



Dodging Bullets **by Aaron Crowley**

Great leaders in history became great by facing and overcoming extraordinarily difficult challenges. Their stories inspire. Additionally, their words of wisdom contain principles that often apply beautifully to the running of a business, making them especially relevant and helpful in these challenging times.

Winston Churchill was quoted as saying, "There is nothing so exhilarating as to be shot at without effect."

Does it not seem like the last year has been an ongoing ballet of dodging bullets? While mortgage meltdowns, collapsing consumer confidence, and sliding stock prices are not exactly exhilarating, there is a certain degree of excitement knowing we are engaged in an economic struggle of historic proportions.

George Washington, the greatest leader of the Revolutionary War, knew what it was like to dodge bullets. In numerous battles, he had horses shot out from under him and holes shot through his cloths. Yet miraculously, Providentially, the bullets that flew as thick as London fog around him, never left a scratch.

Our nation's battle for independence itself, was in a sense, a series of near misses, close calls, and dodged bullets. Benjamin Franklin offered his explanation of this danger avoided and his suggestion for further protection in one of his most famous quotes,

"...how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly appealing to the Father of light to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible to danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine protection ...I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth – that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? ...I therefore beg leave to move – that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations ..."

As I ponder that quote, I must admit that my dreams of building a *granite* empire have been replaced by a drive to survive this recession. And realizing that winning the contest is by no means a sure thing, I take comfort in the words of Mr. Franklin and the fact that we can pray for Divine protection and appeal to the Father of light to illuminate our understanding of these challenging times.

As another month has passed into another bullet dodged, remember; God does govern in the affairs of men. So let us offer prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven for each other, our industry, and our country.