

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, March 3, 2018

While living in an upstairs condominium years ago, I distinctly remember being greeted by a doormat downstairs that simply stated “Life, Liberty and Happiness.” Often, I would critically remind myself that it’s the pursuit of happiness rather than the experience that really matters. In our Declaration of Independence we’re instructed “*We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*” Let’s take a hard look at this word happiness, since I believe we as a people of this great country have got it all askew these days.

Today in America we’ve come to consider happiness as simply having all our needs met and satisfied. When these concepts were drafted in 1776, our forefathers obviously envisioned a better life where they could truly pursue freedom and the opportunities it would certainly afford. It had nothing to do with what we gained tangibly. All that mattered to them was freedom to express and practice their beliefs without any concern for some oligarchy forcing their ideas and precepts upon them.

Frankly, I’m more concerned about the pursuit of God rather than the pursuit of Happiness. A. W. Tozer addressed this topic exquisitely in his inspirational book appropriately entitled *THE PURSUIT OF GOD* first published in 1948. In the first chapter entitled “*Following Hard After God*” we’re informed that God’s grace seeks us out before we even consider seeking out God’s grace. Our hunger for God has been first placed in us by God. He gives us an appetite for Himself and He also gives us a thirst to know Him intimately. Can you relate to Tozer’s premise?

Unfortunately, I’ve found that many Christians are simply satisfied to meet God and do not apparently desire to truly experience Him in their daily lives. It’s much like being happy but not wanting to pursue what true happiness can and should be. Many don’t seem to have the time to intimately experience God or at least don’t seem to find the time to do so. They are often too busy running their businesses, raising their kids and doing the things they feel are important rather than first seeking God’s will for their life.

There’s really nothing wrong with these endeavors, but we can all easily get our priorities out of kilter. We can become out of tune and out of touch with God’s purpose for our lives. Jesus spoke to this in Luke 10 as He instructed Martha that her sister Mary had “*chosen what is better*” by listening to Jesus as Mary sat at His feet rather than helping Martha with all the preparations that needed to be made.

You see our Lord wants us to choose “*what is better*” rather than get caught up with our little tedious tasks in life. In Matthew 6:33 we’re reminded “*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*” You too can have the joy that comes from knowing God is pleased with you as you listen and act upon His desire for you to remain in His will for the short time we’re here on this planet.

May He bless you richly and may you become a blessing to Him!

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 42:1-4; Hosea 6:3; Matthew 5:6; John 10:38-42; Acts 20:24

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**Psalm 42:1-4** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.  
<sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?  
<sup>3</sup>My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”  
<sup>4</sup>These things I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.

**Hosea 6:3** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>3</sup>Let us acknowledge the LORD;  
let us press on to acknowledge him.  
As surely as the sun rises,  
he will appear;  
he will come to us like the winter rains,  
like the spring rains that water the earth.”

**Matthew 5:6** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

**John 10:38-42** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>38</sup>But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” <sup>39</sup>Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

<sup>40</sup>Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing in the early days. There he stayed, <sup>41</sup>and many people came to him. They said, “Though John never performed a sign, all that John said about this man was true.” <sup>42</sup>And in that place many believed in Jesus.

**Acts 20:24** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>24</sup>However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.