



Links Players

Adversity - Learning From Tough Times

Don't you see, you planned evil against me, but God used those same plans for my good.... (Genesis 50:20, The Message)

If I had a nickel for every time I've heard a Tour Player say, moments after losing, "I'll take away the positives from this failure," I would be a zillionaire.

After missing the cut at the 104th PGA Championship, Scottie Scheffler responded, "You can learn anything from that kind of, you know, just really failure...I'm not going to sit there and be, 'Like, oh, my gosh, how did this happen?'"

When Rory was asked how he manages failures, he gave a champion's response, "I think my grit comes from my failures...You have to embrace the fact that you are going to fail at things, but you should learn from them, and then when you go again, you should be better... You need to go through those tough patches to learn."

Every awful swing, round, or tournament can teach us something positive if we pause to examine the cause, persevere through the disappointment, and push forward to better days.

The infamous atheist Friedrich Nietzsche noted, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger." Recent research has disproven this popular and unexamined "truism."

What is true, though, is this: those who trust the Lord and his providence in the difficult seasons of life and persevere in faith that God has a purpose for every season will emerge on the other side of defeats with a deeper relationship with their Maker and a richer appreciation of God's providence.

Along with Scotty and Rory, let's consider the historically and biblically depicted Joseph, who was betrayed, thrown into a pit, and sold into slavery by his brothers. Then, after finding favor in Egypt, he was falsely accused and thrown into prison.

Time after time, Joseph knew only hardship. Yet, all the while, God was preparing him for the throne. As we continue reading Scripture, we learn Joseph's life is primarily intended to foreshadow Jesus, "...who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is [now] seated at the right hand of God."

Apart from Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, we would merely have a good story to model from Joseph's life. But now, knowing what we know about Jesus, every battle, failure, and disappointment will be redeemed for those who "stay the course."

The Christian philosopher Soren Kierkegaard once said, "Life can only be understood backward, but it must be lived forward." Translated: We rarely know why we are going through painful moments or seasons until we emerge on the other side and look back.

Trusting that God has a plan and purpose through all the tough times, while not easy in the moment, will, in the end, prove that God is, indeed, all-wise, and we are better off for having gone through what seemed like hell.

Prayer: Lord! Since Jesus has risen, I believe I will rise from defeat and again on that glorious day.

READING: Proverbs 24:10; Romans 8:28; Psalm 34:19.
For those who have time, read the story of Joseph in Genesis, chapters 37-50.

1. We learn a lot about ourselves from how we handle adversity on the golf course. Discuss some things you've learned about yourself, good or bad, in times of hardship.

2. After reading these texts and others, what promises can we be assured of when navigating through adversity?

3. Optional: for those who read Genesis, chapters 37-50, list how Joseph's life typifies or foreshadows Christ's life.
