



Links Players

The Power of Forgiveness

If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive them. (Matthew 6: 14-15, ESV)

Robert Damron, currently an analyst for The Golf Channel, won a PGA Tour event defeating Scott Verplank in a playoff at the 2001 Verizon Byron Nelson Classic. Ten years later, and trying to regain his PGA Tour status, he played in a Korn Ferry event in Pittsburgh, PA.

He played poorly for most of the season, so finding himself near the top of the leaderboard gave him hope that this might be the week to get back on tour. He walked more confidently toward his next shot by striping his tee shot down the middle of the fairway on the 14th hole, a reachable par 5 with OB on the right.

A poorly designed cart path ran from the left side of the rough across the middle of the fairway to the right rough with a severe slope from left to right. What seemed like a bad dream to him, he watched as the ball nearly stopped but continued moving toward the right side of the fairway down the cart path, picking up speed, before coming to rest 1 foot OB, almost 60 yards of the center of the fairway.

One year later, on the same hole, in a practice round with two-time U.S. Open Champ Lee Janzen and PGA Tour winner Paul Stankowski, Robert hit his tee shot in the same spot. However, PGA Tour officials put in temporary speed bumpers that would prohibit another nightmare for a perfect drive. As he approached the cart path, he leaned down and said to the path, "I forgive You."

As you can imagine, we all enjoyed a great chuckle, having been told the full story on the walk from the tee box.

Perhaps you have been on the wrong end of an undeserving comment, action, business deal, divorce, or any other challenging situation, where holding a grudge or wanting revenge seemed to be the natural response.

We all have!

Jesus calls us to forgive (supernatural response) as we have been forgiven. He even said to forgive our enemies! In today's scripture reading, he emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and the consequences of not forgiving others.

An unforgiving heart can restrict, limit, impede and even destroy a person from the inside out. Lewis B. Smedes said, “forgiveness is setting the prisoner free and realizing you were the one held captive.”

Have you received forgiveness from God through faith in what Jesus did on the cross? If not, it will be easy to understand what being set free is about. How about in your golf game when you hit those errant shots or make the dreaded 3-putt?

Can you forgive yourself and move on? It frees you up to play the next shot unhindered by the previous shot. Consider forgiveness in your daily life, in your marriage, as a parent, and in all of your relationships.

Forgiveness allows us to do something for others and, at the same time, something incredibly powerful for ourselves.

Prayer: Jesus, as you hung on the cross, brutally beaten, and left to die, you took all my sin, guilt, and shame. You did that so we could be forgiven.

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Jose Alvarez
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