

The Strategy of Elevation

Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.—Micah 4:2

The devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. —Matthew 4:8

In the fall of 2008, my hunting buddy Gary called me excitedly on a Thursday morning and told me to take Friday off of work. The forecast showed that we were going to get three consecutive clear days—a rarity in Southeast Alaska. The good weather would make it much safer for us to climb and camp for a couple days at higher altitude. We would finally get a chance to pursue the mountain goats that reside in the “archery only” area south of Juneau. We’d spotted goats on these mountains before, but only from sea level, through windows of cloud cover. It was their instinctive “strategy of elevation” among dense clouds that made them a challenge to hunt.

Oswald Chambers once offered the insight that both God and Satan also use a strategy of elevation.²⁷ What did he mean by that? Well, in the case of evil, every time we give in to a temptation, it becomes that much easier to commit the same sin the next time. It also becomes that much easier to commit the next, more woeful act, as well. In that way our sin is elevated, and we find ourselves on increasingly higher places or pinnacles, where there is poor footing and little room for error without risk of falling.

When God employs the strategy of elevation, He uses the Holy Spirit to show you what you must do to elevate or grow your relationship with Him. Once He has shared this with you, it is your choice to make. The more you obey God’s direction, the easier it is to maintain your footing as you climb higher with

Him. Instead of clinging to cliff edges emotionally or in your interactions with others, you find it wide open and safe to move.

God-given elevation brings a sense of freedom and peace that rises as we overcome temptation and remain true to the convictions shared by the Holy Spirit. And like our physical bodies, the more we climb spiritually—listening to and obeying Him—the stronger the Holy Spirit grows within us. Lift your sights and make your way up the mountain of the Lord. Strike the path that will continue to elevate your walk with Him.

Prayer:

Help me to rise higher with You, Jesus. I surrender my heart to You and ask that You lead me upward. I accept that it's impossible for me to see beyond the next rise, but I trust that You are here with me guiding my soul and lifting my spirit with Your joy during difficult times. Please give me the strength, courage, and steadfastness to continue this ascent with You each day, my Lord. Now that I'm on this path with You and sense Your presence, I can imagine no other way.

—Scott B. Lemasters of Trailblazer Ministries. Taken from *Hunt of a Lifetime: An Outdoorsman's Journey to Prayer* (2020 PrayerShop Publishing).