In order to win the chess game, you need to learn how to checkmate your opponent. What is really interesting about chess is nothing is hidden. Everything is visible and contained on the 64 squares. Both players are looking at the same board at the same time, but they probably see different things.

Having all of the pieces and making all the moves is just a process to get to the final "End Game" position.

We can look at life as a great big puzzle. There are so many pieces that seem to fit together perfectly and at other times they don't appear to fit at all (at least at first). Sometimes it may be years before we can understand or comprehend a piece to the puzzle. However, just because we cannot comprehend it - doesn't mean it doesn't belong.

The biggest and hardest question people ask of God is, “*WHY”?*

The real question should be,

  **“God, what do you want me to learn from this”?**

The Bible tells us that God’s ways are not our ways. (Isaiah 55: 8-9)

Have you ever put a puzzle together? Most people like to have the finished picture that is printed on the box in front of them while they work on it. It is our nature to want to know what we are doing and how everything relates to each other. We like to be in control of our environment. This principle works pretty well for most things, but it sure is hard to see the picture of our life when you are in the picture! Sometimes “bad things seem to happen to good people”, and we cannot see the clear picture. Another oddity is that sometimes “good things seem to happen to bad people”. When things don't go the way we plan, we can get angry and frustrated. Some things are out of our control, and it is better that way. What a burden it would be if we each had to be in control of every phase of our life. For example, my heart and lungs have to work or I'll be dead. I cannot control my heart and lungs - they just work on their own and I am very thankful I do not have to worry about that.

I cannot explain why so many things happen in life, but I can accept the fact that they do. God told us that He loves us and I have to trust Him and His Word.

Just because you do not see the picture does not mean it does not exist or it isn’t real. I do not mean to imply life is preset and predetermined. God knows each of us and he knows our heart but he has also given us the freedom to make choices. Sometimes the choices we make are not the ones God would like for us to make but He lets us make them if we wish! What I believe is we are placed in life and we have roles to play. How we play those roles changes the plot of the story as it goes along. There is not one picture but multiple pictures within a picture and multiple artists all working at the same time.

For the most part I have given up watching the TV news. They can give only a limited amount of information and they decide what they want us to see. I cannot do anything about most of it. This does not mean I live as a hermit, ignorant of world events. However, so many people watch the news and then get “stressed out”. This feeling is because they are being presented stimuli, and cannot control the situation. We like to be in control and yet we are presented situations that are completely out of our control. It is also interesting we would waste our time watching something when most of what they show is “front page news” that can be read in a few minutes. Just think what you could do with that time if you were not sitting in front of the TV.

The "SERENITY PRAYER" is a simple little prayer that is very useful for bringing the picture back into focus.

**God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,**

**the courage to change the things I can,**

**and the wisdom to know the difference.**



It is White's turn to move and he can win the game in two moves.

**Remember the three key questions?**

 **1) What is being attacked?**

 **2) What is about to be attacked?**

 **3) What can I attack?**

White has some choices to make.

**What would you do?**

 The Black Rook on g8 is attacking the Queen.

 If White lets his Queen be captured, Black should be able to win.

 How do you get out of danger?

 Block, Move or Capture (or have a stronger counter attack).

 White could Block with B-g5.

This looks bad because if R x B then the situation is about the same! Or is it?

 R – d8 + and black must block with the Rook.

 Now, either R x R, Q x R or Q-f7 are all Checkmate.

If after B-g5, P x B, then Black plays Q x P +.

 Black must block with R-g7

 and White wins with either

 Q x R ++ (The Queen is protected by the pawn)

 or R-d8 ++!!!

That took three moves (not two), and there is no rule that says that Black had to capture the Bishop. Black is smart and can also see ahead. What is really exciting about chess is that the position on the board is the truth. Nothing is hidden and there are no tricks. However, it is a skill and an art to be able to see moves and make the pieces come 'alive' and perform their tasks and remember how things changed after each move.

So, back to the problem*. If the Black Rook was removed*, then White could checkmate Black in one move (and there are three ways that this can be done).

**Remove the Rook at g8.**

*Take a moment and see if you can find all three ways****.***

 1) Q-g7++.

 Black cannot block with any pieces or move the King.

The other option is to capture the Queen. It might look like he could do that, but remember the Pawn captures diagonally so it is protecting the Queen.

 2) R - d8 ++

Again, the King is in check and cannot block, move, or capture.

**Place the Rook back on the board at g8.**

 **White to move and win in 2 moves**.

What this has shown is the Rook is keeping Black from being checkmated.

If the Rook could be removed, then White should be able to get checkmate.

 B x P +. The King must block with the Rook (R-g7),

 and then White can play either R-d8 ++ or Q x R ++.

or

 R - d8!!

 If Black plays R x R, we did what we planned to do and removed the Rook from where it was. So now, Q-g7++.

Black cannot play R x Q, because he would be putting himself in check from the Rook and a King cannot put himself in danger.

Black will be checkmated on the next move, and there is nothing he can do to escape the danger.

**Every time a piece is moved, a new puzzle is made!**

A good chess player can see what the finished puzzle is going to look like and then makes moves to facilitate it happening. This is just like an artist who sees the finished picture and applies the paint to make that picture appear. Chess is an art. Some would claim that it is also a science, but a science has predictable results. Chess can be played with principles, guidelines and logic, and while chess computers are getting stronger, the human mind is still very powerful.

Look around you and see the ever changing pictures in life.

Plan for things to happen and then make it a reality.

**Pray God will allow you to see the parts of the picture you need to see so you can join him at work.**

**Give Him thanks for the pieces He keeps hidden.**