

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, February 25, 2017

I was recently challenged to take a new look at the Ten Commandments. As you may know, eight of the ten are presented as negative statements. In Exodus 20 we can find all ten listed, but I'd like to concentrate on four little words in the sixth commandment found in verse 13 – *"You shall not murder."* Please note that God does not command us to not kill. We may need to kill in self-defense, but murdering another human is totally unacceptable. Now, let's take this commandment and turn it into a positive statement. In essence, what God really wants us to do is honor all human life. By doing so, we are obeying His command. Human life is precious and our Father in Heaven does not want us to consider the life of any human being as worthless or of minimal value. We are His greatest creation and each of us has a purpose in His master plan.

The first account of murder takes place outside the Garden of Eden when Cain killed his brother Abel. According to Genesis 4, Cain became very angry because God had accepted Abel's sacrificial offering from the firstborn of his flock, yet God did not accept Cain's grain offering. In verse 7 God lovingly instructed Cain, *"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."* Cain did not heed God's instructions and he proceeded to take his brother's life. Our Lord wants us to realize and appreciate the sanctity of life.

It's time I share a personal story with you. In my mid-thirties my Mom somewhat flippantly told me that she had three abortions while my Dad was in the military. If she had not had those abortions, I would have been the third of five children and I suspect my early years would have been quite different. As it turned out, only my brother, who's ten years younger, and I ever saw the face of the earth. I got over the ill thoughts years ago and only feel sorry that my Mom had to deal with the emotional pain all those years. Before her death I found out that my Dad made her go through those procedures. Now, I know she and my Dad are reunited with our siblings in Heaven and one day I will meet them as well! Apparently military hospitals were performing abortions many years before Roe v. Wade.

Before accepting Christ as my Savior and Lord thirty-plus years ago, I really had no strong feelings about the sanctity of life. My main concern was simply for me and the well-being of those around me. Twenty-seven years ago, Janet and I had the wonderful pleasure of adopting a little girl at birth in Sacramento. Faith has brought much joy into our lives and we are so thankful that her birth mother had the courage to go through the full pregnancy and deliver our beautiful daughter into our care. Raising her has not always been a bed of roses, but we are so grateful that God entrusted her life into our hands and we look forward to whatever lies ahead. We know God was calling us to adopt back then and He was certainly faithful in the process which all took place in less than a normal gestation period. In fact we believe Faith was conceived the same evening we were initially confronted with the first of two possible adoptions that fell through the previous summer.

We would be wise to honor all human life as God has instructed in the Sixth Commandment. Remember, in Matthew 22:37-40 it says, *"Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.' And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."* Over the years I've been fortunate to meet many challenged with developmental disabilities and other handicaps who have lived productive lives and I know that in every case there's a story of a courageous mother enduring many trials to simply honor human life. May we all take a new fresh look at human life this day forward.

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Exodus 20:1-17; 2 Samuel 12:19-23; Psalm 133; 1 Timothy 2:13-15;

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Passages to Ponder: Exodus 20:1-17; 2 Samuel 12:19-23; Psalm 133; 1 Timothy 2:13-15;

**Exodus 20:1-17** New International Version (NIV)

20 And God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>3</sup>“You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup>but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>“You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

<sup>8</sup>“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup>but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. <sup>11</sup>For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

<sup>12</sup>“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>13</sup>“You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup>“You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>15</sup>“You shall not steal.

<sup>16</sup>“You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

<sup>17</sup>“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

**2 Samuel 12:19-23** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>19</sup>David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. “Is the child dead?” he asked.

“Yes,” they replied, “he is dead.”

<sup>20</sup>Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

<sup>21</sup>His attendants asked him, “Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!”

<sup>22</sup>He answered, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.’” <sup>23</sup>But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

**Psalm 133** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>How good and pleasant it is  
when God’s people live together in unity!

<sup>2</sup>It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron’s beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.

<sup>3</sup>It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the LORD bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore.

**1 Timothy 2:13-15** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup>And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup>But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.