

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, June 24, 2017

Life is filled with one decision after another. How we make those decisions can vary immensely. Frankly, I've noticed that most decisions are made without even a second thought. Unfortunately, some of those quickly made decisions may have a great consequence on our lives or the lives of those near us. That's not to say that we need to weigh every decision for the potential outcome, but we would be wise to bring our heart into the decision-making process. Let's go to my favorite book, the Bible, to see what it says on this topic.

In 1 Samuel 13:14, the prophet Samuel tells King Saul *"But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."* The first king of Israel simply blew it! Saul took things into his own hands at Gilgal not waiting the full seven days for Samuel to arrive and conduct the prescribed sacrificial burnt offering. Apparently Saul was greatly concerned that his troops were becoming impatient and were starting to scatter. He admitted to Samuel that he was afraid the Philistines would soon attack. His disobedience and poor judgment cost him greatly.

I'd like you to think back to some of the poor decisions you've made in your life. Personally, some of my worst decisions were impulsive and there was little thought or consideration made for those around me and the affect it might have on their lives. Certainly, I no longer dwell on those decisions, but I have learned from those past tactical errors. These days I've come to see that it's not about me and now my number one concern is how God will see my actions and how it might affect the lives of others. In a nutshell, that's what heart decisions are all about. In Psalm 90, which is described as a prayer of 'Moses the man of God', verses 11 and 12 convey *"Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."* Moses knew God intimately and learned from those poor decisions in his life.

King Solomon instructs us in Proverbs 23:15-18 *"My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right. Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the Lord. There is surely a future hope for you, and your hope will not be cut off."* That's an important lesson that we need to learn in life. Fearing – having reverence – for the Lord is critical in coming to grips with the decisions of the heart.

In Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 King Solomon shares some special words of wisdom. He writes, *"Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. A dream comes when there are many cares, and many words mark the speech of a fool."*

You see, there is much to be gained by making decisions of the heart rather than impulsively going through life. Our Heavenly Father wants us to have a wonderful experience here on earth for the short time we're here. Heed his word and your life will be more meaningful to you and your loved ones.

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesied a new covenant that was forthcoming. We all can have a 'new heart' that will let us see God and others in a totally new light. This new heart comes from a right relationship with Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord. He's the One who gives us this right heart attitude. Please join me in knowing Him and His glorious existence!

Passages to Ponder: Psalms 119:9-16; 139:23-24; Proverbs 21:1-4; Jeremiah 24:7; 32:39-40; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27

© 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: Psalms 119:9-16; 139:23-24; Proverbs 21:1-4; Jeremiah 24:7; 32:39-40; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27

Psalms 119:9-16 New International Version (NIV)

⁹How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to your word.

¹⁰I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

¹¹I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.

¹²Praise be to you, LORD;

teach me your decrees.

¹³With my lips I recount

all the laws that come from your mouth.

¹⁴I rejoice in following your statutes

as one rejoices in great riches.

¹⁵I meditate on your precepts

and consider your ways.

¹⁶I delight in your decrees;

I will not neglect your word.

Psalms 139:23-24 New International Version (NIV)

²³Search me, God, and know my heart;

test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴See if there is any offensive way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting.

Proverbs 21:1-4 New International Version (NIV)

¹In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a stream of water
that he channels toward all who please him.

²A person may think their own ways are right,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

³To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

⁴Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the unplowed field of the wicked—produce sin.

Jeremiah 24:7 New International Version (NIV)

⁷I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 32:39-40 New International Version (NIV)

³⁹I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.

Ezekiel 11:19-20 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 New International Version (NIV)

²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.