



Links Players

Perspective

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV).

Bernard “Bernie” Sims was a friend of mine. He lived a few houses down from my family on Pruitt Drive. We were a year apart in age and shared an interest in golf. This meant we did not share any classes in school and that I could only observe him on the golf course.

Bernie appeared more verbally forward and intellectual than me, while I just wanted to hit a golf ball. I felt Bernie would become someone important, but he would never match my skill at golf.

Since I was the youngest in my family, my intent in the classroom was simply to avoid any punishment at home, and my effort reflected this attitude. Bernie was the oldest child in his family and exhibited the outward framework associated with rule-following, measured involvement, and restrained spontaneity. The difference between us was my advantage on the golf course. The difference was his in the classroom.

On the golf course, Bernie exhibited the characteristic of a constant state of preparation. He was tedious about practice and technique. He would often forego playing with the gang because he wanted to practice. At my age, pimply and awkward, I did not yet know the term perfectionist, but I witnessed it firsthand in Bernie. Bernie spent all his time getting ready and never appeared to be ready.

In those days, I wanted to practice for the purpose of playing. As soon as I improved some aspect of my game, I took to the course. I felt the best avenue for attaining proficiency was to play more than practice. Playing was my measure and validation. My competitive juices allowed little time for anything else, classroom included.

One day, Bernie and I went fishing. Throwing a line came natural to me. The touch required at first nibble was something I never thought about. I can't say I was born with it, but I intuited it. Bernie needed practice, especially since he was wearing an alpaca cardigan. Extracting a fishing hook from woven fabric, repeatedly, is no easy task. I didn't catch many fish that day, but I became proficient in unangling line and hook from alpaca.

Perspective is a remnant of our rusted and eroded memory, the long, distant reach toward some event best forgotten. It is the truth left for us when all falsity dies and ill-founded shrines fall away. Reaching it gives us the courage to form a brighter future or become our better self, to live unentangled by illusion and former selves and sins. Perspective is the perpetual state of being ready to move toward the unseen, carrying along the wisdom from the decay of our misapplied intentions.

Faith works the same way. It is the stark realization that when all is stripped away, all reason, all illusion, all effort, the only possibility remaining is God.

And doesn't God desire nothing exist between us?

Prayer: "Those who have ears to hear, let them hear" (Matthew 11:15).

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