

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, June 3, 2017

Andraé Crouch wrote a very popular Christian song in 2003 entitled *Through It All*. The words have helped console many believers as a worship song since being published. The song starts out “I’ve had many tears and sorrows/I’ve had questions for tomorrow/There’ve been times I didn’t know right from wrong/But in every situation/God gave me blessed consolation/That my trials come to only make me strong.” The chorus continues “Through it all/Through it all/I’ve learned to trust in Jesus/I’ve learned to trust in God/Through it all/Through it all/I’ve learned to depend upon His Word.” So let me ask the question, “*How do you get through it all?*”

I’m sure you’ve noticed that some days, months, and even years are quite often more challenging than other times in our lives. It’s impossible to live on the mountaintop continually. Personally, my valley experiences immensely outweigh that handful of mountaintop experiences. The majority of our lives are spent in what I would call “ho-hum” days. Much of our lives can be perceived as spent in drudgery. For me, those average days are a time to just take a deep breath and draw near to God. In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus instructs us in how we should pray. In verse 11 he says, “*Give us today our daily bread.*” which does not simply deal with our food, but with all our provision for the day. Just imagine God wanting us to ask Him for His daily involvement in all aspects of our lives! Can you imagine Him longing for us to ask Him for our daily bread? That’s what Jesus says.

You see, we really don’t need to dread getting up and going to work or fearing what the day has in store for us. In one way or another each day can be exciting, if we simply sense God’s presence and His desire to be there through it all. We are instructed in Psalm 118:6 to say with confidence “*The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*” The writer of Hebrews reiterates this in Chapter 13 verse 6 as well.

One of God’s many names is Jehovah-Jireh which means “The Lord will provide.” In Genesis 22 we are told the story of Abraham being commanded by God to take his son Isaac to a specific location in the land of Moriah and to offer him as a sacrifice. After God provided a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac, Abraham named the place Jehovah Jireh. God wants our obedience and He longs to hear our petitions for our daily bread. Yes, you can go through it all on your own if you prefer, but He wants us to acknowledge His presence and recognize His concern for us. This pleases Him greatly.

That’s why He sent His only son to die for us. Christ’s death, burial and resurrection allows us to commune with our Father in Heaven. And there’s not a day that goes by where I’m not focused on Him and the wonderful provision that He lays before me here on this earth and in Heaven. The final verse of *Through It All* declares “I thank God for the mountains/And I thank Him for the valleys/I thank Him for the storms He brought me through/For if I’d never had a problem/I wouldn’t know God could solve them/I’d never know what faith in God could do.”

Won’t you join me in placing your daily trust in our Heavenly Father? He longs for us to acknowledge Him as Savior and Lord of all.

Passages to Ponder: Genesis 22:9-14; Psalm 73:21-26; Matthew 12:28-30

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Passages to Ponder: Genesis 22:9-14; Psalm 73:21-26; Matthew 12:28-30

Genesis 22:9-14 New International Version (NIV)

⁹When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

¹²"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

¹³Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

Psalm 73:21-26 New International Version (NIV)

²¹When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,

²²I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.

²³Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.

²⁴You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.

²⁵Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

Matthew 12:28-30 New International Version (NIV)

²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

²⁹"Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

³⁰"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.