



Links Players

Breaking the Slump

If you continue in my Word then you are my disciples indeed. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:31-32)

I will assume you've contemplated quitting golf at one time or another because you were discouraged with how you were playing.

When Jimmy Roberts, the NBC golf commentator, became frustrated with his game, he asked some of the most successful golfers for advice. His book *Breaking the Slump: How Great Players Survived Their Darkest Moments in Golf* records their answers.

Roberts asked golf veterans to discuss a part of their lives that we don't usually see: their failures. Most of the players he interviewed identified bad mental habits as the cause of their slumps.

David Duval said you must protect your confidence. Justin Rose's advice was to avoid negative thoughts. Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller got better by walking away from the game for a few months to clear their minds. Dottie Pepper reread notes from her original teacher, who had since passed away.

I resonated with advice from Davis Love III, "try less hard." My golf instructor said his best advice for my game was to relax. All of them confirmed a Bobby Jones truism: "Golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half-inch course ... the space between your ears."

Slumps are terrible things. Just when I started to feel good about my game, out of nowhere, my handicap rose 2 points. Every aspect of my otherwise optimistic life was affected by my golf nose-dive.

Lately, many of my deeper conversations have been with people about their spiritual slumps. They feel discontent with their spiritual lives and have an attitude of resignation.

There isn't a universal cure-all for the spiritual blahs, but there are ways to recover from a spiritual slump. Obviously, it's a process. I've looked for shortcuts to improve both my golf game and to get out of times of spiritual depression. Rarely do they work.

Here's a suggestion: Spend time in God's Word. Make it a habit to open your Bible. The dictionary defines a habit as an inclination to do a particular activity acquired through frequent repetition.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we read, "The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out

and helps us to do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."

Emotions come and go. I need God's Word most when I don't feel like it. Probably, our greatest problem in getting out of a slump is our struggle to stay consistent. Dropping time in Scripture is usually one of the first steps into spiritual apathy.

Don't give up. If you miss a day, don't get on a guilt trip. Don't get legalistic because we live by grace. Don't give up. Have you ever missed a meal? Did you stop eating? No! You show up for the next meal.

Let us not get tired of doing what is right. For after a while, we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up." (Galatians 6:9)

Prayer: Dear Lord, restore, refresh, and renew my spirit. Breathe Your Spirit of joy into my life.

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Bill Crawford

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