

FOURTH QUARTER STRATEGIES - Saturday, December 5, 2015

Some years back before I went to wearing broad-brimmed hats, my favorite golf cap was one with several fish embroidered above the bill. On that cap was one fish defiantly swimming in the opposite direction of the rest. I've come to relate to this scene in my own life. You see, I consider myself one who loves the challenge of swimming upstream - going against the flow. And as Christians, I believe we're all called to do just that. Yet, going against the current, the norm, is non-conforming and may have repercussions in your business, personal and family life.

My daughter shared a cute video with me the other day that reminded me of that golf cap and why I am the way I am. I used to go with the flow in my teens, through my twenties and even through my thirties. (You may want to check out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjqsavPCYi8&feature=youtu.be> .) By age 40, I found myself challenging norms and questioning paths taken. I was simply existing, not truly loving life and sensed there had to be more to it all than just existing one day at a time. I had been through two divorces, had completed my graduate degree and was on a successful corporate career path, but something was missing.

I had been afraid to let go of the life I had been living up to that point. Life was comfortable, but it was not fulfilling. I gave up a lucrative corporate position and launched out in my own business. A few months later, I was challenged to try church! Upon returning from Vietnam, I had stayed away from church life for more than 15 years. As a teenager and young adult, I enjoyed the liturgy of the church, singing hymns and ended up becoming quite religious. In time that all wore off and I considered such things to be a waste of my time.

Life was really all about surviving, but I was certainly not thriving. Upon accepting Christ as Savior and Lord in a small Baptist church in 1984, my desires and motives quickly changed. You see, I simply "let go" of those things that were holding me back and weighing me down. Life became more meaningful and I found true purpose in living for God. My eyes were open to the world as never before. First I fell in love with Jesus and then God introduced me to my loving wife in that small church. Life has been special ever since I let go of those things that were holding me back.

Perhaps you can relate to this and then again this whole story may be difficult for you to grasp. Unless you've experienced the life-changing work of God, you may well question just how this can be. You may be saying under your breath, "How can any relationship make that kind of dramatic change in a life?" Well I witnessed the change and all I can say is it happened to me and I know it can happen to anyone who's drawn to God. Our part is to simply accept His invitation to let Him have control (to take the wheel) of our life. He can certainly navigate through the hazards we will inevitably face better than we can. Place your trust in Jesus and join me on the road to Reality!

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 55:22; Matthew 11:28-30; John 14:5-7; Romans 6:4; Galatians 2:20; 1 Timothy 6:13; 1 John 5:20; Jude 20-21

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Psalm 55:22 New King James Version (NKJV)

²² Cast your burden on the LORD,
And He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

Matthew 11:28-30 New King James Version (NKJV)

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is
light."

John 14:5-7 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can
we know the way?"

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the
Father except through Me.

⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on
you know Him and have seen Him."

Romans 6:4

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as
Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also
should walk in newness of life.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who
loved me and gave Himself for me.

1 Timothy 1:16

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might
show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for
everlasting life.

1 John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding,
that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son
Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Jude 20-21

²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the
Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our
Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.