

## Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, March 28, 2015

Have you ever been faced with a ground fog so dense that you had no choice but to pull your vehicle over to the side of the road? California's Central Valley is renowned for this phenomenon. It's called Tule fog (named for the indigenous Tule grass found in the valley) and it's quite prevalent especially during the winter months. It can be exceptionally hazardous for traffic, but it's also extremely beneficial for fruit trees and other regional crops. The best example of the downside of this low-hanging fog happened in 2007 when a dense fog on California's Highway 99 near Fresno caused a huge 108 car pileup that killed two people, injured forty more and shut down the road for more than twelve hours. On the flip side, the Tule fog is crucial to the region's fruit and nut crop, which represents a significant portion of U.S. production of such foods as cherries, almonds, peaches and apricots. These fruit and nut trees need a winter chill and the ground fog helps contribute to that chill. You may be wondering where this whole discussion is headed. Well, let's talk about a different kind of fog.

I contend there's a spiritual fog that can easily affect our perception of this world. If we are not careful, we can be moving through life so fast that we don't pay attention to the warning signs God puts in our path to protect us from the hazards of life. What makes this even more challenging is the realization that there are many zipping past us at an even faster pace with no clue as to what lies ahead! It's happening in our business lives. It's happening in our families. It's happening in government. It's happening in our schools. And yes, it's even happening in our churches. Spiritual casualties continually occur in all those arenas. Paul warns us in the second half of the first chapter of his letter to the Romans, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." (Romans 1:20) Unfortunately, this spiritual fog has covered the eyes of mankind and many are dismally trapped in their demise. The fog allows them to cover their evil ways - to go about living life for their personal gain at the expense of others. They know "God's righteous decree" but they choose to ignore them and lead a life that does not please their Maker. In John 3:19 we hear Jesus explain, "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

So, it sounds like we have a real dilemma here. Simply put men and women seem to love darkness. Many apparently believe that they can get away with all kinds of things, if they remain in this dense fog of life centered on their selfish needs. They put on a front that looks good to those around them, but remain deeply mired in their sinful ways. Some of you through trusting God may be able to look at this discussion and realize there's some work to be done to get yourself on track. Others will see the condition of those around them and take on the challenge to be salt and light to those God places in their path. We all need to be aware that the Christian life is filled with many hazards and gather around each other to remain faithful as our race nears the end! Remember we have a wonderful Helper in the Holy Spirit. Jesus declared to His disciples in John 16 about this Person who would blow away all the dense fog that can keep us from seeing the Truth. We are truly blessed and need to simply look upon Christ and trust Him in all things. Join me in doing so this day forward!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Romans 1:18-32; John 3:19-21; and John 16:7-16.

*© 2015, 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!*

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### **Romans 1:18-32 New King James Version (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. <sup>27</sup> Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

<sup>28</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, <sup>30</sup> backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, <sup>1</sup> unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

### **John 3:19-21**

<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

### **John 16:7-16**

<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup> “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. <sup>13</sup> However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

<sup>16</sup> “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”