

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, December 17, 2016

In 1981 my friend and I went to see a British film entitled *CHARIOTS OF FIRE*. We were immediately touched by this factual account of the lives of Eric Liddle and Harold Abrahams as the story described their preparation for the 1924 Paris Olympic Games. In the film and in real life Liddle, a devout Scottish Christian, ran for the glory of God and Abrahams, an English Jew, ran to overcome prejudice for his people. The film won four Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Screenplay. Its instrumental theme by Vangelis won the Academy Award for Best Original Score. The film also won the hearts of many. In 1985 Liddle's life journal was published forty years after his death in a Japanese concentration camp in Mainland China. *THE DISCIPLINES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE* tells us much about this man of faith.

Eric Liddell is one of those modern day saints who can help us all see how we can better serve and live for Christ. He and Abrahams were the two fastest men in Great Britain and would have both vied for the gold medal in the 100 meter dash. Liddle withdrew when he discovered the finals would be held on Sunday. He was unwilling to race on Sunday being raised to strictly observe it as a Day of Rest. His favorite distances were the shorter races, yet he ran in the more demanding 400 meters the following week. He ran his quarterfinals heat in 49.3 seconds, then 48.2 seconds in the semifinals and 47.6 seconds in the finals to win Olympic Gold for Great Britain. His feat set a new World Record for the 400 meter distance. Abrahams did win the Olympic Gold in the 100 meters for Great Britain.

Have you ever felt God's pleasure? Eric Liddle spoke about this in his journal when he shared, *"I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast! And when I run I feel His pleasure."* Born in China, he gave up a good life in Scotland to return and follow in the footsteps of his missionary parents. He spent his final twenty years serving the Lord until his death in 1945 at the age of 43. His pregnant wife with their two young daughters left China to return to Great Britain at the outbreak of World War II. Liddle explained his devotion with these words – *"It has been a wonderful experience to compete in the Olympic Games and to bring home a gold medal. But since I have been a young lad, I have had my eyes on a different prize. You see, each one of us is in a greater race than any I have run in Paris, and this race ends when God gives out the medals."* He was truly committed to serving Christ in China. Now let's talk about pleasure,

In his 1942 classic *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*, C.S. Lewis covers the topic of pleasure where Screwtape writes to his nephew Wormwood in Letter IX that all pleasure is God's invention and their task as demons is to simply take the pleasures that God has produced and twist them in ways and degrees that He has forbidden. What C.S. Lewis was describing is our tendency to take natural pleasures and turn them into the unnatural. We miss the mark when we dwell on such pleasures. God is pleased when we obey, trust in Him and place the needs of others before our own needs and wants. That's how Eric Liddle lived and it's the kind of life I know God wants from all His people. To experience God's pleasure, we must be obedient to His desires for our life.

I often "feel His pleasure" as I write these weekly discussions. You too can feel His pleasure in whatever He may have you do in life, if you simply listen to His calling for you this day forward. He longs to share His pleasure with you.

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: 1 Samuel 15:22-23; 1 Samuel 16:6-7; Psalm 37:23; Psalm 149:4; Jeremiah 9:24; Philippians 2:12-13

© 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: 1 Samuel 15:22-23; 1 Samuel 16:6-7; Psalm 37:23; Psalm 149:4; Jeremiah 9:24; Philippians 2:12-13

1 Samuel 15:22-23 New International Version (NIV)

²² But Samuel replied:

“Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king.”

1 Samuel 16:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed stands here before the LORD.”

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Psalms 37:23 New International Version (NIV)

²³ The LORD makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;

Psalms 149:4 New International Version (NIV)

⁴ For the LORD takes delight in his people;
he crowns the humble with victory.

Jeremiah 9:24 New International Version (NIV)

²⁴ but let the one who boasts boast about this:
that they have the understanding to know me,
that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,”
declares the LORD.

Philippians 2:12-13 New International Version (NIV)

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.