

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES -Saturday, July 18, 2015

I distinctly remember sitting in front of my personal computer that autumn evening in 1985. For the past four months I had spent many evenings composing Christian poems in anticipation of publishing my first book of poetry in 1986. I had been struggling with one particular poem for several months. I sensed the writing of the poems was nearing completion, but this one just wasn't flowing at all. Then in less than ten minutes the last eighty words flowed from my fingertips. I yelled out to my bride Janet who was in the living room, "It's finished!" explaining that the writing was done and most of the 28 poems drafted in the past few months would be my first published work. That final poem was strategically placed as the last poem in my book, **SO WE MIGHT GROW**. I'd like to share it with you now.

ONLY A MESSENGER

*It's time I sat down and shared with the world.
That these words transcribed have not been my own.
They're handed down to me by God's grace unknown,
This time Lord struggling with my own words gnarled.*

*It's as if you don't want me to disclose
The great glory you've unselfishly shared.
Giving me such words that few even dared
Write so forcibly as if one who knows.*

*Knows the great wonders to be gained by man,
Opening the door letting Jesus through.
Bringing goodness and mercy into view,
If we just hold out our own trembling hand.*

*Thank you Lord Jesus for sharing Your Word
And bringing me joy most men never know.
I'm your messenger and pray I can show
Much more of Your Will to those with sight blurred.*

In retrospect, I can now see how He's used me as a messenger in the lives of many He's placed in my path over these past thirty years. Yes, angels are certainly God's anointed messengers, but as his earthly creation, He truly wants all of us to take on that task as well. Initially, I thought those messages would come through poetry, but over time I came to realize that the Lord wanted to use me face-to-face and oftentimes one-on-one. Operation Timothy became a great tool to help me to witness and disciple to many in need. As followers of Christ, you as well fall into the category of "only" messengers and you may ask, "What does that look like?" Well, it's as simple as watching for opportunities to share the joy of our most important relationship with people every day. Oftentimes, those most eager to listen are caught up in their own challenging circumstances and they simply need someone to listen to their story. The challenge we all face is allocating the time in our busy lives to be available for these divine appointments. It usually doesn't seem like the right time, but we need to make the time to be obedient for His purpose. It's not easy, but I've seen His continued faithfulness and providence for my family, if I simply place Him first. Try it and see God engineer circumstances in your life that will amaze you!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Acts 1:7-8; Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:5-8; 2 Chronicles 36:15; Proverbs 13:17; 2 Corinthians 8:23 b

© 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!

Passages to Ponder: Acts 1:7-8; Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:5-8; 2 Chronicles 36:15; Proverbs 13:17; 2 Corinthians 8:23 b

Acts 1:7-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Matthew 28:18-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

John 15:5-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

2 Chronicles 36:15 (NKJV)

And the Lord God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.

Proverbs 13:17 (NKJV)

A wicked messenger falls into trouble, But a faithful ambassador *brings* health.

2 Corinthians 8:23 b (NKJV)

Or if our brethren *are inquired about*, *they are* messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.