

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES – Saturday, January 17, 2015

Relationships are critical in all our lives. They affect the very quality of life. Since becoming a follower of Christ thirty years ago, the depth of my personal relationships blossomed. Early in my life, I feared letting others get too close. As the oldest son in a military family, I didn't feel I could risk close friendships since I knew the kids I played with would be moving soon and so would my family. Life was a turnstile! Even after my dad retired, I remained aloof in my relationships. After college, joining the US Army helped reinforce my adverse behavior to shut down close friendships. We can easily put up barriers that stifle the closeness that God wants us all to experience.

Perhaps you can relate to this and then again you may well think you've got this facet of life just where you want it. So what do you think about the word intimacy? That's a word I've used for years to confront Christian business and professional men with what I believe God wants us to experience with fellow believers. Some cringe when I use the term in their presence. I suspect they don't see intimacy as a manly trait. John Wayne was certainly never intimate on the big screen! Charles Dickens allowed us to see the transformation in Ebenezer Scrooge and what I saw was an unabashed intimacy in the last few pages of A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Unfortunately, many Christian men shortly after their conversion experience revert back to their guarded ways in an effort to remain strong in their business endeavors at the expense of deeper relationships.

Years ago, I went through Operation Timothy with two dear friends. Carl Schuele and Dr. Bill Blythe are now both in Heaven, but I still cherish the memories of meeting with these two very successful businessmen for more than a year at The Brown Pelican for our weekly breakfast sessions. Those were very special mornings for all of us. We looked forward to sharing our love for Jesus and applying the truths found in Operation Timothy in all aspects of our lives. Whether it's Operation Timothy or another bible study, I highly recommend meeting together and developing close bonds with like-minded men. These days, I'm personally looking forward to using the new E-version of Operation Timothy, which appears to be easily accessible at www.Advance.CBMC.com. I'm praying about just how God wants me to use this exciting tool to develop and improve new relationships that will be pleasing to Him. He wants us to do just that and of course He longs to be in the midst of those relationships with us. Please join me in taking the risk, checking out the new E-version of OT and becoming vulnerable this day forward!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: John 14:16-20; John 15:9-11; Hebrews 13:1-2; Acts 8:26-31

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!

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John 14:16-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Indwelling of the Father and the Son

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 15:9-11

Love and Joy Perfected

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.

Hebrews 13:1-2

Concluding Moral Directions

¹³ Let brotherly love continue. ² Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* some have unwittingly entertained angels.

Acts 8:26-31

Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. ²⁷ So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”

³⁰ So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

³¹ And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.