

Below is a snapshot of 2018's performance and what to watch in coming year from Chadd Mason, Cabana CEO and co-founder.

### Looking back on 2018...

Equity markets ended the year down across the board. International markets fared the worst, all down double digits. U.S. markets performed best of all, but still finished with the worst returns since the 2008 financial crisis. Huge price swings characterized the last two weeks of trading in 2018. The new year has given us more of the same, in that we've seen equity markets drop 3% one day and surge 3% the next. Some buying is to be expected due to the extreme oversold technical conditions, which is the result of sustained selling over the past three months.

In my opinion, the overall volatile market behavior is consistent with the early stages of a bear market. This is characterized by a bounce in equity prices from oversold conditions, followed by selling as prices meet areas of resistance that were previously areas of support in the bull market (until broken). Assets that are hit the hardest during the downturn typically outperform during rallies. These presently include commodities, energy and international equities.

### How did we get here?

At the close of 2018, two particular events occurred, which I was watching for and commented on several times - most notably on October 29 and November 26.

The first was whether buyers would step in to the oversold equity market and not only buy the dip but **hold on** to the position through the typical bounce. I was worried that if they bought and then sold, it would be strong evidence of a change in behavior since the last rally began in 2016. The second thing I was watching for was behavior in the bond markets. I was particularly interested in whether bond investors were taking money out of the equity market and buying longer-term bonds. As markets swooned during October, we did not see a commensurate pullback in long-term yields, consistent with a bear market on the horizon. I am a big believer in watching the bond market, as I think monetary supply drives earnings. Where interest rates are going can tell us a lot. Based upon these two pieces of the puzzle, I held out hope for a return to the bull market. Since that time, we have seen these two questions answered definitively. Every dip that was bought immediately sold, until even the dips were sold. This is what happens when stocks break trend and technical support levels. We not only broke the October lows that started all this, but also the February lows (that really started all this)! Just as importantly, bond yields collapsed just as fast as they rose earlier in the year. The 10-year Treasury dropped from 3.25% to 2.58% in two months. This evidences that bond investors have forecasted low growth or a recession in the future - to such a degree that they are willing to tie their money up for ten years in return for a 2.58% annual yield. I believe these two early indicators forecast slower growth, or worse during 2019.



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