

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, February 4, 2017

My Dad started grooming me for a major league baseball career at a very early age. I remember playing ball in our back yard at Randolph Air Force Base as a three year old. Eight years later he had transformed me into a switch hitting second baseman on a Babe Ruth League team that won our championship. Yes, he coached the team as well. I loved the attention my Dad gave me and I worked very hard to get better in pleasing him and seeking his approval. My Dad was by far my biggest fan in those days, but he also pushed me and through it all I developed a strong work ethic which would come in handy later in my business life. By the way, I burned out on baseball after graduating from college. To this day, I still covet approval of others in whatever I do. Seeking approval is natural in human beings. In fact, I believe we all long for the approval of others.

We are social beings with an innate desire to be part of a community. We may not want to be around a large group of people, but there are few hermits in this world and I suspect those that do exist simply gave up on society and did not feel accepted by others. Their perceived approval rating was obviously quite low or non-existent. Approval ratings are important to us. Just look at the emphasis placed on the approval ratings of elected officials. Perhaps the camp of an elected official is truly concerned about future popularity and the chance for re-election, but I believe it's more. We naturally want to be recognized for our accomplishments and knowing we have done our best may be enough for some, but most of us want to see and hear others applaud our effort at least.

So, can you personally relate to the approval of others motivating you to do your best in a chosen endeavor? As a long-time member of Kiwanis International, I found out very early that the greatest motivator at my grasp to get others to perform without pay was sharing recognition for their involvement in club projects. In fact, not recognizing members for their involvement can take its toll on future participation. Certainly we can be motivated in our business endeavors for our tangible accomplishments as well. Compensation and benefits packages are fine, but I've found that sharing individual and corporate accomplishments with the team pays great rewards toward future effort. So, whom do you most long to please?

There's one person I truly long to please. My reasoning is simple. There's no way I can repay God for all He's done in my life. He's the One I most want to please and receive His approval as my worldly life nears the end. In 2 Timothy 2:15. Paul instructs the younger Timothy, *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."* In Romans 12:1-2 we're also instructed, *"Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer 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."* That pretty much says it all – we need to do this in view of His mercy for us!

Join me in seeking His approval most of all. The world may applaud our accomplishments, but we can't take those trophies with us. They will all be left behind, since they have no value in His eyes.

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Judges 18:5-6; Ecclesiastes 2:26; John 6:27; Romans 14:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Hebrews 13:16

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Judges 18:5-6 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>5</sup>Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful."

<sup>6</sup>The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval."

Ecclesiastes 2:26 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>26</sup>To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

John 6:27 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>27</sup>Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

Romans 14:22-23 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>22</sup>So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. <sup>23</sup>But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

1 Thessalonians 2:4 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>4</sup>On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.

Hebrews 13:16 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>16</sup>And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.