

Life is like a game of Chess...

Ofentimes John and I find ourselves battling it out on the chessboard (*and after I usually find myself defeated!*) we often say how many sermons you take from it and how well it resembles our life experiences.

Each game is totally different to the game before it which is just like our individual lives; we go through our own unique situations and experiences although we are made up of the same pieces.

With that said I thought it would make an interesting article to briefly summarise some of the things I have learnt and thought about simply by playing a game of chess, and I wanted to focus particularly on experiences we all share and those that relate to our Christian walk.

- 1. The decisions you make can cost you.** You, reader, are in the situation you are in today because of the choices you have made. Although others can influence you, ultimately it is up to *you* what you do with your life, your time, your money and your efforts. Making the wrong move during a game can often be detrimental, especially when it allows your opponent to gain one of your pieces or move into a position of advantage. Similarly in our Christian lives, making the wrong choice can give our opponents (the world, the flesh and the devil) the upper hand – it is after all a battle! Sometimes making the wrong decisions can hit us for six; we reap what we sow and have to live with the consequences. Other times we might just get away with it by the skin of our teeth... either way we must make sure we are making the right decisions for the Lord. Proverbs 3v5-6 says **Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.** Being in the will of God is the safest place you can be and doing the will of God is the greatest achievement you can have – are you in the will of God today?
- 2. We can become too focussed on one thing.** Just like in a game of chess, we can become too focussed on our own strategy and thought process that we miss what's going on around us. We can get so wrapped up in our own work, thoughts and feelings etc. that we often fail to see and acknowledge the joys and struggles of those around us. Whilst we moan and grumble about the hardships we face are we helping our struggling neighbours? Do we even notice? By becoming too focussed on one thing I have also learnt that things tend to happen that you don't expect, and it is wise to expect the unexpected at all times and be on your guard. As Bible-believing Christians we are constantly being watched by others and there will always be people who try to catch you unawares, the Scriptures tell us that **A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished – Proverbs 22v3**
- 3. You can't go back.** No matter how much you want to change something you cannot go back; we are to press forward, deal with the present and look to future. **I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus – Philippians 3v14.** As Christians we know that our past has been forgiven and forgotten, we are to put off the old man and walk in newness of life... **Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience – Ephesians 2v2.**
- 4. We must learn to sacrifice.** Sometimes during chess there may come a point where you have to sacrifice a piece to gain overall and the same can be said about life. There should come a point in our Christian walk where we are willing to totally give our time, money, desires etc. to the Lord

and offer it on the alter to Him – not out of duty but out of love. This will only draw us closer to the Lord Jesus Christ and help us to gain spiritually. This reminds me of Keith Green's song 'Pledge my head to Heaven' which speaks of him laying down everything on the alter to the Lord, he said it was easy for him to lay down *his* life but to see anything happen to his wife or children was another matter, nevertheless for the Lord he still gave it all – the question is, do we?

5. **It's important to learn from your mistakes.** As the famous saying goes, 'the only thing man has learnt from history is that man has never learnt from history' and this is very true to say the least. When I make a mistake in one game, I try to learn for next time how to get out of the situation I was in or how to improve my defence etc. We seem to make of habit of making the same errors we make before, and with that said it is important to learn from your mistakes and also from the mistakes of others. Growing up through my teenage years and now hitting my twenties I have seen that the more you go through life the more you realise how much you need to change to be more like the Lord and how un-Christ like you really are.
6. **Don't give up.** Last but not least, regardless of what happens along the way in life, whatever you lose or gain, do not give up! Even when things do not seem to be working out for you, do not give up. When you feel like you are being cornered, do not give up – fight to the bitter end. Even in a mere game of chess it is highlighted to me time and time again that even when you are down you should never quit. **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses - I Timothy 6v12**