

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES – Saturday, November 22, 2014

Passion comes in many packages and I believe it's a worthwhile discussion topic. So, let me ask you a question, "Where do you place your passion?" We are all passionate about certain areas of our life and certain people around us. Much of our life is filled with what could be called common drudgery – just living out an existence and getting by perhaps. At least that's the way the world portrays life and I imagine that's why advertising presents an image of hope in the things we can purchase. Many commercials say, "Your life can be much more meaningful and exciting!" I question the truth and motive in such statements. Media is filled with lies that present products and lifestyles that appear to lead to self-gratification and happiness. We would be wise to not become passionate about their promises or buy into the lifestyle they cunningly express.

Like me, you may be quite passionate about your work. If you find yourself measuring your success in how much you make financially, in my opinion your focus is misplaced. God is not the least bit impressed by how much we make or how much we accumulate. He's much more concerned about our obedience to Him and how our work might benefit others. After ten years, I finally figured out why God called me into the life insurance profession. Some very special words in James 1:27 have impacted me over these past two decades. *"Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."* (NIV) The second part of that verse is what I consider most important - we cannot allow the world to pollute our thoughts and actions. Remain focused on what is pure and pleasing to our Father.

Obviously, we need to remain faithful to our spouse and our children. My relationships with my wife and daughter are the most important on this earth. I place their well-being before my own. Being there for my family comes before my work commitments these days, but that was not always the case. Spending four days flat on my back in a hospital bed in 1992 helped me put my priorities in order. Before that double pneumonia I was a typical "Type A" workaholic. These days I must continually watch for signs of slipping back into my old ways. We need to remain passionate about our family relationships. Balance demands accountability and continual self-assessment.

We all need some diversions in life, but we can't let such activities become our passion. Sporting activities like golf, tennis, surfing, skiing, bicycling, motorsports, etc. can all become consuming. Even spending hour after hour on in front of the TV or computer can become quite addictive. Many find they need to totally abstain from a given activity lest it becomes their downfall.

Christ had a passion that took Him to the cross on Calvary. I suggest we need to focus on Him and become more passionate about His love for us. *"For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us ..."* (John 3:16) and this day forward, place your passion where it belongs on our Lord and Savior!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Matthew 6:24-27; John 17: 13-22

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!

Matthew 6:24-27 New King James Version (NKJV)

You Cannot Serve God and Riches

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Do Not Worry

²⁵ “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

John 17:13-22 (NKJV)

¹³ But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth.

Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: