

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, June 17, 2017

You can't deny it! We all find ourselves in denial from time to time. Our emotions can easily take over and we simply set logic aside. We have no interest in hearing the opinions of friends and associates and we rationalize that our position is justified. Whether we're dealing with business or personal decisions, we can let our prejudices get in the way of making the best choice available. Sometimes we don't even look at the alternatives that are out there or seek the counsel of those whom we know we can trust.

I've certainly made my share of bad choices in life. So, I feel as though I can speak on the topic. In essence, we can have blurred vision and often not even see the consequences of taking certain actions. Another word for denial found frequently in the Bible is the term unbelief. Very early in history in the book of Genesis we hear about the first deception as Eve listens to the lie of Satan as he slyly says, *"You will surely not die"* Eve rationalizes in Genesis 3:6, *"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her and he ate it."* (NIV) Thus sin entered into the world.

Our unbelief often comes from our pride and thinking we have everything under control. After all, much of what we do seems to work out for the better or at least adequately. In my insurance profession, I've often faced people who were in denial that they needed protection and they decided to simply take on the risk. Fortunately, all states have financial responsibility laws that require we purchase certain minimum coverage to protect our property from potential losses.

We'd all be wise to at least carry some basic coverage to protect our family against unexpected health issues and our government in recent years has done its best to make sure we all have some form of health protection. Yet many insurances are totally optional and some folks deny the need for coverage, weigh the risks and decide to take their chances. Over the past thirty-plus years I've witnessed a number of families who decided to pass on insurance and later wished they would have listened to my advice.

In the book of Numbers, Moses shares the unbelief of the Israelites in chapters 13 and 14. Of the twelve spies sent into the Promised Land, only Joshua and Caleb came back with a promising report. The other ten spies gave a negative report that caused the Israelites to elect not to enter Canaan and thus continue to wander in the desert for another forty years. The Israelites simply denied that their God could possibly deliver them from their enemies.

In Numbers 14:11, God shared His displeasure with the Israelites as He conveyed to Moses *"How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?"* In fact, because of their unbelief God was prepared to strike them down with a plague and start over again. Moses pleaded with the Lord and He spared His people. We have no reason to doubt our God!

In Hebrews 3:12-13 we're instructed *"See to it brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."* In verses 17 through 19 we're reminded that there was a consequence for denying God's provision for entering the Promised Land. The writer of Hebrews continues *"And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief."*

You can't deny that our Lord wants and deserves our obedience, our total devotion and our trust. Those who place their faith in His Son have so much to gain during our short time here on earth and eternally in Heaven. Please don't deny Him. Do trust Him with all your heart, mind, soul and strength!

Passages to Ponder: Acts 4:14-16; Titus 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:8; James 3:14-15; 2 Peter 2:1-2

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Acts 4:14-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴ But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ¹⁶ “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it.

Titus 1:15-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶ They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

1 Timothy 5:8 New International Version (NIV)

⁸ Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

James 3:14-15 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

2 Peter 2:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

False Teachers and Their Destruction

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.