

October 22, 2023

## Gamers: Lessons from Minecraft and Tetris (Psalm 32)

*Enjoy creativity and think strategically with Jesus.*

### Hook (5min)

- Greetings (online too), Connect Card, Notes in bulletin or app
- God is at work!
  - o Woman in our church heard God's voice after CR one evening – she now has God's peace for a very difficult situation.
  - o Young man felt convicted after a sermon to re-think his sexual activity before marriage.
  - o New people have asked our pastors to be mentored.
  - o New people are joining Teams and Groups.
  - o Today – baptisms!
- *God is at work – and He will never stop working. This is HIS church.*

### Prayer

### Minecraft (10min)

- Minecraft is the best-selling video game of all time – with over 300 million copies sold. Over \$700 million in merchandise happens every year.
- Created in 2009 by Markus Persson. It has two main modes. In Survival, you collect resources to prepare for creatures that come out at night. You mine resources, craft tools and weapons, build a home, and grow food. In Creative mode, you have unlimited resources, never need food, and can fly. The focus is on building and being creative. Minecraft has several spin-off games, a lot of toys and merchandise, many comics and books, and a movie is in development.
- It grew in popularity during the pandemic, allowing people to connect and create online with their friends.
- **\*Enjoy creativity with the Creator.**
  - o It is amazing what people have created in this world – random things and entire cities. The entire map of Middle Earth has been made!
  - o It is amazing how open people are with what they have created.
  - o *Don't just consume creativity, add your voice to the song.*
- **Psalm 32:1-7 (p.466)**
  - o David writing a poem for the people of God, talking about sin being forgiven.

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- HOW we express it matters. He didn't just say, "The Lord forgives your sin, and that's good."

A psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> Oh, what joy for those  
whose disobedience is forgiven,  
whose sin is put out of sight!

<sup>2</sup> Yes, what joy for those  
whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt,  
whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

<sup>3</sup> When I refused to confess my sin,  
my body wasted away,  
and I groaned all day long.

<sup>4</sup> Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.  
My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Interlude

(Selah – a time to reflect)

<sup>5</sup> Finally, I confessed all my sins to you  
and stopped trying to hide my guilt.  
I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."  
And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Interlude

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time,  
that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.

<sup>7</sup> For you are my hiding place;  
you protect me from trouble.  
You surround me with songs of victory. Interlude

- Enjoy creativity with the Creator.
  - David wrote the psalm poetically.
  - Creativity is part of the communication.
  - His creativity can inspire ours.
- \*Don't just consume creativity, add your voice to the song.
  - We all appreciate our artists – music, movies, art, design, houses, and more.
  - YOU are created with creative abilities.
  - Problem = comparison. We see the shine of others and opt to silence our own light.
- Art is for more than consumption.
- Art is for more than evaluation – just enjoy that you get to make your mark on the canvas.
  - *I haven't played much Minecraft – I have played a bit with my kids. For me, it is too slow – but they know how to enjoy the pace and enjoy what they are creating. I found myself*

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asking them over and again – what is the point of this? Where is the boss? What is motivating me?

- I reflected on this – I had lost the ability to just enjoy the process. I still don't play Minecraft, but I do photography, graphic design, and music.
- But I have to be intentional to do these things for enjoyment – and not just for work or efficiency.

- **What will your creativity be?**

- Poetry, writing, drawing, singing, dancing, something else?
- Minecraft?

## Tetris (10min)

- Created in 1985 by Alexey Pajitnov, a Russian software engineer. It especially gained popularity when it came included with the original Nintendo Game Boy, which sold 35 million copies of the game. Tetris is the most ported game of all time, available on over 65 platforms. It has sold over 202 million copies.
- Apple TV released a movie this year about the legal battles the game went through.
- The Tetris Effect – research has been done about how the game can help brain function.
  - People can see the game playing in their head, even after they have stopped playing.
  - Playing increases the problem-solving function of your brain and can increase cerebral cortex thickness.
  - It has been shown to help those who are trying to quit an addiction or struggling with trauma.
  - One study even showed it helpful for treating a lazy eye.
  - It has been shown to help relax people who struggle with anxiety.

- **\*Think strategically with Jesus.**

- The game consists of seven different shapes, all with four squares. The shapes fall into a box, which the player can rotate into place. A row of squares gets removed. As the game continues, the shapes fall at a faster rate.
- The more you play the game, the more you can prepare for what is coming – even though which shapes will come is randomized.
- Preparing makes a big difference.

- **John 4:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John <sup>2</sup> (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). <sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup> He had to go through Samaria on the way. <sup>5</sup> Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. <sup>7</sup> Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."

<sup>8</sup> He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

- **\*Think strategically with Jesus.**
  - Jesus prayed every day and was led by the Spirit. Yet He also had a strategy – the disciples He chose, the experiences He led them through, and the places He went.
  - He left Judea because of the animosity.
  - Yet he intentionally went through Samaria – which Jews in His day did not do.
    - In Greek “*dei*” – it was *necessary* to go to Samaria.
  - Jesus intentionally sat at the well at a time when most people would not be there – but this outcast woman would be.
    - He shared the hope of the gospel with her, and she believed in Jesus and invited her entire village to know Christ.
    - Jesus turns outcasts into witnesses of hope!
  
- **Story – coaching planters.**
  - As I have coached church planters, I find that some of them are very spiritually minded and ignore strategy. When a challenge or problem arises, they just say, “We just need to pray, and the Lord will take care of it.” I say back, “What if the Lord gave you a brain so you can take care of it?” They laugh, and we make a plan together.
  - Other planters are way too strategic. A problem comes, and they go right into “fix-it” mode. I have to pause them and say, “Have you prayed about this yet? How you sought out your Supply Lines? What Scripture is speaking to you in this problem or challenge?” This helps slow them down to rely on God’s power more than their own strength. If you got God’s power – use it!
  - ***Which one do you lead towards – spirituality or strategy?***
    - Spirituality, Strategy, Creativity – we need all three!
      - Too often one is ignored.
    - **\*What does it mean for you to think strategically with Jesus?**
    - **\*How can you be creative with Jesus?**

## Punch – Testimony (5min)

- Earlier this year, someone in our church told me that they had watched all the testimonies online – and we have a lot of them. (This is strategy to post them, and creativity to work on them.) This person said, “Thank you for putting those online. Listening to those stories helped me through a very dark time of faith. I realized I am not alone.”
- *Let’s check out the newest one together!*

### Prayer

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Benediction – Eph 3:17 – Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.

- Prayer Team available