



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Grateful on Every Hole

Then one of them, when he saw he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. (Luke 17:15,16)

Meet a hero of mine, Tom Flory.

Some of you will recognize Tom's name as one of the founders of Links Players. I was fortunate to partner with Tom many times while serving Jesus in the golf world.

Shortly before his eternal birthday in July 2019, my father and I visited Tom and his lovely wife, Priscilla. We encouraged them and were blessed by their words and deeds.

I wrote about the experience on June 18th, 2019, and how it profoundly shaped me in the discipline of gratitude.

Tom was having breakfast on Monday following Gary Woodland's stirring US Open victory at Pebble Beach. While eating his applesauce and cottage cheese, he began to cry uncontrollably. "I just started to sob and sob, but it felt so good I never wanted it to stop," he shared 10 days later with us. "My whole being was full of gratitude. I am grateful for everything that has ever happened to me. For my beautiful wife. For life. For everything."

As Dad and I listened, Tom paused in reflection. "I'm still grateful," he said. "It's what I'm all about."

The afternoon before the breakfast "moment," Tom's wife, Priscilla, asked him, "Tom, are you dying?" Their eyes locked and he responded, "Been thinking I was dying for at least the last week."

Together, they had fought cancer for ten-plus years, and in this brief conversation, they both felt acceptance and peace that his body was finally giving way.

When Dad and I visited, Tom was down to 124 pounds. His digestive system shut down shortly after breakfast, and he could not eat anything. His whole family was near him, knowing that the end was near.

Yet I had never seen Tom more alert and alive. Not in all the years we had played countless tournaments, many at the top courses in the world, and shared the love of Jesus with many others in our world of recreational golf. These four hours with Tom were so precious. This was the last time I saw my friend physically alive.

Before leaving, he shared one more comment. "When the tears flowed over breakfast with Priscilla, I was apprehended by overwhelming gratitude. God bubbled this up in me, and it was fabulous. I never wanted it to stop." His face shined, and his smile was so warm.

I gave him a kiss and hug. "See you soon, Tom, real soon."

It is said that experiences form our beliefs. This experience profoundly changed my beliefs. Deep down, I was not a genuinely grateful person, and I needed to understand and cultivate this discipline in my life.

In Luke 17:11-19, Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns to give thanks. Would I be the one out of ten who returns to Jesus and gives thanks?

How about you? Are you the one in ten? Do you give thanks in all circumstances? Did you know this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you and me? (1 Thess. 5:18)

Since then, one of the many practical steps in cultivating gratitude has been to write down at least three things I'm thankful for today. After five years, it's second nature, and I may write 20-30 on many days. Being grateful has radically affected my perspective on many situations, including bad bounces and buried lies.

Tom showed me the way. Let's choose the path of gratitude together.

Prayer: Lord! Remind me again and again to express my gratitude!

—

Pete Hiskey

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