

Stratego; 1 Timothy 1:18-20

I. Moves on a Board

A. The game “Stratego”

B. *****PICTURE*****

C. Strategy; a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal usually over a long period of time

1. Job 1:6–8; 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. 7 The Lord said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the Lord and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.” 8 And the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?”

2. 1 Peter 5:8; Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

D. If we are just sailing through life without a strategic plan on how to counter Satan’s “prowling” then we are sure to be “devoured”

II. Holding Faith

A. “Holding” - to keep in a certain state, position, or activity

B. All too often, when Satan comes prowling we fall into despair

C. The pain of our present circumstances outweighs everything else

D. *****PICTURE*****

E. Remembering our hope is a sure way to hold on to our faith

1. Acts 26:4–7; 4 “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, 7 to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king!

2. Colossians 1:21–23; 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

3. 2 Corinthians 1:8–10; 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

F. “Despair” - to lose one’s emotional or mental composure; to break down, to fall apart

1. I can imagine that Paul might be remembering the time they stoned him in Lystra (Acts 14:19)

2. 2 Corinthians was written while Paul was in Macedonia around AD 56 during his third missionary journey

3. We all may succumb to despair at some point in time

4. But, just as Paul quickly remembered that God is in control and regained his hope, we should always remember our Hope through the sacrifice of Jesus
 5. Many of Paul's trials come after he writes this; The Jews seeking to kill him and his arrest in Jerusalem, his imprisonment, his shipwreck on the way to Rome, etc.
 6. I can't help but think that Paul's trials Lystra somehow set him up to endure all the suffering that came later
- G. Whatever we are suffering through can be used to the benefit of the Kingdom of God
1. Those of us who have lost loved ones can suffer with those who are in the process right now
 2. Those who have been homeless, jobless, addicted to illegal substances, or without the daily necessities can empathize with those who are currently suffering these things
 3. For Christians, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel, there is always calm after the storm
- H. As long as we hold on to our faith, we can work through every single one of Satan's "prowlings"
- III. Holding a Good Conscience
- A. The psychological faculty that distinguishes between right and wrong; either afflicts or comforts the person depending on their actions
- B. *****PICTURE*****
- C. The conscience is an amazing thing, and we either develop or suppress it depending on our actions
- D. We know that killing someone is wrong, yet we justify it by excuses
1. "47 Ronin" is about the Samurai system in ancient Japan, based loosely on a true story
 2. "This true story was popularized in Japanese culture as emblematic of the loyalty, sacrifice, persistence, and honor that people should preserve in their daily lives"
 3. Vendettas and vigilantes become memorialized for their behavior
 4. Since when did it become ok that our daily lives are filled with such hate for a person that all we think about is killing them?
 5. Yet we cloak that in phrases like loyalty, sacrifice, persistence, honor
- E. We should be loyal to Christ and commit ourselves to His principles, like love God and love your neighbor
- F. Romans 12:14–21; 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- G. All that we sacrifice should be in service to the Kingdom, recognizing the Christ made the ultimate sacrifice
- H. Romans 12:1–2; 1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- I. We should be persistent in our devotion to Christ, not losing heart of faith in the face of adversity
 - J. 2 Corinthians 4:14–18; 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
 - K. We should honor Christ as Lord over anyone or anything else
 - L. 1 Peter 3:13–16; 13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.
 - M. Our consciences can be seared by continued exposure to the idea that sin is okay
 - 1. Whether by books, newspapers, billboards, music, television, movies, friends and acquaintances, etc.
 - 2. You may say, "that is pretty much every way to receive information, relaxation, vacations, etc.
 - 3. And you are right, which is why we must have developed our strategy to combat the "roaring lion" that is seeking to devour us
 - 4. That is why we must hold to our faith and hold to a good conscience
 - 5. We recognize Satan's attack on our moral conscience for what it is... a battle for our souls
 - 6. We must remember that God has the final word and we must agree with Him
 - 7. We must remember that we no longer live for our own selfish desires, but for Christ, who loved me and gave Himself for me
- IV. Christian Strategy
- A. Wage the good warfare
 - B. Holding on to our faith, never losing hope or turning to despair
 - C. Holding our good conscience, knowing what is right are wrong
 - D. Resisting Satan's attacks
 - E. James 4:7; Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.