. Do all applications for loans for that refi in an approximately two week period lenders, don't suspect that you are buying a refinancing, a bunch of homes all at once, particularly the buying thing. So all applications for a mortgage lending in a short period of time are treated as if they're one hard inquiry for a Mortgage.

1 (22m 57s):

So you could apply in theory to 15 different lenders online and traditional and do that all in a very short period of time. And it will still be only one inquiry on your credit. The more you shop for a mortgage loan or a refi, the less you'll pay

2 (23m 19s):

Chad in Florida says my mother recently switched all of her retirement accounts from a large brokerage to an individual CFP I'm concerned. She doesn't have the same protections in case of a rogue investor, as she would with a larger brokerage institution. Please let me know the protection differences.

1 (23m 35s):

A wonderful question. So let's say year with a big brokerage S I P C security is in a investors protection corporation, which is not a governmental does not cover when you're defrauded by the brokerage or a broker at that brokerage. So there is not a fraud difference. And the, the, the key difference for you is that a large brokerage there is about a 0% chance at a full commission brokerage that the person or people your mom was dealing with were acting as fiduciaries, meaning they were legally obligated to do what was in her best interests.

1 (24m 18s):

On the other hand with an individual CFP odds are much higher that they are in a legal obligation with your mom to be a fiduciary. And so that's the big question is to find out if your mom is in a fiduciary agreement with that individual certified financial planner, if that CFP is in fact operating legally as a fiduciary, she we'll have more protections with that individual than she had with the giant full commission stockbroker, which is essentially just a sales organization.

2 (24m 60s):

And we do have a briefing on how to find a Fiduciary on Clark dot com. And I should have mentioned that. Thank you, Christopher Chris in Connecticut says my wife and I are both 36 years old. Our 401ks are over 12% of our income. My question is about HSA accounts. I have an HSA that is maxed out for the year. I carry insurance for my family. Should my wife take insurance from her work just for her to be able to open an HSA or is it worth the cost of roughly \$100 a paycheck to open it?

1 (25m 29s):

So <inaudible> are the most tax advantaged accounts that exist today, but for your wife to take on the cost of splitting out her insurance, just so she could open an HSA is a bridge too far. The fact that you're maxing out the HSA for you and your family is the right thing to do. But the strategy you're considering is really something that I would say is overthinking it. And I love that you're overthinking it, but if you are going to do anything from here, it would be to increase contributions to your 401k's and if available to each of you, the Roth version of the 401k instead of traditional, that would get you fantastic bang for your buck.

1 (26m 22s):

If your contributions go into the Roth 401k instead of the traditional, so that you have post-tax dollars going in, that you don't have to worry about being taxed again versus pre-tax dollars.

2 (26m 36s):

And Carla in Arizona says, is there a safe, secure email service for personal use? What email servers would you recommend? I like

1 (26m 44s):

ProtonMail is a secure email service to truly be secure though, the person you are writing also needs to be a ProtonMail customer. And so a lot of people who are looking for a real privacy in their communications, particularly with certain individuals, it's a buddy system where everybody gets ProtonMail and it is a very streamlined, simple email service. All it's really about is keeping your communications as private as they possibly can be on that score. Let me repeat. If you did not hear me, if you are a WhatsApp user, you need to kick them to the curb.

1 (27m 30s):

There are a new lack of privacy standards going into effect with WhatsApp. And it's going to give Facebook, which owns WhatsApp permission to do all kinds of spying on you. Affective the day you accept the new terms of service. And instead you should look at Alternatives like Signal for your texting when you're trying to make sure you're a texting person to person is secure. And again, both the sender and recipient need to be using Signal. I want to tell you how much I appreciate you listening to our podcast. And if you want more info for your wallet, go to Clark dot com.

1 (28m 14s):

When you're there serving you 24 hours a day, every day of the year,

3 (28m 19s):

<inaudible>.