

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, September 17, 2016

I broach this topic on holiness with some trepidation. It's a lofty goal to even consider the possibility of getting a handle on holiness. Yet, God wants us to be holy as He is holy. Certainly we cannot obtain God's perfection, but we can strive to be perfect in His eyes and pleasing to Him in our ways, our thoughts and our actions. We have a wonderful example set for us through the life of His only Son Christ Jesus.

As a businessman who follows Christ, I take the task seriously since I know there are many eyes watching my every action. And yes, they see me stumble in some areas of my daily walk. It's quite easy for the old ways to rear their ugly head. For example, my frustrations on the golf course are perhaps one of my biggest challenges these days. Having a competitive nature and unrealistic expectations cause me to lose my cool way too often. This happens to be a continual battle which I continually strive to control.

In 1 Peter 1:15 all believers are instructed to be "set apart" from the world unto our Lord. We need to live by God's standards, not the standards of this world. In business, believers appear to be at a real disadvantage since we know that many of our competitors are not playing by the same rules. In fact, some may not be play by any rules at all. Paul instructs us in Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." (NIV) This radical instruction will not make sense to the average businessman, but we Christians must simply trust in God's provision.

As a young man, my Dad set very high expectations for my future. He set the bar so high I could seldom reach it. Perfection was his goal in my sports career and to this day I still strive to reach it in all I do. I know that sounds silly, but those early years of behavioral conditioning has taken its toll on me. As I've aged you would think I'd accept the fact that I'm unable to perform physically as I did when I was in my prime. In fact, even little things like dropping something on the kitchen floor will cause me to get upset with my clumsiness. No I am not perfect and I'm certainly not holy either! But I know I have been set apart for His purpose in my life.

Our Heavenly Father is perfect in all ways. In Revelation 4:8, John shares his vision of the four living creatures and he tells us that they never stop saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." You see our Father in Heaven is holy and perfect in all ways. We certainly are not holy and not perfect. But there's good news. God accepts us with all our blemishes and imperfections and in His eyes through Christ we can be holy and perfect in all ways. We have been set apart and made holy for His purpose.

In 1 Peter 2:9 Peter describes all believers as a "holy nation" and I for one plan to take that seriously. There's nothing more important in my life than pleasing my Father in Heaven and I trust my fellow believers will take a hard look at their lives and realize we cannot "conform to the pattern of this world" and need to be "transformed by the renewing of our mind" as Paul instructs in Romans 12: 2. Let us at least strive for perfection since He is perfect in all ways.

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 Peter 2:9

© 2016, all rights reserved. Note: Jim Langley has been an agent with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC of Santa Barbara since 1987. These "Fourth Quarter Strategies" discussions are designed to "light a fire" under Christian business and professional men so we might be more effective in the marketplace for the sake of Christ, our Lord and Savior! Please visit our website @ <http://www.fourthquarterstrategies.com>.

Passages to Ponder: Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 Peter 2:9

Romans 12:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Colossians 3:23-24 New International Version (NIV)

²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

1 Peter 1:15 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

1 Peter 2:9 New International Version (NIV)

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.