

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES - March 26, 2016

A recent business article in the *LA TIMES* caused me to do a bit of research on the new CEO for a major airline. This CEO had accepted the position last Fall and six weeks later he was hospitalized after a serious heart attack. A few months later while on leave of absence he went through a heart transplant. Now, only a short time after his transplant surgery, this CEO has decided he's ready to come back full-time and commit to the long, arduous hours and extensive travel needed to hopefully turn the airline around. And at least on the surface, the bottom line seems to be a very large compensation package at stake, if he completes six straight months without any more leaves of absence. I wonder if he has truly considered the cost, and what about you, have you considered the cost?

We don't necessarily have to go through an organ transplant to see the impact our work priorities might have on our life and the lives of those who are closest to us. I imagine this CEO is not returning strictly for the money. I suspect he loves the challenge of turning this organization around and he's willing to take the calculated risk of potential heart failure. As one article points out, the airline's demand that their top executive return to work just two months after the transplant could be considered a "heartless act" on their part. Perhaps you can relate to this executive's dilemma. I know that I certainly can. Work can be demanding and it can truly take a toll on a life.

Let's take a hard look at what God's Word says about the cost associated with our life decisions. Jesus tells us in Luke 14:28-33, *"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to finish it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one who is coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."*

More than twenty years ago I considered the cost and decided to let the Lord have control of my life. I was no longer a slave to my business and had come to understand that my relationship with God was my top priority. Certainly work remains important to pay the bills and provide for my loved ones, but I've also learned to put my family and others before the office as well. God's providence continues to amaze me as He takes care of all our needs as we simply trust in Him. I'm a satisfied customer and I recommend you consider the cost as you deal with life's tough decisions. So the question I believe we all must ask is, "Where is my heart now?"

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 16:26; Luke 9:25; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-10

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Matthew 16:26 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁶ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

Luke 9:25 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁵ For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?

1 Corinthians 10:31 New King James Version (NKJV)

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:23-24 New King James Version (NKJV)

²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 New International Version (NIV)

⁹ Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹ and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

1 Thessalonians 5:6-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.