

Conversations at the Hoag Classic Major Winner, Doug Barron, and the “Man in the Mirror.”

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. (James 1: 23-25, ESV)

Doug Barron might not be a household name, but he is well-known and admired by his peers on the Tour. Not only has he enjoyed three “W’s” among the best who’ve ever played this game, but he won The Tradition in 2024, one of five Majors on the PGA Tour Champions Tour.

Doug is refreshingly honest about his walk with Jesus when he says, “I’ve had a tough road with Jesus...me and him have gone back and forth for years...I became a believer later in life....a year before I got married.”

It’s a rare trait when anyone, especially someone whose life is lived out in the public eye, is so easily honest about the “ups and downs” of being a husband, father, and professional golfer. Yet, “Doug-ee” is playfully and painfully transparent about his failures and successes.

Looking back on the early years of the PGA Tour and the struggles he endured in his personal and family life, Doug reminisces that things could have gone very differently had the Lord not been kind to him and his family.

Repeatedly honoring his wife and her faith in Jesus, Doug freely admits, “It took me a while to get there, and it took me a long time to get a little farther...” In a moment of honesty, Doug says, “These days, golf is not as important like it used to be...I used to be hard on myself, and my wife had to endure a lot of that.”

Doug admits, “I love to talk about how the Lord has worked in my life. It hasn’t all been ‘smiles and giggles.’ God has put me through a lot. He [God] made me look in the mirror and realize that, at times, I didn’t like what I saw...and he has made me change...I give him [Jesus] credit for everything I’ve accomplished.”

While trying to describe how refreshing it is to watch a man [Doug] own his failures and open up to others about Christ’s love and the gift of “second chances,” a good friend and former TOPGUN instructor said to me, “I’d rather try a thousand “night traps” [landing on a Carrier

at night in a fighter jet] than open up to another man about all the “junk in my soul.”

This friend and former naval aviator has achieved immense success in life. In high school and college, he excelled on the football field and in competitive lacrosse. Becoming a TOPGUN instructor was not an easy journey either. Nevertheless, despite his many achievements, none have been as fulfilling as watching him learn to walk with Jesus in humility and openness.

If Doug Barron has reminded us of anything, we need to trust brothers in Christ with the “junk” and know they will love us just the same.

Prayer: Jesus! Thank you for knowing me infinitely better than anyone and loving me anyway.

READING: James 1:19-25; Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:16

1. Do you talk about it after you’ve played a brilliant or awful round? If so, with whom do you divulge the details?

2. After reading the devotional and a few recommended texts, are you inclined to admit your failures to another trusted brother?

3. Application: discuss among your Links brothers why we avoid divulging our failures and how we might remedy that.
