



Links Players

Ambassadors for Christ?

*We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, **nor grumble**, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. (1 Corinthians. 10: 8-10, ESV)*

Some golfers are predictable. We know, given past performances, that Bob will draw it off the first tee, Jim will hit that patented butter fade down the fairway, and Billy will, well, one never knows with Billy. That's what predictable about Billy—he is unpredictable. One thing we can count on is Jerry giving colorful commentary after every shot. Jim, Bob, and Billy will hear moans, groans, and exasperated sighs describing in precise detail the flight of the ball and why it is not behaving as Jerry intended.

Unfortunately, Jerry has a long history of quirky antics on the golf course. These antics range from annoying to amusing. One thing is for sure. Every round is filled with expressions of exasperation following virtually every shot. Jerry is not that self-aware. He has operated this way for so long that he is largely unaware of his behavior. Clubs don't fly. Expletives are not used. But you can bet the ranch that Jerry will wear his emotions on his sleeves after every shot.

Ironically, Jerry is not that good. Jerry shows up and complains. His friends love him, so they tolerate his boorish behavior. Adding injury to

insult, he is slow. He would call it “deliberate.” In truth, he is slow. Watching him stalk a putt is as if someone hit the slow-motion button.

One gets the impression that Jerry is disconnected from reality—that unbridgeable chasm between the idea he has of his golfing prowess and that which occurs on the course. You might think that one of his buddies would screw up enough courage to have a candid conversation with him, but his ego is so fragile they cannot imagine that conversation. So, Saturday after Saturday, his friends endure. Of course, they talk and laugh at Jerry behind his back, but it’s all in good fun—at least that’s their justification.

I don’t write with anyone in mind, but I would be lying if I didn’t admit that dozens of faces have flashed across my mind as I write. Some of those people would be glad to be remembered this way. Why? Well, let’s just say, this fictional “Jerry” is a choir boy compared to their behavior. Other faces would feign surprise at the mention of their names acting in such an unbecoming manner. Other faces would express slack-jaw emotions indicating that this characterization can’t be true of them. There are a handful who might own it.

As a walk-on college golfer with an unheralded career, my behavior was, at times, inexcusable. If I was asked to name the top three most embarrassing moments in my life, the day my golf coach pulled me into the men’s locker after the front nine in a qualifying round is, sadly, a top contender. The content of his five-minute monologue was so piercing that to this day, forty-eight years later, I get weak in the knees thinking about how I had disappointed him.

May our behavior on the golf course, especially after poor shots, represent the Christ whom we profess!

Prayer – Lord Jesus, you are Lord of every area of our lives. Remind us that we are ambassadors for Christ, on or off the golf course.

Dennis Darville

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