

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, March 17, 2018

During the last thirty-plus years working in the life insurance profession, I've been involved in well over one hundred death claims. Again and again I've witnessed my clients leave it all behind. When we depart from this earth we can't take any of our possessions with us. All that accompanies our demise is our soul. As I once heard one pastor preach years back "Have you ever seen a U-Haul towed by a hearse?" That really got me thinking about all the possessions I'd accumulated earlier in my life. What did all those possessions really represent?

We just recently pulled my parent's belongings out of a storage unit and are now going through all those items to determine what we'll keep and what we'll sell or donate to charity. Some of those items will go to my younger brother and his wife, but many items I know my Mom cherished have little value to her two surviving sons. Certainly many of the household items will come in handy as our daughter starts her family, but much will simply be discarded. Oh yes, some items were conveniently taken by greedy relatives and close friends who lived near my parents a few years back. Obviously they felt they deserved something for being so close to them during their formidable years. My brother and I are both fine with moving on and not confronting them. After all, we can't take those items with us at the end of life!

Looking back on my most productive financial years, I'm astounded at all I have spent on things that are pretty meaningless. Much of those items are no longer in our possession and we're no worse for the wear. Jesus tells a parable in Luke 12:16-21 which we would be wise to consider. He relates "... *the ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'* Then he said, '*This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there will I store all my grain and my goods!*' And *I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'* But God said to him, '*You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you prepared for yourself?*' This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Let me share a very short poem published in 1986 in my book of poetry entitled *SO WE MIGHT GROW*. The poem "Where Now?" deals with the question of what is really significant in life. So, please sit back and just reflect on these thoughts:

*Two souls touch for a fleeting moment.*

*Time stands still as life passes by.*

*We look back for answers and truths.*

*Doubts just seem to multiply.*

*Can we trust our hearts in times like this?*

*Could the answer be deeper yet?*

*The record plays over and again.*

*Is it best to just forget?*

*The answer lies where we least suspect.*

*A solemn place we seldom seek.*

*A garden, a stream, that quiet spot.*

*Where God will surely speak.*

I trust God is speaking to you about what is really important in the short time we are here on this planet. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus instructs us "*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*" In other words, we need to seek God's desire for our life and trust Him to provide all our needs this day forward. Once you give your life to Him, He will never leave you or forsake you!

Passages to Ponder: Job 1:21; Psalm 89:47-48; Ecclesiastes 7:1-4; Romans 5:17; 1 John 3:16-18

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**Job 1:21** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>21</sup> and (Job) said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;  
may the name of the LORD be praised."

**Psalm 89:47-48** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>47</sup> Remember how fleeting is my life.  
For what futility you have created all humanity!  
<sup>48</sup> Who can live and not see death,  
or who can escape the power of the grave?

**Ecclesiastes 7:1-4** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> A good name is better than fine perfume,  
and the day of death better than the day of birth.

<sup>2</sup> It is better to go to a house of mourning  
than to go to a house of feasting,  
for death is the destiny of everyone;  
the living should take this to heart.

<sup>3</sup> Frustration is better than laughter,  
because a sad face is good for the heart.

<sup>4</sup> The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning,  
but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.

**Romans 5:17** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>17</sup> For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

**1 John 3:16-18** New International Version (NIV)

<sup>16</sup> This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? <sup>18</sup> Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.