

BREAKING POINT

Strategies

Vol. 3



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Introduction

STRATEGIES

“Failure is nothing more than a chance to revise your strategy.” - Anonymous

My childhood friend David was the first person who taught me how to play chess. I was losing pretty good in the beginning stages when he taught me that it was ok for me to lose. He said, “*That's how you get better.*”
Ironically, we were both sitting in the county jail.



Similar to my chess lessons, people tend to learn more from failure than they do from success. You can probably look at your own life and come to the same conclusion - at least I did.

At first glance, jail and prison seemed to be a breeding ground for unsuccessful people. But that's where I was wrong. We were all given time to analyze our past mistakes so that we could strategically change course - if needed.



Now that I think about it,
there are moves that I would
definitely make differently -
if given time to consider.
That's why I believe that God
sometimes allows things to
happen in our lives to "sit us
down" for a few minutes so
that we can gain more clarity
on what He's trying to teach
us. King David learned that.

**When you corrected me, it
did me good because it
taught me to study your
laws.**

- Psalm 119:71 CEV



How would that change our vantage point if we were to consider even the most difficult times as teaching moments to draw us closer to God?

When you look at it like that, it seems less likely that God is trying to kill us but that good can come out of even the worst of circumstances.

It helps when we look at things that way. It's called *strategic thinking*.



But it doesn't take much strategy to blame ourselves or others for our present circumstances. There's no plan or purpose in that. There's also no strategic thinking in self pity or grief beyond measure. But it does take strategy to analyze our adversity - to process our most challenging moments and to consider making better moves to change the game.

You can't lose when you're learning.



STRATEGIC THINKING

One of the first strategies that I learned in the game of chess is how the pieces move. You will never play the game well if you don't first learn how to move around.

Life is like that.

It's not healthy to make choices without knowing the consequences of our actions.



I'll never forget the time that I got beat up in elementary school. My buddy Tony humiliated me in front of everybody on the school yard. But I deserved it.

I thought that I was tough so I kept taunting him, assuming that I was making an impression on the girls. Unfortunately, I didn't consider the fact that he was bigger than me or what was about to happen next.



To my surprise, Tony whooped me at lunch time so I had to walk around school for the rest of the day with the biggest "L" imaginable.

I learned a valuable lesson from that loss.

***THERE'S ALWAYS
SOMEBODY OR SOMETHING
BIGGER THAN YOU***

That may seem elementary until you consider how many people leave this earth failing to realize that.



Reverence is strategic thinking at its' finest.

In the streets, they have a saying, "*Anybody can get it.*" In other words, don't think that it can't happen to you.

A lot of my friends died not realizing that. I'm fortunate that God didn't allow me to experience that same fate. Sometimes, we can forget that God is bigger than us. But reverence, or a healthy fear of God, can only lead to wiser choices.



**The fear of the Lord is the
beginning of knowledge:
but fools despise wisdom
and instruction.**

- Proverbs 1:7 KJV

I use myself as an example a lot because I know what it's like to be on both sides of the fence. I've made foolish choices and I've made wise choices but I can honestly say that things always turned out better for me when I made decisions in light of reverence for God. It's the best move possible.



YOUR WORST OPPONENT

When I first started playing the game of chess I would love to play people that I could beat easily. My friends eventually told me that I needed to play someone better than me so that I could get better.

To my surprise, I experienced my greatest opposition when I played myself.



King David would often ask God to kill his enemies which happened to be people in Old Testament. But in the New Testament, Jesus gives us a new strategy.

**But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
- Matthew 5:44 ESV**

So then, how can we ask God to kill our opposition if we're supposed to love our enemies? How can we be like King David and crush our opponents?



When King David committed adultery and murder he was ready to punish somebody else for the crimes that he had committed.

God had to send somebody close to him to tell him,

"You are the man!"

- 2nd Samuel 12:7a

In other words... *"This is all you bro!"* This example and so many others in the bible tell us that we need to look inwardly to confront our greatest opposition.



Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2 BSB
(with emphasis)

Depending on your mentality, your mind can become your greatest enemy. But the Apostle Paul tells us that we can become "transformed" - we can change whenever we renew our minds.



To re-new is to make new again. It's not like washing your car. It's like getting a new car - over and over again - with some occasional new features. That's how powerful a changed mind is.

If God can get us to change our way of thinking to His way of thinking then we will be able to defeat your greatest opponent... ourselves.

I can't help but think how awesome it would be to play against myself - and win!



PLAYING TO WIN

**He made known his ways to
Moses, his acts to the
people of Israel.**

- Psalm 103:7 ESV

There's a difference between knowing someone's ways and knowing their acts. I grew up in church always hearing about what God did - but I didn't really understand *WHY* He did what He did.

I needed to know *WHY* He moved the way He moved.



Barna Research tells us that 96% of Millennial churchgoers believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. So young people aren't really turned off by the Bible. They're mainly disinterested in the presentation of the Gospel. *"Millennials who don't go to church say they see Christians as judgmental (87%), hypocritical (85%), anti-homosexual (91%) and insensitive to others (70%) - Barna Research.*

But that's not how God moves.



The people who claimed to follow God were familiar with all the rituals and customs - but Moses had a personal relationship with Him.

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

Exodus 33:11a ESV

That's the model for us. That's how you play to win. Relationship should always trump religion.



A man is religiously bound to his wife by marriage for sure - but that doesn't mean they're a couple. You can tell when two people enjoy each other's company and their commitment level. Just as you can tell when somebody needs more Christ and less "church."

We've all been there.

It's possible for any one of us to become institutionalized. But the marriage should always take precedent over ceremonies.



Jesus said...

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.

- Matthew 11:29 ESV

Get "yoked up" or connected
with Jesus if you really want
to know how God operates.
Learn his ways because He is
the very image of God and He
is gentle and humble.

When you play the game
strategically like that -
you'll make good moves.