

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, October 21, 2017

As we age, we are often reminded just how limited we become in what we can accomplish later in life. There are two ways to look at this gradual aging process. We can simply accept it or we can apply ourselves to increase our stamina and improve our quality of life. More than a century and a half ago, the YMCA rightly addressed this by acknowledging the importance of the needs of their patrons' spirit, mind and body. In fact the mission statement of this fine non-profit organization remains *"To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all."*

I'm extremely proud of my wife Janet and her recent commitment to improve her physical health in her retirement years. She is now a lifetime member of Weight Watchers, which is no easy feat. Having now maintained her recommended weight for the past few months while continuing to work out regularly at our local YMCA, she's proved to me that she wants a healthier lifestyle as she continues to remain very active in our local community. During these months, I've also witnessed her grow spiritually as well. She's even inspired me to become regular at working out and watching what I eat more closely!

If we truly want to remain spiritually, mentally and physically fit, then we'd be wise and take a close look at what the Bible says about our overall health. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Paul exhorts *"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."* Personally, I take this to mean that as a follower of Christ I must do all I possibly can to remain spiritually, mentally and physically fit in order to serve my Lord as long as He sees fit to keep me here in this world.

Years ago, I collaborated with the Executive Director of our local YMCA to develop a *Spiritual Fitness* brochure which was made available to all members as a gift. The brochure, which was produced by our Christian Emphasis Committee, introduced members to the history of the YMCA movement and the significance of having a strong faith in Jesus Christ. Certainly over the past few decades membership has become more diverse, but Christian emphasis can still be found in the three cornerstones of YMCA activity: Spirit, Mind and Body. Having proper balance in life is important and complete health requires our diligence in all aspects of our lives.

We must be careful to not just limit ourselves to proper exercise and nutrition. That's only part of the formula to a healthy lifestyle. We must also remain faithful in reading and studying God's Word and meeting other like-minded believers on a regular basis. In Hebrews 10:24-25 the writer reminds us *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."* Yes, some have unfortunately developed the bad habit of not being part of a team. Apparently they would much rather go it alone and miss out on the relationships that are critical in life. I find that a true shame.

In ending, I hope you will take heed and do all you can to strive for vitality in the spiritual, mental and physical aspects of your life this day forward. Listen to the words of the apostle John in his final short letter. In verse 2 he inscribes to Gaius *"Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."* I trust all will be well with your soul too.

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 6:32-34; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Timothy 4:8; James 1:19-21; 1 Peter 5:6-9

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Matthew 6:32-34 New International Version (NIV)

³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Romans 12:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

A Living Sacrifice

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Timothy 4:8 New International Version (NIV)

⁸For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

James 1:19-21 New International Version (NIV)

Listening and Doing

¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

1 Peter 5:6-9 New International Version (NIV)

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.