



Links Players

God Had Other Plans

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations. (Jeremiah 1:5, NASB)

There is a sign on the first tee at the golf course in Utopia, Texas. It is a quote from David Cook's book *Golf's Sacred Journey*. It says, "We all own par on the first tee. It is on the 18th green that one has to face the music." How similar to life.

One of my mentors, Reverend John Redfearn, has a common story of making plans yet God directing his steps. Actually, John's story is the story of all of us. We plan, and God directs. John also mentors our own Drew Hamilton and Bill Rogers.

The story starts in Colorado at a winter FCA conference in 1969. A man whom John respected very much saddled up to him and said, "John, when are you going to seminary?" John was taken aback and replied, "I don't look like a pastor, I don't act like a pastor, and I don't sound like a pastor. Why should I be a pastor?" The man responded, "Two words—that's why." And then he walked off.

A light went off. God got his attention. He sought God for answers. He passionately prayed and asked for guidance. Tears streamed down his cheeks. He now knew that he was available for God to use him.

But the Navy had some other plans. He cried all the way to the Naval Officer Candidate School in Pensacola, Florida, to start his basic officer training. He thought, "When I finish the Navy, how can I best serve God?"

Upon arriving in Pensacola, the Navy chaplain explained that he was there for anyone who needed to talk to him about the next steps in this journey.

John wanted to be a pastor, but now he was starting his Navy training and possibly serving in Vietnam. So, John raised his hand—he was the only one who did. He explained to the chaplain that he really wanted to serve the Lord. The chaplain thought, "Pray about it and come see me next week."

The following week, the chaplain told John that he had checked with the Pentagon in Washington, and Admiral Zumwalt was willing to give him an honorable discharge so that he could attend Seminary.

Reverend Redfearn spent 42 years pastoring churches and now lives in Tyler, Texas. He encourages golfers in three different Links Fellowships in the area, which meet on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

John knows their language. He has loved golf all his life and played on the SMU golf team in college. He reminds me he is not retired and says, “You can retire from that for which you were hired, but you can never retire from that for which you were bought with a price.”

He now says he got promoted, and his life is full. Golf is now the platform he uses for the glory of almighty God. Golf and ministry—what a combination. Who would have thought?

Everyone has a calling and a purpose that will be illuminated as we approach the 18th green of life. We need to practice our golf games to get better. John now says that we need to practice walking with Him to get eternally better.

God may have plans we cannot imagine as we step out in faith into the arena that we love and where He has equipped us. You may be on the back nine now, but the 18th green is in sight. Always remember you were bought with a price.

Closing prayer – Thank you, Lord, for directing our paths and walking with us.

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Randy Wolff

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