



Links Players

The Golf Gods

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. (Job 38:4, ESV)

I recently wrestled with the golf gods. We had a Links Players gathering in Dallas over a December weekend. On the seventh hole, a par four, my caddy told me to hit a 150-yard shot to the front of the green and to let the ball roll to a back pin placement. I was carrying some frustration from the previous hole, where I made a double bogey.

I did exactly what my caddie told me to do. I hit my 150-yard club to the front of the green right at the pin. I then watched my ball roll over the top of a slope and disappear. It was the perfect shot. I was confident the ball had settled within ten feet of the flag stick, leaving a birdie putt.

As I approached the green, I was alarmed to discover that my ball was nowhere to be found. My frustration from the last whole grew into anger. In my mind, I immediately went to the injustice of unpredictable surfaces, greens that should hold, and the ever-popular; "I can't get a break!" I murmured that the golf gods weren't delivering. As I walked toward the back trap, expecting to find my ball there, I discovered it was just off the edge of the green sitting down on top of a sprinkler head. The sprinkler had kept my ball from rolling into the back trap!

Suddenly I was fired up! Now that's what I'm talking about! The golf gods had done their job! I was finally rewarded for my A-plus iron shot. I instantly went from complaining to elation—there was golf course justice, after all!

The above experience may be familiar to some. If so, it's a bit silly. Surprisingly, our minds can work similarly with more serious life issues. We often assume our effort should guarantee specific outcomes in this life. And when things don't go our way, we protest to the heavens.

In the book of Job, Job discovers life is less manageable than he first assumed. In a day, Job, a "righteous" man, suffers incomprehensible loss. His wealth is stolen by invading tribes, and his entire family is killed in a natural disaster. To make things worse, he suffers a terrible disease that causes open sores all over his body.

In despair, Job laments: "From the city the dying groan, and the throat of the wounded cries for help; yet God pays no attention to their prayer." (Job 24:12). From Job's perspective, those that suffer are without help, and not even God is paying attention.

After his loss, Job wrestles with God in an open dialogue for 33 chapters. At the end of the book, Job never gets an answer to his biggest question; Why? God finally answers Job, and He starts with a question for Job: "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand."

We will never understand many mysteries on this side of eternity—Creatio ex nihilo—"creation out of nothing," is one. Ignorance in the face of divine mystery should lead to great humility. And, when, unexpectedly, cancer appears, addiction haunts a loved one, or death seems untimely, like Job, we are left to mourn and to wrestle with our God on unexplainable levels.

Job's great reward was not an answer but a deeper relationship with his Creator, whom he chose to trust. Answers or no answers, God will always prove to be the highest and greatest good, as evidenced in his Son, Jesus. For now, we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face...then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12).

PRAYER: Though he slays me, yet will I hope in him...(Job 13:15)

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