

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, February 18, 2017

In recent weeks I've been confronted by several friends dealing with new directions in their work life. These friends are mature workers who have given much to their respective companies for a good part of their lives. Several received fairly substantial severance packages appropriate for their time of service, but even golden handshakes can't take away the uncertainty of what lies ahead. I don't believe any of these men are ready to hang up the towel and simply remain at home and live an unproductive life. Yet, I imagine there will be days when they will feel somewhat lost and won't know which way to turn. We can easily become comfortable in our careers and not give any thought to what God may have planned for that next passage in our lives.

Perhaps one of the best examples of patience can be found in Samuel 16 when a young shepherd boy named David was anointed King by the prophet Samuel. From that day forward, the Spirit of the Lord was with David, but he would have to wait many years before he was crowned King. In fact he was hunted by King Saul and his men for years. Then, after Saul's death he was anointed king of Judah first and later King of Israel (Jerusalem). In all, King David reigned over God's people for more than forty years. David was a man after God's own heart and he was obedient to God until his death.

Just as David patiently awaited God's perfect timing to reign over the kingdom, we must patiently await whatever God has planned for our lives. In Jeremiah 29:11 we're reminded, *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* I'm certain He has a plan for all my friends whether they will continue to work for another firm, perhaps start their own business and possibly even give their time to some special passion that God puts on their heart and have to simply tighten their belts to make ends meet.

In my career as an insurance agent, I quickly understood that my job was on the line quite frequently, since I was continually asking for permission to work with new prospects. I've come to cherish that uncertainty over the years, since I'm aware that God will provide the clients who are willing to work with me and trust me with their financial matters. In recent years, I've also experienced how God has directed me to hone my writing skills, which obviously takes me away from money-making activities. Yet through it all, He continues to provide for my family and I know I must remain obedient to His call.

So, please don't be surprised to someday find yourself in a somewhat similar situation to these friends who are uncertain what God has planned for their next passage in life. My advice for them and you as well is to simply trust that He does have a plan for your future. In Isaiah 60:22 we are reminded, *"The least of you will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation. I am the Lord, in its time I will do this swiftly."* That phrase "I will do this swiftly" has made me realize that His timing is not my timing. His timing is perfect and we all need to be patient and truly listen to His still, small voice as He orchestrates His wonderful plan for His glory.

So, whatever your circumstance may be, know that He is in control and He wants us to wait for His direction for all that lies ahead. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we're instructed to, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."* I know that God has a wonderful plan for all who trust in Him. We need to simply wait for His perfect timing!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 25:4-5; Psalm 27:13-14; Isaiah 60:1-2; Matthew 6:25, 32-34; Romans 8:28-30; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

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Psalm 25:4-5 New International Version (NIV)

⁴Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
⁵Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.

Psalm 27:13-14 New International Version (NIV)

¹³I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
¹⁴Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Isaiah 60:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

60 "Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
²See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

Matthew 6:25, 32-34 New International Version (NIV)

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?
³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Romans 8:28-30 New International Version (NIV)

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.