



Links Players

Do Not Fear

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10, ESV)

When someone says to you, “Do not fear,” it typically means there is something of which you could be afraid. Jesus tells the original disciples to “fear not,” yet most of the Apostles died martyr’s deaths. Jesus does not deny the reality of various fears.

Instead, he says something like, “You will face many dangers in your journey, but trust me; I am greater than all of them. I will bring you safely through the storms of life.” Though various fears mount their attacks against us, the Spirit of Christ in us is “greater than he that is in the world.”

Fears are interesting things. Some are rational, and some are irrational. For example, it is irrational to fear the existence of a green alien under your bed. Even though this fear is irrational, it has still driven many children to sleep in mom and dad’s bed. On the other hand, it is rational to fear losing your footing when mountain climbing, especially when wearing street shoes while overlooking a three-hundred-foot drop.

The same can be said regarding fear and the game of golf. It makes sense to be cautious if the pin is tucked in the back left corner of the green eight feet from a water hazard. It is irrational to shake at the knees over a one-foot putt when playing a casual round with friends.

Nevertheless, fearful thoughts and emotions often attack the psyche when one is standing over that “gimme.” Even though you tell yourself that it is “in the leather,” you are conscious of a twitch in your stroke. I imagine I am not the only one secretly hoping my friends say, “That’s good! Pick it up!” Generally speaking, fear and golf are not usually a good combination.

What is it about standing on the first tee with a crowd watching you prepare to stripe it down the middle that causes an adrenaline rush that would power a rocket to the moon? Fear can be absolutely paralyzing! However, if fear is harnessed, it can intensify one’s concentration and even add a few yards to that drive.

I think that feeling is what many have referred to when making a distinction between competitive golf and leisurely golf. I’ve not done any deep dives on the subject, but I suppose that fear could be the primary culprit behind the “yips.”

Think of the “hosel rockets” you’ve experienced on one or two occasions. Preparing to hit a provisional ball after one of those beauties is nothing less than psychological torture. Teeing up with fear is perhaps why so many tour professionals have hired sports psychologists.

Everyone has fears. Some learn to battle with their fears and conquer them. Others are, sadly, conquered by their fears. Most of us learn to live in an ongoing tug-of-war with fear. Sometimes we win, and sometimes we fold like a paper napkin.

I recently asked a good friend how his wife putts so magnificently. His response was telling. “She putts without fear,” he said.

Fear on the golf course can be crippling. Fears that we confront outside the ropes can be even more suffocating. Let’s draw near to Jesus and hear him say, “fear not.”

Prayer – Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, teach us that we can overcome “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their [our] testimony.”

Dennis Darville

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