



Links Players

Adversity - A Battle Rages

*...there went over to David at the stronghold in the wilderness mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountains....
(1 Chronicles 12: 8, ESV)*

Playing consistent golf at the highest levels involves having and developing a range of intangibles, not just overcoming the obvious visible challenges. For example, pessimism can't be seen, but it is, nevertheless, real.

A more holistic approach realizes that the game is more than developing a strong core and increasing our swing speeds. For instance, psychologists have explored the psyches of professional athletes, revealing the essential role intangible factors contribute to success.

All the talent in the world is not enough to overcome lousy attitudes, distorted perspectives, emotional immaturity, moral bankruptcy, or spiritual deformity. Even the best swing mechanics in the world will not negate those deficiencies.

Unfortunately, our culture has also adopted a scientific approach to the game of life, consequently diminishing the importance of attitudinal, intuitive, emotive, psychological, and other intangible approaches to life; this scientific approach has also come within a whisker of eclipsing our need for spiritual and moral development.

For those who follow Jesus Christ as the "Captain of their Salvation," there is good news. He has equipped us with all we need to develop spiritual, emotional, and moral maturity—the essential intangibles to enter, persevere, and triumph in the various battles we will encounter. Consider just a few of the following ways Jesus provides for and powerfully equips us to face adversities:

A Spiritual Captain: We need a wise, courageous champion to guide, protect, and strengthen us. Jesus, by his Spirit, offers himself to those who recognize their need for a leader who can lead them through the landmines of life.

Supernatural Strength: We need a source of strength beyond our natural abilities. The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers us to persevere through life's trials and tribulations, on and off the course.

Perspective: Living as if we are on a cruise ship with nothing to

live for but entertainment is a fantasy. Rightly understood, we are, metaphorically speaking, on a warship in the middle of a battle for our souls and the soul of the world. Jesus provides that wide-lens perspective, the "true story of the world," in Scripture.

Extraordinary Weapons: We need weapons forged specifically to address the spiritual forces of darkness. Thankfully, Jesus provides us with a supernatural arsenal that withstands and defeats our invisible enemy—the belt of truth, the helmet of hope, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit are all ours in Christ.

Healing: Sometimes, we lose a battle and are wounded. We need deep spiritual and emotional healing. The Father invites us to heal in his loving presence. He bandages our wounds, gives us a much-needed pep talk, and instills the courage to reenter the fray.

As we journey through life's battlefield, we need a personal guide, a source of strength, a proper perspective, a unique set of spiritual weapons, and a place to heal.

In light of those needs, the Father has given us Jesus, the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, the armor of God, and a biblical worldview, all of which equip us for battle.

Prayer: Lord! Count us in! We volunteer for the spiritual army you are recruiting and equipping.

READING: Ephesians 6:10-20.

1. Are you the player who enters a round with a strategy, or do you tee it up and play as it comes to you? Discuss any advantage either approach might offer.

2. After reading Ephesians 6:10-20, think through the various military metaphors regarding spiritual weapons and discuss your level of preparedness.
