

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, March 11, 2017

In 1895, Rudyard Kipling wrote an often quoted poem entitled *IF*. It's written in the form of paternal advice to the poet's son John. The third and fourth lines of the second stanza of that poem are perhaps best known and can be found engraved on the wall as participants enter Centre Court at the All England Tennis and Croquet Club where Wimbledon is held each summer. I suggest you consider these challenging words, *"If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors the same ..."* and how we often succumb emotionally to these impostors in our ongoing life experiences. These impostors can be imposing and take us down a path that can certainly lead to deception and destruction.

Can you relate to Rudyard Kipling's challenge? I certainly can! Life brings many impostors with it. Sports fans witness the impact of victory and defeat on the lives of athletes daily. One can easily become consumed in making that great play, then losing their momentum and frequently falling short of their sports goal. In business, we can also easily let our current successes lull us into thinking we've got it made only to find that our expectations were greatly exaggerated. It's also quite easy to find yourself in a downward spiral and become discouraged in life. So, what are some of the impostors we might face in life?

Dante's epic poem *THE DIVINE COMEDY* describes the seven deadly sins. And in Proverbs 6:16-19, we are instructed with those things the Lord hates. Let me briefly describe these seven impostors to you. First and foremost is a prideful heart. Then there's the dishonest word and the unnecessary shedding of human blood. There's the devising of wicked schemes and the imparting of evil ways. These are followed by bearing false witness and stirring up dissension. In this world we are faced with these impostors daily. Dante calls those seven impostors gluttony, greed, laziness, hatred, murder, envy and pride.

Now let's turn to the Book of Ecclesiastes. This wisdom book entices us with many thoughts on life. In the first chapter King Solomon subtly shares the hopelessness of life. Then, in Ecclesiastes 8:15 we're told *"So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun."* This Epicurean view of life is often quoted by those who feel God does not exist or has no concern for our personal lives and that life under the sun is all that matters. Certainly this is a myopic view of our existence. There just has to be more to life than eating, drinking and being merry.

In the final chapter of Ecclesiastes, Solomon sums up the meaning of life with these words in verses 11 through 14. *"Now all has been heard, here is the conclusion of the matter; fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."*

So, we need to heed these words presented through the wisdom of Solomon and diligently strive to live a fruitful life as presented by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23, which instructs us that *"The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."* In other words, the law has no place as long as we live in such a way and don't let the impostors take hold of our life.

Let's live accordingly!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Ecclesiastes 1:1-9; Proverbs 6:20-22; Galatians 5:24-26; 1 John 2:16-17

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Ecclesiastes 1:1-9 New International Version (NIV)

1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!”

says the Teacher.

“Utterly meaningless!

Everything is meaningless.”

3 What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?

4 Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.

5 The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.

6 The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.

7 All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.

To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.

8 All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.

9 What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.

Proverbs 6:20-22 New International Version (NIV)

20 My son, keep your father’s command
and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.

21 Bind them always on your heart;
fasten them around your neck.

22 When you walk, they will guide you;
when you sleep, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.

Galatians 5:24-26 New International Version (NIV)

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become
conceited, provoking and envying each other.

1 John 2:16-17 New International Version (NIV)

16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of
life—comes not from the Father but from the world. **17** The world and its desires pass
away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.