



Links Players

Through It All, Love Abides

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16)

It was an excitement for me. The unencumbered thought of waking wide-eyed, captivated by readiness and willingness to engage the day's promise, meant my day had come, meant my dream gripped reality like my spikes gripped the ground.

The sun pierced my window like the day's wish had pierced my mind for years, repeated every time my hand pressed the ball and tee to the ground, every time freshly mown grass triggered my desire to compress a Titleist golf ball with my Wilson Staff blade. I rose, eager to play Augusta National.

Meticulous in preparation, I placed new Titleists in my golf bag. I decided to take two new golf gloves and clean my clubs to the bottom groove. I washed my grips with warm, soapy water and a soft-bristle brush.

Tacky grips induce confidence, and I thought this might calm my nerves on the first tee. I even shined my shoes and ironed my pants. Preparation demands detail, though it might strike one as a pretense. Pretense or not, I was ready.

And then, walking out the door, the phone rang. I stopped. Pressed, I tried to ignore it, but my conscience prevailed. "Hello," I said. "Hello, Pard? This is Gene." My heart was thumping, trying to leave as this interruption compressed time alongside my impatience.

"Yes, Gene. What's up?" I said. "Uh, hey, our member at Augusta has canceled on us." Feeling my body stiffen, my disappointment deafened my ears to the words that followed and suffocated Gene's apology. An instant turns a day.

Life rings then interrupts our desire for congruency between our beliefs, thoughts, and actions. We wish our plans to ... well... go as planned. Life seems good when our intent is easily subjugated. But ease is a mythical goal, congruency, a fleeting want. Does not our faith suffer the same? And when it suffers such, what's our response?

The apostle Paul answers. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). How does the Spirit emanate from our life?

The answer lies not in the seductions life gleefully engenders but in the learning that love lives in the Spirit, lives in our testimony, enduring disappointment and triumph. “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16).

On what does a life turn? Mine turned when the Holy Spirit came; that day, grace appeared. The day was exciting for me. I thought that in the days and years following, living and walking would be easy. I discovered abiding is a hard thing to learn. Time became my consolation.

Do we redeem time? Or does time redeem us? And how does time testify to life but by the living and the walking, the tripping and falling, the getting up and remembering the day grace appeared, the love through it all? “Those who have ears to hear, let them hear” (Matthew 11:15).

Prayer: Lord, teach us to abide in your love through life’s disappointments and circumstances.

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