

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, October 22, 2016

“Winning isn’t everything, but it beats anything that comes in second.” That’s a quote from Paul “Bear” Bryant, College Football Hall of Fame coach at Texas A&M and later at the University of Alabama. Well, I’ve tasted victory and I must admit winning feels great. My Junior year in High School, our baseball team won the Texas AAA Baseball Championship. My contribution was minimal, but being part of that victorious effort with our star pitcher Charlie Hartenstein pitching a perfect game was something I’ll always cherish. That was a long time ago. I was only sixteen, but I can still see Jeep Kiel making that diving shoestring catch in right field for the final out in the seventh inning.

Twenty-five years later, our team was honored as the Grand Marshalls for the Seguin, Texas Fourth of July parade. Riding that fire truck through the parade route brought back some great memories. I recently ran across my championship medal, which we all received after the game way back in 1960. We had several players sign professional baseball contracts from that team, but what made it all worthwhile was the team effort and the camaraderie that was apparent to everyone that made that long trip to Harlingen, Texas near the Mexican border.

In business and all aspects of life, keeping track of our wins and losses may have some intrinsic value, but it really has no lasting value. In my insurance profession I’ve had some big wins, but I learned early on what really matters is not what I gained but what the client gained. In other words, it wasn’t about me. It’s all about the client and the value they gained by accepting my small contribution in following my advice. It’s their financial situation and all I’m doing is helping them through my knowledge to make an informed decision.

It’s easy to get a “big head” if you have repeated success in life. We can easily find ourselves thinking we’ve done it all on our own and not give credit to others involved in the decision process. It’s also quite easy for Christians to forget to give God the credit that He certainly deserves. Let’s take that a bit further.

Over the past thirty-plus years I’ve come to understand that my Father in Heaven is intimately involved in my life. He truly cares for me and the decisions I make, yet He allows me to take the path that I choose. Through the years I’ve taken the wrong path way too often and there have often been consequences for my bad choices. I’ve learned to accept those consequences and not blame God or anyone else for my actions. No matter how small or large those choices are these days, I find myself asking God for wisdom and calling upon others as needed for counsel.

I certainly don’t have a perfect win-loss record these days, but it’s a lot better than my record in the past. Coach Bryant was right! Winning isn’t everything. But it sure beats the alternative. That’s why I’m awfully glad I joined the Winning Team in 1984. The decision was easy back then and it can be just as easy for others, if they are simply willing to give control to their Maker. He has a plan of salvation that will certainly lead to ultimate victory in the game of life. Come join me on His team for eternity!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 44:6-8; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; Philippians 3: 13-14; 1 John 5:3-5

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Psalm 44:6-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁶I put no trust in my bow,
 my sword does not bring me victory;
⁷but you give us victory over our enemies,
 you put our adversaries to shame.
⁸In God we make our boast all day long,
 and we will praise your name forever.

1 Corinthians 15:54-58 New International Version (NIV)

⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable,
and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written
will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory?
 Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But
thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus
Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing
move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord,
because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Philippians 3:13-14 New International Version (NIV)

¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken
hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and
straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to
win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ
Jesus.

1 John 5:3-5 New International Version (NIV)

³In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his
commands are not burdensome, ⁴for everyone born of God
overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the
world, even our faith. ⁵Who is it that overcomes the world? Only
the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.