



Links Players

Adversity - Overcoming

For whoever has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. (1 John 5:4, NASB)

Adversity! If golf involves anything, it consists in overcoming adversity! The list of things that seek to thwart our success on the course is seemingly endless.

First, we play a game in the “elements.” Wind, drizzle, heat, cold, etc., all constitute issues golfers must overcome. Then, there are lakes, creeks, ponds, oceans, and other “hazards” that present adversities in our efforts to go low.

On top of that, there are bunkers, trees, undulated greens, tightly mown slopes, old divots, and, not to be left out, roughs that are so thick that a “punch out” is required.

On top of all these external obstacles, we have “internal” adversaries. Emotions can run amuck in a competitive round. Our minds can dredge up horrific outcomes before we pull the trigger. Once the “tongue” gets involved and goes negative, “Katy bar the door.”

It would be naïve to think that we would never encounter adversity between the first tee and the eighteenth green. Rather than playing the “victim card” and blaming “the golfing gods,” we can persevere and triumph.

The right perspective doesn’t relish adversity but is neither surprised nor defeated by it. Slinging clubs only makes us look childish. An endless stream of expletives shows we are stunted in adolescence. “Medicating” ourselves with too much alcohol to play better is pure self-deception.

Beyond what the course throws at us or the weakness of our internal constitution, there is always the opponent with whom we are paired. Playing against someone who cheats, constantly whines, or makes maple sap in the winter look fast presents particular adversities in what would otherwise have been a wonderful outing.

C. S. Lewis was spot on, “If you’re shown a hotel room and you’ve been told is the Honeymoon Suite, your expectations will be high. If there’s no

plush carpet, spa, and champagne, you’ll be disappointed. On the other hand, if you’ve been told before the door opens that it’s a jail cell, you’ll be delighted to find even modest comforts.”

The moral of C.S. Lewis’s extended metaphor should be obvious. If we think the world owes us “maximized pleasure and minimized pain,” we are deluding ourselves.

Lewis understood that we live in a broken world and that adversity confronts us all. Yet, what makes the difference for them and others who follow Christ is that we simultaneously know that “faith in Christ overcomes the world.”

For those who follow Christ, the unperturbed life is coming. That longing for Eden is real. It pulsates in every heart, awaiting Jesus’ arrival. In truth, the life to come will far surpass life in Eden!

Prayer: Father, align our minds with yours about life’s ups and downs!

READING: 1 John 5:4; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9; Philippians 4:12-13; James 1:2-4.

1. After some self-reflection, discuss how managing adversity on the golf course and in life is best addressed.

2. After reflecting on the recommended verses, discuss what Scripture teaches us about managing adversities.

3. Application: Ask yourself what you can practically do to overcome those adversities that have gotten the best of you in the past.
