



Links Players

Adversity - Diabolos

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8, ESV)

One would be hard-pressed to choose a more magnificent hole than Number 12 at Augusta National Golf Club. At first blush, this par three seems pleasant enough, playing a meager 155 yards. Even its name, Golden Bell, suggests charm and serenity.

Yet, this seemingly innocent Par 3 has been a formidable adversary from the beginning. Nestled in the middle of the iconic Amen Corner, this hole has a rich history of humbling the very best in their pursuit of the coveted Green Jacket.

Beneath its grandeur, the 12th hole presents a powerful test of skill and nerve. Guarded by three bunkers, the treacherous Rae's Creek, and a host of azalea shrubs for those who "go long," this shallow green on the far side of Hogan's bridge is a challenge that rivals all others.

In 1980, Tom Weiskopf plopped five balls in the water before finally making a 13. In 2016, Jordan Spieth squandered a five-shot lead when he made a quadruple bogey at the second leg of Amen Corner.

Throughout its storied history, this "little hole" has an accomplice in its resistance to pars and birdies— invisible and ever-present swirling winds have played a significant role in the destinies and legacies of aspiring champions.

How many men have chosen their club based on the direction of the wind before taking it back, only to see their ball mid-flight hit a wall and plummet into Rae's Creek?

Similarly, people are lured into thinking that the dark world of Satan and his minions is nothing more than old wives' tales. The "modern man" has been beguiled into believing that our Adversary, the Devil, is the result of the overly active imaginations of pre-scientific cultures.

These enlightened ones say, "No one believes in the Devil anymore." Reading these culture-shaping gurus, many are led to dismiss thousands of years of history that acknowledge the existence of Lucifer and his legion of fallen angels.

Ironically, that's precisely what Satan desires the world to believe. One of his greatest stratagems is to convince the world he doesn't exist.

C.S. Lewis had it right when he observed, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

Many metaphors attempt to explain Scripture. A recent one likens Scripture to night vision goggles. Like these goggles, Scripture opens our eyes to the unseen realm of sinister forces that seek the destruction of God's image bearers-you and me.

Ignoring or denying Satan's existence might cause you to appear "in vogue," but living as if Diabolos doesn't exist makes you vulnerable to his insidious and devastating attacks.

Scripture is God's love letter to his own, but it is also a war manual teaching us how to discern the Devil's schemes and overcome his attacks.

Prayer: Jesus! Train us to overcome the Devil.

READING: 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Zechariah 3:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:3.

1. Going back in your memory banks, recall those times when the wind fooled you. Discuss what you could have done better to discern the direction and velocity of the wind.

2. Satan is described in several ways in Scripture. After reading these verses, what do we learn about him and his sinister ways?

3. Application: Reading and studying Scripture trains us for spiritual warfare. Let's consistently encourage one another to know the Word.
