



Links Players

Humility - Going Down to Go Up

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-11, ESV)

So much about golf is counterintuitive. Generally speaking, we aim right to hit it left, and we aim left to bend it right. In a greenside bunker, we intentionally miss the ball by hitting somewhere behind it. Teaching this to a beginner is always tons of fun.

To be sure, we don't exaggerate these counterintuitive moments as much as Bubba does, but who could play like this two-time Master's Champion? His hooked wedge from behind the trees onto the tenth green in a playoff to beat Louis Oosthuizen in the 2012 Masters is legendary; flat-out legendary!

One of the most challenging things to convey to a junior beginning to play the game is the counterintuitive idea of hitting down with the irons to get the ball to go up.

After explaining to Johnny or Suzy that the ball will ride up the face of a lofted club with the appropriate angle of attack, they eventually get one airborne after a few mishits, and then we are off to the races.

Yep! To go up, one must go down. Nothing is more explicit in Scripture than the way up is down! That's right! To ascend, we must descend. Or, said more simply, to rise, we must humble ourselves.

There are two Adam(s) in Scripture, and contrary to liberal scholars, both Adam(s) are historical men. The first Adam's story is tragic. He grasped after autonomy and glory (the desire to rule himself) and found utter humiliation. The last Adam's story is quite the opposite. Of course, the Last Adam is Jesus Christ (see Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15).

This Last Adam [Jesus] did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped; instead, he chose to humble himself by becoming a man, a servant, and obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

These two biblical/historical stories present the only two options offered to the human race: You can be like the First Adam, refusing your Creator's authority,

attempting to decide for yourself what is right and wrong. That road leads to unspeakable humiliation.

Or you can, like the Last Adam [Jesus], humble yourself before your Maker by acknowledging your utter dependence on him, admitting your rebellion against him, and humbling yourself by bowing before Jesus, the King of glory!

In one of the last scenes from the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, the Grail Knight, who guarded the cup of immortality, said this about the "bad guy" who, like the First Adam, grasped for immortality by choosing the beautiful chalice instead of a humble wooden cup: "He chose poorly!"

The most counterintuitive event in all of history is the Cross of Christ. No one could have imagined that God would save his people by executing his Son!

Choose wisely!

Prayer:

Father! Grant faith in Jesus Christ to your own by the power of your Spirit!

READING: Philippians 2:1-11; Romans 5:12-21 (optional-1 Corinthians 15:35-58).

1. Reflecting on your countless million-plus swings, what percentage of poor iron strikes can be explained by a failure to descend properly with good shaft lean?

2. After pondering the wonder of Christ's descension from heaven to earth and back again from earth to heaven through humility, discuss the contrast between the two Adam(s).

3. In a moment of private self-reflection, ask and answer this question: How much of my life is spent attempting to call attention to myself? How might we shift that to honoring Christ and others?
