

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, November 4, 2017

You may or may not consider life as a game, but there are a few correlations worth pondering. For instance, this world seems to be obsessed with winning at any cost. In sports, the art of winning is somewhat controlled by the rules of the game being played. If you don't follow the official rules and get caught, you or your team will be penalized and possibly even be disqualified from the competition. Penalties put you at a disadvantage and often affect the final outcome of the game.

In business, we have to follow rules in how we conduct our affairs and keep our financial records in order to pay our tax obligations. The penalties for "cooking the books" can be severe and many businesses fail from inappropriate record-keeping. Years ago, one of my most prominent clients got caught up in white collar crime that cost him dearly. His boss, the owner of a multi-million dollar entertainment business, spent a few years vacationing in a local penitentiary. Fortunately, my client never spent a day in custody and this incident led him, his wife and three daughters to the cross of Christ in the process.

International business is completely unique. Unfortunately, not all countries play by the same rules in their international dealings. There needs to be a caveat when dealing with foreign entities where business practices, local laws and beliefs may well differ from what we consider customary practices. Transactions and dealings between governments can be extremely challenging as well.

Although the Code of Hammurabi may have been written a few centuries earlier, the law given to Moses and Aaron on Mount Sinai around 1500 BC as found in Exodus 20-23, is the most significant written text used in developing the laws of lands over these many centuries. Governments need to have written laws that are judiciously enforced. Without written law we would be faced with lawlessness. There are those in our society who unfortunately feel there is no value in believing in a higher power. In the study of philosophy, Nihilism is the complete rejection of moral values and religious beliefs. Such practices are dangerous to society as a whole and potentially can lead to anarchy. Our Lord knew what He was doing when He gave the law to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai.

Removing God from the equation can have dire consequences. After all, He created the heavens and the earth and He certainly understands the nature of man and woman since we are made in His image. He knows the worst and the best of the human race. We are His greatest creation. Laws help us to live and act in a civil manner. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses recited the words of a song from beginning to end to the Israelites before being summoned by God to Mount Nebo to die. Try putting yourself in the shoes of those who heard Moses recite these words of warning.

Moses concluded in Deuteronomy 32:45-47 *"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you – they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."* When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620 they brought these same laws and customs to America.

We are no different than those first million-plus followers of Yahweh, the Great I Am. His law and the laws of this land must be preserved in order for us to live life in an orderly manner. We must play the game of life by the rules that have been set before us. I trust you will join me in obeying the rules established by our government and ultimately our Father in Heaven. To Him be all the glory!

Passages to Ponder: Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Isaiah 42:18-22; Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 2:12-13; Galatians 5:13-15

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Deuteronomy 30:19-20 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹ This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live ²⁰ and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Isaiah 42:18-22 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ "Hear, you deaf;

look, you blind, and see!

¹⁹ Who is blind but my servant,
and deaf like the messenger I send?

Who is blind like the one in covenant with me,
blind like the servant of the LORD?

²⁰ You have seen many things, but you pay no attention;
your ears are open, but you do not listen."

²¹ It pleased the LORD
for the sake of his righteousness
to make his law great and glorious.

²² But this is a people plundered and looted,
all of them trapped in pits
or hidden away in prisons.

They have become plunder,
with no one to rescue them;
they have been made loot,
with no one to say, "Send them back."

Matthew 5:17-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Romans 2:12-13 New International Version (NIV)

¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

Galatians 5:13-15 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.