



Links Players

Persevering Through Trials

For you know that the testing of your trust produces perseverance. But let perseverance do its complete work; so that you may be complete and whole, lacking in nothing. (James 1:3-4)

I took a few breaths to resettle after my three-putt bogey. Walking up to the sixth tee I repeated, "You're fine. Feel like you're on the range." Staring down the fairway, I saw my target – the right cut line of the fairway. The breeze brushed across my left cheek, and I felt strong as I took my stance. One more look at my target, and then back to the ball.

My club swooshed and made contact. To my dismay the result was a cold top and bounced into the rough forty yards ahead. I laughed. "What the heck was that?" What was the gallery thinking? What was Nancy Lopez, my playing partner, thinking?

My second shot, a five-hybrid, sailed down the fairway, took a hard bounce nestling in the left rough. It was thick, but I was going to go for the green 162 yards up the hill and over water. I cold topped it again. Stunned, I walked over the creek and found my ball in deeper rough.

Lying three, I still had 122 yards up the hill and over the water. I muscled a nine iron and the ball went up in the air drifting to the right front of the green. I needed to get up and down for bogey. "I had green to work with and it's going to break right to left," I chattered to myself. "Pick your landing spot and commit." I left myself a four-foot putt for bogey.

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Playing golf requires trust and perseverance.

I made the putt. Not only did I have to hit a seven iron over water on the next hole, eleven more holes waited beyond that. My trust in my swing was dwindling. My patience was teetering on the edge of disappearing into an abyss.

Whether it be tournament golf, casual golf, or life; trials come. According to James, trials test our trust (the genuineness of our faith (1Peter 1:7)) which then produces perseverance. This isn't automatic; we need to remain steadfast and intentional. Patience, a key ingredient, opens space for wisdom to keep moving toward the purposes of God. First, it's the work God does IN us during our trials, then he works through us.

The work in us is a deeper dependance on him, more gratitude, a change in behavior and character for the better. Sometimes we need to release the outcome and embrace the moment. The testing of our trust that leads to perseverance draws us to deeper devotion, we develop resilience to future trials, and we grow in wisdom.

I persevered through those next eleven holes even when my patience was put on the line. I want God to do his work in me, through the process of tournament golf and the challenges of life.

As you face your own trials, are you seeing the work God is doing in you?

Prayer: Lord, help us see our trials as a proving ground for our faith. Give us strength to let perseverance to complete its work in us.

Tracy Hanson

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