



Links Players

On Responding To Adversity

In the day of prosperity, be happy, But in the day of adversity, consider— God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him. (Ecclesiastes 7:14, NASB)

Going into the final round of the 2007 U.S. Open at Oakmont Country Club, Aaron Baddeley led Tiger Woods by two shots. Baddeley had famously bested Greg Norman and Colin Montgomery to win the 1999 Australian Open as an 18-year-old.

Many thought he was the golfer who would dethrone Tiger Woods. It was the final round of the U.S. Open and Baddeley's chance to prove he was as good as so many thought he could be.

It was not to be, though. The first hole at Oakmont is a 482-yard par four. Baddeley drove it in the right rough, left his approach right of the green, pitched over the green, finally chipping to eight feet on his fourth shot.

From there, Baddeley three-putted for a triple bogey 7. Woods made a routine par. In one hole, Baddeley watched his two-shot lead over Woods turn into a one-shot deficit.

It was just about the worst possible start one could imagine, and it happened while he was in the feature group with Tiger Woods and while the world was watching.

But as Baddeley, a Christian, walked off the green, he didn't get angry, and he didn't throw his putter at his golf bag. Instead, he smiled.

It wasn't the warm, appreciative smile professional golfers give in response to applause after a good shot, nor the emotion-filled celebratory smile following a putt to win a tournament. It was a dispassionate, "that-was-kind-of-funny" smile. At that moment, I became a forever Aaron Baddeley fan.

When Solomon wrote the words above 3,000 years ago, he was contrasting how we should respond to good times and bad. He was saying that in the days of prosperity when good things happen, and life is good, we should embrace it emotionally and be happy.

But when adversity strikes- and in a fallen world, it eventually strikes us all—Solomon says we should consider it. In other words, he encourages us to respond intellectually, not emotionally.

We should think, realize, and understand that adversity is part of life in a fallen world. The Stoics were great at this. The first-century Stoic philosopher Seneca once said, "To bear trials with a calm mind robs misfortune of its strength and burden."

Aaron Baddeley's response exiting the 1st green at Oakmont said, "I realize professional golf is merely a form of entertainment and what I just did was so bad it was kind of funny." He was rational and dispassionate. He showed he had perspective. He showed he was a Christian.

**Prayer: Lord, help me to respond to adversity in a way that honors you to a watching world.
Amen.**

—

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