



Links Players

ALL WE HAVE GAINED 7: CONQUERORS

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37, NIV)

THE HARD PART ABOUT WINNING IS THAT THERE IS SO MUCH LOSING to be done along the way.

A number of years ago, I worked with one of our contributors, Tim Philpot, on his personal story for the Links Players magazine. Tim has lived what by many measures would be called a successful life. He's practiced as an attorney, been elected to his state senate, served as president of an international ministry, and officiated as a family court judge. Now retired, Tim is still called upon to speak at many events, has authored two books, and has played host to some of you at courses from California to Kentucky to Royal Dornoch. And yet, when it came time to choose a title for his story, we called it "My Life As a Loser." Here, in Tim's words, is the reason we went with that title: "Nearly every win in my life has followed a loss. Nearly every gain has come in the wake of a setback."

It is exciting when we come to a verse like Romans 8:37, for it is greatly encouraging when we are told that, through Christ, we are "more than conquerors." Here is another true gain we experience when we have a relationship with him.

But that three-word phrase is not all this verse says, is it? When we read the whole sentence, we find first that we are more than conquerors "in all these things." What things? Well, the context is not so heartening:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." (Romans 8:35-36)

All those woes look a lot like losing. Worse, even. But just like victory doesn't come for an athlete without first enduring the rigors of practice and competition, victory doesn't come for the people of God without real challenges. And isn't it deeply significant to consider here that Christ went first, that he was wounded, shed his blood, and died? The poet Christian Wiman writes: "Human weakness plus Christ's weakness equals a supernatural strength." Which takes us to the end of our verse, where we hear that Christ loved us. How did he do this? By his losing. And yet, he has conquered—and we with him.

Opening questions Have you ever won a golf competition? How about another sport or contest? What did that winning feel like? What did it take to get there?

READING Romans 8:31-39; Daniel 6:1-28

Loss and love (Romans 8)

What kinds of troubles do we find listed in this passage? And what kinds of blessings or reward? Which do you find to be more consistent in your life: hardship or victory?

What does it mean to you that the loving concern of God is repeatedly emphasized in this passage? How does this remind you of the personal nature of your relationship with Christ?

Testing and victory (Daniel 6)

What specific troubles confronted Daniel in this passage? How did he respond to the challenges? What rewards did Daniel see because of his faithful dependence on God? Beyond tangible earthly victories, what can other kinds of victory can we anticipate through Christ?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/HGm3PPovVjk>.