

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, August 5, 2017

There have been times in my life when I've toyed with the idea of a coaching career. When asked, I've always enjoyed helping someone with their golf swing, since I have a good grasp of the fundamentals of the game and still play fairly well. There are moments when I've felt compelled to look into coaching baseball, but I've been away from the game for a long, long time. Instead, God has taken me in a very different direction by instilling in me new individual coaching skills that I've enjoyed implementing over the past few years in helping some acquaintances get back on track in their personal and business lives. Believe me – coaching counts!

Whether coaching an individual or team in a given sport or taking on the task of personal coaching, the approach needs to be one that emphasizes observation skills and the ability to communicate in different fashions to maximize the potential of the student. It also requires the student to willingly learn and apply the principles being taught. As an example, a golf professional may be faced with an unenviable task in making needed changes to the golf swing of a student who's been hitting the ball improperly for years. The golfer's tendency will be to naturally revert to old habits while under pressure on the course. In personal coaching, the coach must also deal with assisting the student in changing old habits that often stymie personal growth.

The Christ-based coaching program I successfully completed several years ago can benefit anyone willing to work within the guidelines of the program. Certainly followers of Christ can more easily relate to the emphasis placed on the Holy Spirit in this particular program. Yet all the sincerity in the world and faith in God to complete the work won't bring success, if the student is not willing to make the needed changes for personal growth. I've found what works best for me is to simply come alongside someone who indicates a true desire to improve in some aspect of their life and help them through a simple approach that takes them from Point A to Point B. Once Point B has been reached, it then becomes Point A and the student determines the new Point B they feel they can handle with the help of the Holy Spirit. My job is to get out of the way, watch the progress on their journey, encourage the student, observe the results and thank God for the work that's accomplished.

Nearly twenty years ago, I contracted a life coach to prepare me for my twelve month stint as President of our local Kiwanis Club. I did not feel fully qualified and wanted to get a better handle on my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. I found the three months spent working with my life coach to be challenging, intensive and enlightening. My coach's training approach was fairly effective yet quite bizarre. I had never heard a woman feel the need to cuss so much to convey her message. I finally had to call her on the carpet and ask her to clean up her language, if we were going to continue the process. She did and the process went well from that day forward.

In life coaching, we first look for a change in the heart. Once the heart changes, the person quickly begins to learn and grow and understand themselves better. In Psalm 139:23-24, King David rightly proclaimed to God *"Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* (NIV) These days, my Personal Coach is the Holy Spirit, but I do have others who I call upon to give good counsel during challenging times. We can all gain from a little coaching in this challenging life journey. In Proverbs 3:5-6 we're reminded *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."*

Please at least consider utilizing some form of coaching in your life journey. It has proved beneficial for me and I'm certain you can benefit from godly counsel as well.

Passages to Ponder: Proverbs 8:12-16; 15:21-24; 27:9-10; John 14:15-17; 1 John 4:18

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Proverbs 8:12-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹²“I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.

¹³To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.

¹⁴Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have insight, I have power.

¹⁵By me kings reign
and rulers issue decrees that are just;

¹⁶by me princes govern,
and nobles—all who rule on earth.

Proverbs 15:21-24 New International Version (NIV)

²¹Folly brings joy to one who has no sense,
but whoever has understanding keeps a straight course.

²²Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.

²³A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—
and how good is a timely word!

²⁴The path of life leads upward for the prudent
to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

Proverbs 27:9-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁹Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of a friend
springs from their heartfelt advice.

¹⁰Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family,
and do not go to your relative’s house when disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.

John 14:15-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁵“If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

1 John 4:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.