Dow Plunges as Coronavirus Spreads to South Korea, Iran and Italy

As soon as we mentioned the first sign that the coronavirus was impacting earnings (Apple lowered forward guidance), the virus broke out of general containment in China and began rapidly spreading into South Korea, Iran and Italy. This news provided a significant psychological impetus over the weekend to sell risk assets in the belief that we have a true pandemic on our hands. This is a scary concept for us as humans, but is it going to bring down equity markets in and of itself?

No one knows for sure what the future will bring, but the simple fact is we are still in a growing economy and companies have continued to beat expectations on both earnings and revenue. The U.S. corporate earnings growth rate remains at a positive 8% year-over-year. The IMF is projecting international growth as well. This is not the data that bear markets are made of. That is not to say that a worldwide pandemic can't change these positive numbers going forward, but until they do, the bull is still in the pasture. We have had an incredible run-up in stock prices over the last 13 months. We are way overdue for some pain. The coronavirus is as good of a reason as any, if not better, for some panic-induced selling. A rapidly spreading and uncontrolled "killer virus" has real sex appeal as far as the scare factor goes. Major market indexes dropped 5% over the past two trading days, wiping out the gains we achieved since 2020 began. The VIX (fear index) broke out above 23 on the back of today's largest drop in the DOW since 2018. Bond yields collapsed even further and gold hit seven-year highs as money flowed to perceived safe havens.

We are very likely to have more volatility like we just saw before the skies clear. Investors must take it in stride and realize we are investing for the next five years, not the next five days, or even five weeks. For those of you who are just starting out on the path and are becoming "investors" for perhaps the first time in your life, welcome to the NFL. This business is not for the faint of heart.

Last week's commentary can be found here.





Cabana Asset Management Ranked #2 Fastest-Growing Firm in the U.S. in Financial Advisor magazine's 2019 ranking and survey.



Cabana Asset Management Ranked #1 Fastest-Growing Firm in the U.S. in Financial Advisor magazine's 2018 ranking and survey.



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