

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES - Saturday, January 2, 2016

Just imagine - every morning we wake to a new day! Personally, I've not been caught up in celebrating the new year since I was in my thirties. Over the years I've taken a totally different view of time and find excitement in every new day as I awake each morning. You may consider my optimism for each day a bit strange, but I find it resourceful as I await what God has in store for me. The Christian life can be filled with excitement as we watch God orchestrate our circumstances and allow Him to take control of all aspects of our lives. I've learned to slow down over the years and just sit back and watch Him at work.

To me, bringing in the new year is no different than waiting for the back nine holes of a golf course and expecting better results than I experienced on the front nine! Newness is around every corner. Resolutions are fine, but I suggest we'd be better served to simply get out of the way and listen to His voice. To hear that voice, we need to be less absorbed in self and become more aware of His presence. God certainly speaks to us through His wonderful creation, but especially through His Word. And, He often speaks through others who are close to Him and I dearly cherish those special relationships with like-minded men and women of faith.

My dear friend Roy Doty, long-time CBMC Area Director, would always start our times of prayer for lost souls with these words from Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." I'm certain Roy started every day with those special words and continues to do so in his daily walk with the Lord. Personally, I simply thank my Savior and Lord for each day and let Him know that I'm looking forward to whatever He has planned for me. Granted, it may be that He is ready to take me home and I'm prepared for that day, but more than likely He has plans set aside for me and I look forward to those special encounters each day of my life!

This would be a good time to take a look at James 4:13-14 which warns us, "Now listen you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." I consider those to be sobering words to the business and professional community who are caught up in chasing wealth and prosperity.

The Latin term *Deo Volente* (God willing) seems to have gone by the wayside in our modern society. The abbreviation D.V. often ended letters written in past centuries in reverence and fear of God's will for the writer's plans and desires. We'd be wise to use that term today as we make plans for our uncertain future. Perhaps Psalm 90 attributed to Moses will speak to you in some special way. In verse 12 we're instructed, "Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom." I trust that's your desire to simply be in God's will and look forward to what lays ahead each new day.

Perhaps reflecting on James 4:15-17 will bring about a proper perspective on this subject: "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." I humbly leave you with these two powerful words - *Deo Volente!*

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 31:14-16; 90:10-12; Lamentations 3:22-23; Matthew 6:31-34; James 4:13-17

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Passages to Ponder: Psalm 31:14-16; 90:10-12; Lamentations 3:22-23; Matthew 6:31-34; James 4:13-17

Psalm 31:14-16 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁴ But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD;
I say, "You *are* my God."

¹⁵ My times *are* in Your hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,
And from those who persecute me.

¹⁶ Make Your face shine upon Your servant;
Save me for Your mercies' sake.

Psalm 90:10-12 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁰ The days of our lives *are* seventy years;
And if by reason of strength *they are* eighty years,
Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

¹¹ Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath.

¹² So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Lamentations 3:22-23 New King James Version (NKJV)

²² *Through* the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions fail not.

²³ *They are* new every morning;
Great *is* Your faithfulness.

Matthew 6:31-34 New King James Version (NKJV)

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

James 4:13-17 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." ¹⁶ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.