



Links Players

Courage Award

These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world, you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33, NASB)

There are several awards given out every year on the PGA Tour. As a rookie, I could see making it a goal to receive the Arnold Palmer Award for Rookie of the Year. As players become more established on tour, maybe the Jack Nicklaus Award for Player of the Year or the Byron Nelson Award for Lowest Scoring Average is in their sights for the upcoming season. However, there is one award that nobody makes a goal in their career, The Courage Award.

The PGA Tour's Courage Award was first given to two players, Bruce Fleisher and D.A. Weibring, in 1991. It was known for a long time as the Comeback Player of the Year Award, but interestingly it has never been named after anyone. Though it may make for a good movie plot or news article, being associated with tribulation is not how anyone wants to be known, and it is certainly not something one hopes for as part of their future.

In 2022, the PGA Tour Courage Award recipient was unusually not one of its touring professionals; instead, it was a fan. D. J. Gregory, born with cerebral palsy, has walked more than 14,000 miles since 2008 and 42,000 holes at PGA Tour events in support of his Walking For Kids Foundation. The tour broke from its tradition of giving it to a comeback player to awarding an individual who has known adversity from the very beginning of his life.

It is a feel-good story, but let us be honest; none of us want it to be our story. Nobody made it their 2023 New Year's resolution to experience tribulation. However, many of you hope to experience more peace and joy this year. Ironically, those attributes are promised to us when we face trials and tribulations in Christ.

Don't worry; I will not be praying for more difficult circumstances to cross each of our paths so we can all be perfected quickly. I don't need to do that; life happens. And in this life, it is not if we will face tribulation; instead, it is when. So, we ought to change our mindsets from avoiding trials at all costs to embracing them when they come. The reason is that if we are in Christ, so too is our problem, and there are no problems that he is not good at solving.

Nothing stumps Jesus. There are no problems so big that Jesus and the Father look at each other with their hands in the air, saying, "Now, what do we do?" Instead, Jesus wants us to know that he is good at caring for us and our tribulations. If we are willing to turn them over to him, he promises to give us peace and joy in and through them.

So maybe we need a paradigm shift regarding viewing trials that come our way this year. Let's trust that God cares and comforts us and that Jesus is at work in us in every situation. Thus, the outcome is going to be good, and we are going to receive an upgrade. After all, if Jesus never loses, then neither do we.

Prayer: Father, give me the courage to face tribulations head-on when they come and the faith to trust Jesus' promises of peace and joy in and through them.

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Josh Nelson

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