

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, December 16, 2017

Charles Dickens published what is considered by many a literary masterpiece in 1859. *A TALE OF TWO CITIES* set in London and Paris during the French Revolution describes a tenuous time in European history leading up to what is known as the *Reign of Terror*.

Dickens' famous opening sentence prepares us for what lies ahead in this drama dealing with a cataclysmic change in ideologies: *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epic of belief, it was the epic of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."*

What Dickens realized a century and a half ago is the diversion of ideologies that I'd like to coin as "A Tale of Two Natures." The events of eighteenth century Europe are really no different than what we deal with today. In fact, throughout history there's been a spiritual battle fought daily in the lives of all who must face Dickens' proverbial seasons of Light and Darkness. Ever since Satan's deception took place in the Garden of Eden found in Genesis 3, man has been dealing with this separation from God and His Truth.

And, with that pivotal decision of Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, we have all inherited that sinful nature. The natural man has tasted of good and evil and we have come to love darkness. In John 3:19 Jesus goes so far as to confront us with these sobering words: *"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."* which paints a vivid picture of man's vicarious nature.

I can speak to this subject, since I experienced my own wonderful transformation thirty-three years ago. I didn't consider myself a bad person, but I was certainly mostly concerned about my own well-being and only minimally concerned about the welfare of others. My conversion came after spending a life altering fifteen minutes on a cross in an Easter musical performance.

Yes, God got my attention during that performance and that was the first time I ever realized that I needed to drastically change my lifestyle and allow Jesus to take control from that day forward. Since that eventful experience in 1984, I have been renewed and dramatically changed. Unfortunately, I still fall back into my old nature more often than I'd like to admit, but my new spiritual nature keeps me in check most of the time.

There truly is good news for all mankind. We can all die to our self and our old nature and receive a new spiritual nature that overcomes the sinful ways found in all of us. That would be impossible if it weren't for the work of Christ on the cross.

Since He took on the sin of the world in total, we can once again experience the closeness to God that Adam and Eve originally experienced in the Garden of Eden. This world unfortunately remains fallen and we must confront its shortcomings daily until Christ returns or we return to Him. In the meantime, we must face the challenges of the old nature that permeates this world.

Are you prepared to join me and give Christ control of your life? As I mentioned, we can't redeem ourselves, but Christ has laid the groundwork for the redemption of all who gladly submit to Him and allow Him to become their Savior and Lord. Please consider joining His Winning Team!

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 7:7-8; John 3:17-20; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7; 2 Peter 1:3-4

© 2017, all rights reserved. Note: Jim Langley has been an agent with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC of Santa Barbara since 1987. These "Fourth Quarter Strategies" discussions are designed to "light a fire" under Christian business and professional men so we might be more effective in the marketplace for the sake of Christ, our Lord and Savior! Please visit our website @ <http://www.fourthquarterstrategies.com>.

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 7:7-8; John 3:17-20; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 4:5-7; 2 Peter 1:3-4

**Matthew 7:7-8** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>7</sup>“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

**John 3:17-20** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. <sup>18</sup>Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. <sup>19</sup>This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

**1 Corinthians 2:14-16** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>14</sup>The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. <sup>15</sup>The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, <sup>16</sup>for,

“Who has known the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:5-7** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>5</sup>For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. <sup>6</sup>For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

**2 Peter 1:3-4** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.