

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES - Saturday May 23, 2015

One of my favorite small books purchased over the years is Gene Griessman's *THE WORDS LINCOLN LIVED BY - 52 Timeless Principles to Light Your Path*. This compilation of quotes from Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, is filled with wisdom waiting to be put into practice. Besides the obvious inspiration found in these 52 devotionals, I found a greater understanding for the man and what I believe made him tick. Whether "Honest Abe" was a Christian or a Deist, there's no doubt in my mind that he was a Man of God and his greatest source of discipline and understanding came from the Bible. He often quoted God's Word and followed it as best he could under the difficult circumstances he faced throughout his life. The question we need to ask is simply this, "How am I doing in following God's Word?"

Lincoln also was a Man of Prayer and I'm certain the trials he faced as President during the Civil War brought him to his knees frequently. In fact I imagine there probably wasn't day that passed during the terrible conflict between the North and South that he wasn't on his knees praying to God for divine intervention to limit the immense bloodshed caused by differing ideologies on the issue of slavery and commerce. His desire was to keep the nation united at any cost and the cost was truly great! There were approximately 620,000 U.S. deaths caused by the Civil War alone as compared to another 644,000 conflict-related U.S. deaths since then. The price was great, but he apparently understood it was a price that had to be paid. Certainly, our trials seem inconsequential when compared to Lincoln's trials, but we can learn much from the way he handled the adversities of life. So, let's consider one more question, "How is my prayer life?"

There's another man who I personally strive to be more like - the Son of Man. He's my real example and like Abraham Lincoln He too faced much adversity. Jesus always spent ample time with the Father. He knew where to go to recharge His batteries as He was continually being spent for others. Much of my time these days seems to be spent for others and I cherish the time alone with my Heavenly Father. There are times when I just need to get away to the solace of a quiet place and reflect on the remainder of the race that lies ahead. Paul proclaimed in Philippians 3:14, *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."* That's my goal, my reward, and I trust it's yours as well. We were placed on this planet for a distinct purpose and it was not for our selfish motives. We are here to serve God and others! In Luke 10:27 we are reminded to, *"Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself."*

In Matthew 16:33 Jesus shares with us that, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart for I have overcome the world."* And we are not in this world alone. He's given all believers the Holy Spirit to guide us through the troubles that will certainly come our way. Can you count on the Holy Spirit? Can you see the Holy Spirit at work in your life? Do you trust in the Lord as Abraham Lincoln obviously did to take you through the difficulties (the valleys) of life? These are questions that each of us must answer as we face adversity again and again. I made a decision to trust in the Lord (Proverbs 4:5 & 6) and not lean on my own feeble understanding 31 years ago and it was the best decision I ever made. Join me in doing it for the first time or renewing your faith in the One Who created all things and loves us more than we can possibly comprehend!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 54: 4-7; Acts 17: 26-28; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:1-3.

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Passages to Ponder: Psalm 54: 4-7; Acts 17: 26-28; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:1-3

Psalm 54:4-7 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁴ Behold, God *is* my helper;
The Lord *is* with those who uphold my life.

⁵ He will repay my enemies for their evil.
Cut them off in Your truth.

⁶ I will freely sacrifice to You;
I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it is* good.
⁷ For He has delivered me out of all trouble;
And my eye has seen *its desire* upon my enemies.

Acts 17:26-28 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,
²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

Colossians 1:15-18 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Hebrews 1:1-3 New King James Version (NKJV)

God’s Supreme Revelation

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,