

# Analogy of a Soccer Team

(Go To Meeting)

Lindsay Stephens—October 28, 2022

It is a great calling that we have been given by God. The vast majority of this world has no idea just what is in store for all mankind.

Today I want to provide an analogy of our calling with being on a soccer team. What does a soccer team consist of? What does it need in order to operate?

First of all it needs *a coach* to be able to direct the team. It needs a captain, selectors to select the team, and players to be part of the team. We can apply this in a spiritual sense:

Our coach is God the Father, Who also is the Owner; He owns the universe, the Creator of the universe. God the Father is also the Selector; He selects the team.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...”

Every soccer teams needs a captain, *so, we have a captain in Jesus Christ!*

Hebrews 2:10: “...to make the Author... [Jesus Christ, captain (KJV)] ...of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

A team need an administration in other to help run it. We have angels in heaven above who act as *ministering spirits*.

A team also needs supporters, and angels are our supporters. Think about when we overcome the angels in heaven rejoice, each time we overcome and each time someone is baptized.

We also have church members who support one another. We pray for one another to overcome. We have trials and difficulties and we pray for one another, and we support one another in that way.

That’s the beginning of the soccer team. What I want to do is present three points in this message:

## 1. We need to know our role on the team

Know who you are and what it’s all about. Know where you are in the scheme of things.

Every player—whether it’s the goal-keeper, the defense, midfield, attackers or strikers—are all part of the team. You need to know what your role is on the team.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists;

and some pastors and teachers **for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ**” (vs 11-12).

We have to spiritually follow the Coach: God the Father, and follow the Captain: Jesus Christ. Team members have to support one another. We need to follow captain whatever the tactics are, and support one another.

Each member as different aspects of their abilities in the way they play the game. The coach puts people on certain parts of the field according to their abilities. We can’t have the goal-keeper decide to go up the other end of the field saying he doesn’t want to save goals, but he wants to kick goals wanting to have all the glory to himself.

The other member at the other end of the field would say, ‘What are you doing here, you’re supposed to save the goals. The whole team would be out of coordination. What would the coach think if the goal-keeper is at the wrong end of the field.

1-Corinthians 12:4: “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit.” *All of us in God’s Church have the same Spirit, but we have different gifts and abilities!*

Verse 5: “And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are differences of operations, but it is the same God Who is working all things in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for *the benefit of all*” (v 5-7).

Verse 11: “But the one and the same Spirit is operating in all these things, dividing separately to each one as *God Himself desires*.” *So it’s at the will of the Coach!*

Verse 14: “For the body *of Christ* is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body? And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ would this then cause it not to be *part* of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would* the hearing *be*? If *the* whole *were* hearing, where *would* the smelling *be*?” (vs 14-17).

So, we have different gifts in the Body, and we can’t have the opinion: ‘what’s the use of this person being here if he can’t do this or that.’ We need to practice in order learn the game.

John 3:21: “But the one who practices the

Truth comes to the Light, so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God.*”

1-John 3:7: “Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.”

We need to practice righteousness to be righteous. We also need to receive instruction in order to improve and develop.

Proverbs 10:17: “He who **keeps instruction is in the way of life**, but he who refuses reproof goes astray.”

Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ *The Truth is the Way!*

Proverbs 15:32: “He who refuses instruction despises his own soul, but he who hearkens to reproof gains understanding.”

Instruction is something we cannot afford to refuse to do that. It’s not beneficial to the team and it certainly wouldn’t be beneficial for the coach. If we refuse to receive instruction there’s no guarantee that you’re going stay on the team.

2-Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work” (vs 16-17). ***It is vital that we take note of instruction!***

## 2. **We need to know the opposition**

We need to know what you are up against. We need to know who you’re playing against: What are their tactics? What are they like as a team?

In the Church our opposition is this world, which is led by Satan the devil. Satan is the ‘god of this world’ (2-Cor. 4:4). This world can be so overwhelming, because there is so much evil in this world. It can be so overwhelming if we are not conscious of what we are here for, why we’re in the Church.

Satan can be very deceptive, and it may not be so evident sometimes. He doesn’t come as a person in a red costume with a pitchfork ringing the doorbell and saying, ‘Hi! I’m Satan the devil and I’ve come here to deceive you and to tempt you.’ It doesn’t work like that. Let’s see what some of his tactics are: This is where Satan came into the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:1: “Now, the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field, which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘*Is it true that God has said, “You shall not eat of*

any tree of the garden?”’”

The way that Satan asked that question, he was going to try to deceive Eve there and then, but she did answer him.

Verse 2: “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, “You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die”’” (vs 2-3).

So, Eve knew what God had said. But this the next lie that Satan said:

Verse 4: “And the serpent said to the woman, ‘In dying, you shall not surely die! For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil’” (vs 4-5).

In other words, Why doesn’t God tell me what I need to know? Why can’t I decide myself what I want to do.’

Verse 6: “And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”

She saw the temptation there: it was pleasing, ‘Why can’t I have this?’ She was deceived and fell for it.

John 8:44: “...He was a murderer from *the* beginning, and has not stood in the Truth because there is no Truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he is speaking from his own *self*; for he is a liar, **and the father of it.**” *The father of lies!*

Another tactic is that Satan disguises himself masquerading and is a deceiver in that way.

Matthew 7:15: “But beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves.”

2-Corinthians 11:3: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds might be corrupted from *the* simplicity that *is* in Christ.”

Verse 14: “And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works” (vs 14-15). ***So, we think of the end result!***

Satan is also a tempter! We think of the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness by Satan

the devil in Matt. 4. Christ was there for 40 days and 40 nights and He was very hungry by that time.

Matthew 4:3: “And when the tempter came to Him, he said, ‘**If** You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’” *Because of the state that Jesus Christ was in, He could have easily said:*

What do you mean **If** I’m the Son of God? You know who I am!

He could have there and then fell for it and sinned, **but He didn’t!** Actually another way that Satan could have tempted Christ was by saying:

Why do you make it so hard on yourself? See these stones, think of it as nice hot bread fresh from the oven! Wouldn’t it be so delicious?

**But Jesus didn’t fall for it!**

Verse 8: “After that, the devil took Him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory”—*in a moment of time* (Luke 4:5).

You can say that this was a short video clip of all the things that Satan wanted Christ to see.

Verse 9: “And said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You, **if** You will fall down and worship me.’” *Think about how he could have said it:*

Why do You need to wait? Why wait, You can have it now! All You have to do is just fall down and worship me and You can have all this glory now.

But Christ didn’t, and it’s just as well for all of and all of humanity that He didn’t.

Satan is the accuser. We all have weaknesses as human beings and fall down at various times. Satan knows that and accuses us. One example is of Job, who was a most righteous man in the letter of the Law.

Revelation 12:10: “And I heard a great voice in heaven say, ‘Now has come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ **because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God.**’”

Point three is very important for us in the Church.

**3. We need to know the tactics to counter the opposition. We need to:**

- know God’s Law
- understand God’s Word
- understand His Plan

We can’t do it defensively, like on a soccer field, you can’t aim for a ‘draw.’ Sooner or later there will be an area where the opposition can capitalize on some weakness and they will get a goal.

The same way in the Church. There are two parables:

1. we can’t put a pound in a handkerchief and hide it
2. we can’t put a talent in the ground and now worry about it or do anything with it

*We can’t be defensive in the Church!*

Matthew 11:12: “For from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven is taken **with a great struggle**, and the zealous ones lay hold on it.”

So, it takes effort! We have to strive for it! It takes a lot of effort to do it! How do you do that? *This is the way that Christ handled the temptation of Satan:*

Matthew 4:4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”’” *In other words, we have to do it by God’s Word!*

Verse 10: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.”’” *You don’t serve anyone else!*

The soccer player loves the game. If they didn’t love the game they wouldn’t be very affective. In the Church we need to:

- love the Church
- love the brethren
- love God the Father
- love Jesus Christ

Psalm 119:97: “O how love I Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.”

In other words, all day long we are to meditate on God’s Law, God’s plan and purpose for us!

Verse 98: “Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients because I keep Your precepts” (vs 98-100).

We really need to love God’s way with our heart, and think about it all day long.

1-Corinthians 11:1—*Paul says:* “Be imitators of me, exactly as I also *am* of Christ.”

We also need to **guard our mind of all the evil that comes**; all the evil that’s in this world:

Proverbs 4:23<sup>[transcriber’s correction]</sup>: “Above all **guard the door of your mind** with diligence, for out of it *are* the issues of life.”

1-Peter 5:8: “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour.”

When does a lion roar? Is it when he’s on top of a hill in full view of all the animals? *Look at me, I’m the king of beasts! Beware, because I’m coming to get you!*

**NO!** A lion doesn’t do it that way! What he does is go about quietly out of sight and crawls stealthily until it gets close enough to the most vulnerable of the prey and then pounces and roars and paralyzes the poor defenseless animal and devours it.

Verse 9: “Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in the world.”

*Satan is the master tempter*; 1-Corinthians 10:13: “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For God, Who *is* faithful, will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able *to bear*; but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear it.” **IF we’re faithful to God and submit to Him, God will make a way of escape for us!**

Romans 12:2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God.” *We need to know God’s will and apply it!*

Romans 8:5: “For those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh... [think of physical things; things in the world] ...but those who walk according to *the* Spirit mind the things of the Spirit”—*spiritual things; think about what God’s purpose is!*

There are limitations to this analogy of Paul’s, because the analogy is only physical; a soccer team is only physical, and it’s goal is to win the game, the tournament or the highest standard in this world is *the World Cup!*

The rewards are physical. You have the ecstasy and euphoria of winning the game or tournament with all the supporters cheering. That’s great if you win the game. If you don’t win the

game, or if you lose a succession of games, what might happen? *They can turn on you!* They might say they need a new coach or a new team. Drop the players; kick them out.

In a spiritual sense it doesn’t apply like that. In a spiritual sense the rewards go forever, last into eternity. *There is a vast difference between the physical and the spiritual!*

Ephesians 6:12: “Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*.”

Satan does control a lot of high places when you think about where Satan is in: politics, religions, education system, medicine and technology. There are so many other places where Satan is in complete charge.

Verse 13: “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness... [keeping God’s Law and going God’s way] ...and having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith... [of protection] ...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one... [human emotions, thoughts and mood swings] ...and put on the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (vs 13-17).

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.”

The Word of God is living and powerful. What other book in this world has that sort of influence?

Ephesians 6:18: “Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.” *Very important!*

Philippians 4:6: “Do not be anxious about anything; but by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God in everything; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever *things* are true, whatever *things* are honorable, whatever *things* are just, whatever *things* are pure... [not having any ulterior motive]

...whatever *things* are lovely, whatever *things* are of good report; if *there be* any virtue and if *there be* any praise, think on these things” (vs 6-8). *It is a way of life!*

2-Corinthians 10:3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh. For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds... [in the mind; against the way that God would want us to think] ...casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ” (vs 3-5).

This is very strong! Every thought that’s not in obedience to Christ is in this world, controlled by Satan the devil. So, we are to disregard every thought against the mind of Christ. It’s very easy to fall down. We have a promise from God that is very encouraging to all of us.

Psalm 37:24: “Though he fall... [we all fall from time to time] ...he shall not be utterly cast down, for the LORD upholds him with His hand.”

This is a promise that God has for us as long as we choose to go God’s way, and we repent when we do fall down; it’s very encouraging for us all:

As long as we go God’s way, and just an example of God’s way here—the tactics—the fruits of God’s Spirit:

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (vs 22-23).

It’s very encouraging if we go that way that God is not going to drop us from the team. We’re not going to be dropped as long as we have our heart right in going God’s way. The fruits of the Spirit are pro-active; it’s a pro-active way of going God’s way.

I want to summarize the three points that I made:

**1. to know your role on the team**

- What is it all about?
- Why are you here?

**2. to know the opposition**

- What are we up against?

**3. to know the tactics**

- to be able to counteract the opposition so that we don’t fall the wrong way

Hebrews 12:23: “*To the* joyous festival gathering; and to *the Church of the* Firstborn,

registered in *the Book of Life* in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all, and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected.”

This is the team that we want to be on! It is the Church of the Firstborn! The rewards for this is not temporary, ***but will go on forever and ever, into the ages of eternity!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 6:44
- 2) Hebrews 2:10
- 3) Ephesians 4:11-12
- 4) 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11, 14-17
- 5) John 3:21
- 6) 1 John 3:7
- 7) Proverbs 10:17
- 8) Proverbs 15:32
- 9) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 10) Genesis 3:1-6
- 11) John 8:44
- 12) Matthew 7:15
- 13) 2 Corinthians 11:3, 14-15
- 14) Matthew 4:3, 8-9
- 15) Revelation 12:10
- 16) Matthew 11:12
- 17) Matthew 4:4, 10
- 18) Psalm 119:97-100
- 19) 1 Corinthians 11:1
- 20) Proverbs 4:23
- 21) 1 Peter 5:8-9
- 22) 1 Corinthians 10:13
- 23) Romans 12:2
- 24) Romans 8:5
- 25) Ephesians 6:12-17
- 26) Hebrews 4:12
- 27) Ephesians 6:18
- 28) Philippians 4:6-8
- 29) 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 30) Psalm 37:24
- 31) Galatians 5:22-23
- 32) Hebrews 12:23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Corinthians 4:4
- Luke 4:5

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