

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, March 4, 2017

Upon reviewing my family's historical records the other day I realized it's been ninety-nine years since my Dad's life took a dramatic change. One evening after his Mom and Dad finished milking during a thunder storm, they left the barn and were simultaneously killed by a bolt of lightning! I'm sure that story was shared by the small community of Stark City, Missouri for years as he grew up. His older brother and sister were shipped off to aunts and uncles, but Ross was left behind with his grandparents. He was only seven years old when this tragic event occurred. His Grandpa was a farmer who served as a lay minister. He was a strict disciplinarian. My Dad talked about those early years and how he never stopped blaming God for his parents' death. He left the farm when he was fifteen and he never spoke to his Grandpa again. He loved his Grandma and I vividly remember sitting on her lap when I was only three years old.

Perhaps you've found yourself blaming God for some unfortunate circumstance in your life. Victimization is running rampant these days. If not God, we may well blame others for our dismal situation. We've all heard the term "act of God" never giving much thought to what it really means. Some years ago when a large pepper tree fell on the roof of my car in my office parking space, I was advised that the association took no responsibility for the incident since they considered it to be an "act of God." A large branch had been removed from the tree several weeks before the incident, which I believe caused the tree to topple. My insurance took care of most of the costs, so I just had the repairs done. I truly believe that we're often wise to simply accept our circumstances and move on with life.

My Dad turned his unfortunate situation into a very successful military career. While looking for farm work in North Dakota, he ran into an Army recruiting sergeant who asked him, "How old are you son?" My Dad replied he was only sixteen. The sergeant asked him to drop by the recruiting station that afternoon with specific instructions on how to deal with the Army Captain who ran the station. The Captain asked my Dad, "Son how old are you?" Following the sergeant's explicit instructions, my Dad remained silent. The sergeant answered for him saying, "He looks 18 doesn't he sir?" That started a successful twenty-eight year career in the Army/Air Force. My Dad reached the rank of Full Colonel with a ninth grade education! He retired when he at forty-four with a substantial military pension. He considered himself self-made and he passed on a strong work ethic to his two boys.

Perhaps the most tragic story found in the bible is the book of Job. It's possibly the oldest story in the Bible as well likely occurring during the patriarchal period before the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Job was a righteous man who God allowed to be sifted by Satan. Through the tragedy of losing all his wealth and all his children, in Job 1:20-22 we observe, *"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.' In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."* Consider reading this Wisdom Book, if you feel you've been treated unfairly by God. There was a time I did just that and it gave me a new perspective on the specific circumstances God had me going through nearly twenty-five years ago.

So, when lightning strikes the next time in your life, please don't blame God. He allowed the lightning for some purpose, but we don't need to know why. We simply need to know that all will be okay. My Dad was angry at God most of the 100 years he spent here on earth. Nearing the end of life, he fortunately re-affirmed the faith he demonstrated as a young boy. I wish he had found peace with God much earlier. If you need to make peace with God, there's no time like the present to do it and get on with the rest of your life. In 1 Peter 5:8-9 we're reminded, *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."*

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: 1 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:6-7; James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 5: 6-9

© 2017, 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 Corinthians 10:13, Philippians 4:6-7; James 4:7-10; 1 Peter 5: 6-9

1 Corinthians 10:13 New International Version (NIV)

¹³No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Philippians 4:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

James 4:7-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

1 Peter 5:6-9 New International Version (NIV)

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.