

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, November 11, 2017

A few weeks back I received a book from a friend who felt I could benefit from the godly wisdom contained in its pages. This new paperback copy of *The POWER of POSITIVE THINKING* was originally penned by Norman Vincent Peale in 1952 with more than five million copies sold to date. I imagine a good portion of those books were given as gifts to encourage those who were facing enormous challenges in life and I'm certain the book became a reinforcing positive influence in many instances. What I particularly appreciated was the gesture on the part of my friend to care enough to purchase a book he had apparently found beneficial in his life journey.

Dr. Peale certainly went to the right source for inspiration in writing this bestseller. And, I must say that there's much to be gained by looking at the positive side rather than the negative side of any circumstance. Most of my inspiration comes directly from the Bible and the accounts contained within its sixty-six books. In Matthew 14:22-33, there's an interesting account of Jesus telling his disciples to get in a boat one evening and go on ahead of Him across the lake and He would catch up with them later. This occurred right after the feeding of the five thousand.

The account tells us that Jesus first went up on a mountainside to pray to His Father in Heaven. I imagine He wanted to first thank His Father for the provision of feeding the multitude with only five loaves and two small fish. And I'm certain He needed to recharge His battery for the continued ministry work He knew lay before him. Then we're told that during the fourth watch of the night, which would have been after 3AM, Jesus went out to them walking on the lake. The wind had created waves and when they saw a man coming toward them they were afraid and thought it was a ghost. But Jesus said to them *"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

We need to listen to God's Word and take courage in all aspects of life. Whenever we confront something out of the ordinary, we often think the worst and can easily become faint of heart. Peter was not faint-hearted once he realized it was Jesus coming toward the boat. In fact, he called out *"Lord, if it is you, .... tell me to come to you on the water."* When Jesus replied *"Come"* Peter got down out of the boat and amazingly walked on the water toward Jesus. Unfortunately, Peter took his eyes off Jesus and realized the wind and waves were all around him. As he began to sink, he cried out *"Lord, save me."*

It's good to know that we can all cry out to Jesus and He will save us in some fashion. He may not pull us up out of our misery the way we would like, but He certainly will comfort us and give us hope. Have you ever cried out to Jesus? I certainly have on many occasions. Then again, my daily conversations with Him prepare me for whatever may be around the next turn in the road. There's no way we can know what lies ahead, but our Heavenly Father certainly knows every move we'll make before we ever get to the next circumstance in our life journey. Jesus knew that Peter would enthusiastically jump out of the boat and He also knew he would take his gaze off Jesus. Jesus responded to Peter's unbelief after He reached out His hand and caught him by remarking *"You of little faith, .... why did you doubt?"*

Frankly, I don't want to hear my Savior and Lord tell me that I have little faith. I want to hear Him say *"Well done good and faithful servant!"* at the end of my earthly life. In the meantime, I plan to continue calling on Him as I go through each day, knowing that the Holy Spirit remains by my side and comforts me in all circumstances. If you haven't, do call on Jesus and ask Him to save you this day! He's holding His hand out to protect you from the perils of a life without His peace and His purpose. Call upon Jesus!

Passages to Ponder: 1 Chronicles 22:11-13; 2 Chronicles 32:6-8; Ezra 7:27-28; Matthew 14:22-33; 1 Corinthians 16:13

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**1 Chronicles 22:11-13** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>11</sup>“Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would. <sup>12</sup>May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. <sup>13</sup>Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

**2 Chronicles 32:6-8** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: <sup>7</sup>“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. <sup>8</sup>With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

**Ezra 7:27-28** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>27</sup>Praise be to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who has put it into the king’s heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way <sup>28</sup>and who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king’s powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

**Matthew 14:22-33** New International Version (NIV)

**Jesus Walks on the Water**

<sup>22</sup>Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup>After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

<sup>25</sup>Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup>When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

<sup>27</sup>But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

<sup>28</sup>“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

<sup>29</sup>“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

<sup>31</sup>Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

<sup>32</sup>And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup>Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**1 Corinthians 16:13** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>13</sup>Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.