***INTRODUCTION and ACKNOWLEDGMENTS***

*THIS MATERIAL IS STILL IN A DRAFT FORM.*

*PLEASE SEND ME ANY CORRECTIONS OR IDEAS TO EXPAND ON FOR ANY OF THE LESSONS.*

*This book was written so the love of Jesus could be shared with others. The fact that you are reading this now is proof you are interested in pursuing God's love and learning chess.*

*Many churches have recreation ministries, Sunday schools, evening fellowships, special enrichment classes, and/or evangelical discipleship classes. Having a 'chess program' can be valuable outreach to be used in the above settings.*

*Chess is for all. Teams and clubs could be formed, perhaps even a league could be started for inter/intra church competition and fellowship.*

*Chess could be an outreach to a specific group such as; students, seniors, military, nursing homes, or prisons. It might also be used in one-on-one setting, group classes, or maybe just to begin a discussion about God and Faith.*

*This would be a positive parent/child activity. When parents spend time with their children and share the love of Christ, great things happen.*

*In addition, the interaction of all participants creates an atmosphere for the exchange of ideas, sharing, and fellowship.*

***Pray your heart and eyes will be open for ways this project will further God's Kingdom work.***

ACKNOLWEDGEMENTS

Many people helped me get this material to where it is today. When I started to put the words to the paper I did not want to share it with anyone until it was finished. But, *when God is at work, He wants us to join Him* (Henry Blackaby), and I could not hold it back. My Christian walk has also be a journey. There is no way I can give everyone credit, but one day, God will say to them that your reward is in heaven – Well done, my good and faithful Servant.

In 1988, Ray Boltz recorded a song, “*Thank you for giving to the Lord*”, about a man who gets to heaven and is amazed at all the lives he touched and did not even know it.

This material is still in draft form even though it has been read and modified many times by multiple people through the revision process. I am thankful for the thoughts, comments, corrections, and reflections that have been provided to make this message clear.

I would like to thank my wife, Jodi, and my family who let me spend hours putting this together. I need to thank Lin Vickery and Lynn Gillard for their ability to transform the words and thoughts into real sentences. I would like to thank Sherry Vickery for the fellowship and discipleship he taught me and for being a great neighbor and friend and brother in Christ. Miguel Gonzalas, my Evangelism Explosion mentor, and Don Rhodes, my Prayer Partner, two brothers whose strength and prayers held me up through some rough times. To my sister, Dr. Sherryl Meadows, and my friends: Karen Lindsay, Carl Hanna, Tim Hanlin, Todd Jones, Kent Hall, and Caroline Prioleau who shine each day as beacons in this world. To David and Sharon Muff and Pat and Ken Miller for their companionship and support. To my mother-in-law, Audrey Smith for her unyielding faith and constant prayers. Ron Hamilton and Jeff Whedbee need to be acknowledged for the Sunday school lessons where God used them to spread His word. To the Rev. Terry Pagotta, I give praise to God for his calling and support that allowed me to actually first teach this class.

I would like to thank the people of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte under the care of Dr. Joe B. Brown for the power and love of God that was shown to me. And mostly, praise be to God, my Savior and my Lord, Jesus Christ, for the gift He gave me so I may share this message with you.

Since the initial writing began in 1998, many of the Saints listed above have passed into God’s Kingdom.

*USE OF THIS MATERIAL*

Please use any material in this book if it will bring honor and glory to the kingdom of God and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. However, remember that a portion of the profits from the sale of this book will go to various mission projects.

*Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God* (II Corinthians 2:17).

*REFERENCES*

The source of my Bible quotes is the PC STUDY BIBLE Version 2, published by BIBLESOFT 22014 7th Ave South, Seattle WA 98198.

(206) 824-0547.

I have used the NIV Version for all references unless otherwise noted.

I have not meant to leave out proper references for use of material, but in many cases the stories were items I have heard over the years.

Please let me know of any references I need to include.

*HIS and HER*

Chess is a sport for everyone but for clarity in the examples, the pronouns 'he' and 'his' are used most often. I will attempt to use 'she' and 'her' in the book. Though I believe in equality, I do not believe the message should be lost in a writing structure that would require sentences such as:

***"If Black was to move and he/she can not get out of check, then the game is over."***

***or***

***"A player must always make a move. He/She cannot pass if it is his/her turn."***

Dear Friends:

It is with great joy I can share this material with you. Many books have been written that try to teach you how to play chess. However, as a coach and parent, I felt something was needed to teach a much greater and more important lesson than how to play a game.

***This IS NOT a book to prove chess is based on the Bible,***

***but general devotionals are applied to the game of chess.***

This text is a working document and may never be finished. I find it very interesting the more I learn about God's Word, **the more I learn I have yet to learn.** The Bible is so full of truth as the Holy Spirit reveals. My prayer is you will be filled with insight, wisdom and examples that can be added to this text to further clarify God's message of hope, peace, love and joy that comes with Salvation through the Son, Jesus Christ.

This material is only the beginning of what God wants you to know and it should not be used to end a search. God's love comes alive when you know Him. You learn about Him through: His Word, the Bible; when you get involved in the body of Christ in a New Testament Church; when you pray; when you gather for study and fellowship, and when you witness to others about God's gift.

God wants us to be His witness to the world and spread the good news about the living Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19). If we open our ears, eyes, and hearts, we can see and hear God at work all around. He loves us and He wants us to love Him. He has always been and will always be there waiting for us to join Him (Revelation 3:20). One day, however, He will return. For those who have found eternal life, heaven and glory await. For many others the time to decide to follow Jesus will be too late. Each day that passes gives us another opportunity to share the love of Jesus with others. **We can all be a witness for Christ in our life to bring honor and glory to God's kingdom.**

We are watched by others and by God - nothing escapes His eye. The things you do and say are an example and proof of the Spirit who lives within you. **Your light shines every day and it is your responsibility to ensure everyone hears the Gospel of Jesus.**

God at Work

Part I

As you read and learn more about chess and God, I pray you will share this with others. Here is an interesting story of how God brings people together. Don't ever pass up a chance to share the love of Jesus with someone, you never know, they might never get a chance to hear about God's message again!

I was attending a men's conference with my church at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly Retreat at Black Mountain in North Carolina.

On the last day of our weekend, I chose to stay in camp and read my Bible. I walked down to the basement of the building looking for the drink machine. There in the corner of this basement in the break room was one of the camp workers. None of the lights were on, and I thought it was strange that someone would be sitting alone in a dark room. I thought she might have wanted someone to listen to her so I asked her what she was doing down there. She said that she was going to meet another camp worker today to play chess.  *Very interesting*. She did not know that I had a chess board in my bag (or did she?!) A few minutes later the other worker did show up, and he did not have a chess board either.

I then asked, "How were you going to play chess without having any equipment?" Neither of them knew the answer, but there we were, all together on that Sunday morning. I took out my board and presented some of the lessons God had planted in my heart and head.

Later that afternoon I set my board up in the Recreation Hall and a crowd of young students gathered around my table. Many people wanted the chance to get close and play against me. Each one came with pride in the hopes of beating me. Each one was given their chance and it was a perfect time to share the gospel, my testimony, and have some fellowship.

I pray each was touched and left with the message of love that Jesus offers.

***God is always at work and it is exciting when He invites and allows us to join Him.***

***Pray you will see where God is at work in your life.***

Testimony

Before I received the gift of eternal life, I was active in so many different organizations and doing so many things, yet my life felt very empty. I could rationalize by doing lots of good things and living right, my life was in good hands. There came a point, however, when no matter how much I did, I felt I still needed to do more. It was such an overwhelming feeling and so burdensome. No matter how many things I was doing and how perfect I tried to be, the chase of success and happiness became one of frustration and despair.

We all have a mission in life. Some are called to travel around the world, and others are to share the message of Jesus Christ in their own backyard. I have been teaching chess and volunteering at schools for over 40 years. I used to feel I was a pretty good role model by doing what was right and being fair and honest. These are good traits, but they fall so short of the grace and mercy God has to offer.

After I received God’s gift of salvation, I had thoughts about quitting and stop participating in organized competitive chess since I could not do both chess and worship the Lord. However, I received telephone calls from some past students who asked me to take them to the *World Open Chess Tournament*. I did not really want to go nor could I afford to go but I did go. It was at this tournament where seeds of ideas kept sprouting about how to teach the Bible and relate it to chess.

After returning from the tournament, I was called by a Christian home school group to teach chess to 12 students at a local church. Through these classes and subsequent prayer, the following material was developed. There is no greater joy for me than to help others learn, develop and grow. It became so exciting that God was using me and chess to witness for him.

I would love to discuss any thoughts you may have about this material.

**Pray the Holy Spirit will use the messages in this text to touch the hearts of all readers, teachers, and students, so many will come to know and receive the Living Savior, Jesus Christ.**God at Work

Part II - by Lin Vickery

Nolan, I cannot help thinking about the '*coincidental'* chain of events that took place. To follow these through in reverse:

- The reason you were called to help teach that home school class was because Terry Pagotta had brought his son to our second chess club in the winter *before you were saved*.

- The reason there was a second chess club at our house was because there had been an excess of interested students at the time of the first one, so we were doing it again to give more children an opportunity to learn chess.

- The reason I hosted a home school chess club at our house was because I saw it as an evangelistic opportunity - we wanted to build a friendship with you and Jodi, and we were looking for things we had in common to build on.

- The reason I thought of chess as a 'common' interest when neither Sherry nor I played chess (or were even interested in the game) was because Sarah had recently expressed an interest in learning to play.

- The reason you offered to teach Sarah to play chess was because we 'happened' to see you out in the yard one day right after she and I had been struggling to learn from a book, so I asked you a question about some basic moves.

- The reason Sarah become interested in the game of chess was because we 'happened' to be reading *Alice in Wonderland* together and she thought she'd understand part of the story better if she knew how to play chess.

- The reason we were reading *Alice in Wonderland* together at that particular point in time was... well... it must have been because God had a book for you to write, and this thread had to be in place to help set the stage when the right time came.

***Isn't God Awesome?***

***What have you done for God today?***

*The prior page was a great example of God using Lin and her family to reach my heart so I might know the Lord. At the time I thought I was just helping another child learn how to play chess, but God was getting me ready.*

***What is your testimony about how God is at work in their life?***

*Here is an example from Carl: The Spark*

*How do we get to know a person? We get to know him by talking and listening to him. We learn about him from the stories other people tell about him or something that might have been written by him or about him. God has given us an entire autobiography - Read it with an open heart and you will love the author and will find Him. I once asked my mother (age 89) how many times she had read through the entire Bible at a Christmas dinner. She said," I don't know 'cause I never kept a record but I remember reading through it by an oil lantern the first year we moved into this home because it was 1923, we had not electricity until a year later". I said to myself, "If my mom can do it at 89, I can do it at 56. That was in 1986 and I've been hooked on God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit ever since. Every time I read God's autobiography I gain more faith, grace, wisdom, and knowledge and get to know the living Lord better.*

Carl added these references for his story.

II Timothy 2:15

I John 2:5-6

I John 2:23-24, 27, 29

I John 3:1-2, 3, 6, 19, 24

***God is at work all around.***

***Let's share the good work He is doing.***