Secrets to a Godly and Winning Attitude in Uncertain Times

Markets are focusing, almost exclusively, on the escalation of the U. S. and China trade dispute. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) fell points and percent last Friday, because of these concerns. With Friday's weakness, the DJIA is down percent for the year, but still up percent from one year ago.

The trade escalation has been occurring so rapidly, a review of the major events should help.

- March 8th – President Trump announces a 25 percent tariff on imported steel and a 15 percent tariff on imported aluminum. Mexico, Canada and possibly other allies will be exempted.
- April 2nd – China implements tariffs of $3 billion covering 128 U. S. products, including pork, some fruits and nuts and wine.
- April 3rd – President Trump proposes 25 percent tariffs, on 1,300 Chinese products, worth $50 billion in 2017 including industrial technology, medical products and transport items.
- April 4th – China announces it will impose 25 percent tariffs on 106 U. S. products worth $50 billion in 2017. Soybeans and other agricultural products, automobiles, chemicals and some aircraft were targeted.
- April 5th – China took the first step in a World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute with the U. S. The action begins a 60-day timeline to settle the dispute.

- April 5th – President Trump instructs our trade representative to evaluate whether tariffs on an additional $100 billion worth of goods would be appropriate.

The article in *Ministry Today*, “Do You Hear the Rumblings of Spiritual War?” describes reasons for the trade dispute in more detail. Jamie Dimon, CEO of J.P. Morgan Chase (the largest U. S. bank), recently said in his annual letter, that the U. S. has legitimate complaints. The U. S. is not alone. Much of the industrial world has been concerned about China’s trade policies. But, this is the first time these concerns have been aggressively addressed.

In reflecting and planning for impacts of U. S. and China trade relations, the following principles should be remembered.

- A trade war does not currently exist. A new 60-day deadline was triggered April 5th. Markets have been concerned about “proposed” tariffs.
- If the proposed tariffs are implemented, there will be economic pain on both sides.
- If the dispute results in a more reciprocal trade arrangement, both the U. S. and China could win.
- Stakes are high, and no one knows the final conclusion. Expect continued volatility in the markets until the dispute is resolved.

The Bible makes clear that a godly attitude is a requirement for believers to have a positive outcome, especially in uncertain times. Ten of the 12 Israelite spies sent into the promised land had poor attitudes. They saw that the land flowed with milk and honey and that the produce of the land was bountiful. But these unfaithful spies also saw that the people of the land were strong, their cities were fortified and very large and that there were giants in the land. The only two faithful spies, Caleb and Joshua, saw an opportunity because they knew the faithfulness and strength of their God. Unfortunately, the unfaithful spies rallied the people until nearly the entire nation was in rebellion.

“They reported to him and said, “We came to the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. However, the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are fortified and very great, and also we saw the children of Anak there” (Num. 13:27-28).

“Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are able to overcome it” (Num. 13:30).

Israel was justly sent to the wilderness. After 40 years, Joshua and Caleb were the only remaining members of the adults in the original group. Joshua had been chosen and anointed by the Lord to replace Moses. But the moment of truth had arrived. Israel was poised and ready to cross into the promised land. But before they crossed, the Lord had instructions for Joshua.

God assured Joshua that He would be with him and not forsake him. He promised that He would not fail him and would lead him into the promised land. The Lord told Joshua three times in five verses to be strong and courageous. Perhaps we should apply that advice to our attitudes in current times. In five verses, the Lord told Joshua to be obedient twice. Perhaps we can use that advice also. Success was promised and obtained by Joshua via the Lord. The same promises are ours.

> No man will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will not abandon you. I will not leave you. “Be strong and courageous, for you shall provide the land that I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance for this people. Be strong and

> very courageous, in order to act carefully in accordance with all the law that My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn aside from it to the right or the left, so that you may succeed wherever you go (Josh. 1:5-7).

> *This Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise. Have not I commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Josh. 1:8-9).*

These are uncertain times on a variety of fronts: economically, socially, politically and militarily. The Lord has shown through His Scriptures that our attitudes are critically important. Do we trust and have faith in God? Are we strong and courageous? Are we obedient? Are our expectations in line with God's faithfulness and power?

These are challenging times. But these are also exciting times. As sons and daughters of the Most High God, we should be strong, courageous, obedient and optimistic through Him. His peace and victory are available to us with the proper attitude. Let us obtain the victories for His glory. {eoa}

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