**Monthly Market Read: October 17, 2025**

The market is saying (all numbers are **MTD % returns**):

* **Breadth:** 38.1% of names are positive.
* **Information Technology:** little change (**avg +0.39%**).
* **Industrials:** weakening (**avg -1.42%**).
* **Consumer Staples:** firm (**avg +2.02%**).
* **Consumer Discretionary:** lagging (**avg -2.43%**).
* **Financials:** lagging (**avg -3.80%**).
* **Utilities:** strong (**avg +3.53%**).
* **Real Estate:** lagging (**avg -1.60%**).
* **Materials:** soft (**avg -1.97%**).
* **Energy:** lagging (**avg -5.39%**).
* **Health Care:** firm (**avg +2.64%**).
* **Communication Services:** lagging (**avg -5.43%**).

**Macro levers (MTD % returns):**

* **Gold:** bid (**+9.43%**).
* **USD:** firm (**+0.87%**).
* **Yields:** falling (**-3.29%**).
* **Bonds:** steady (**+0.75%**).
* **Energy complex:** weak (**-8.50%**).

**Bottom line:** Breadth is weak with fewer than four in ten names positive. Leadership is concentrated in **defensive/quality** areas — **Utilities, Health Care, and Staples** — while **cyclicals and rate-sensitive** groups — **Financials, Discretionary, Industrials, Materials, Energy, and Communication Services** — lag. The macro mix — **gold bid, USD firm, yields falling, bonds steady, and a weak energy complex** — points to **slowing growth with easing inflation pressures (a disinflationary setup)**, favoring **defensives, duration, and macro hedges** over high-beta cyclicals.