

God, Golf, and The Good Life Finding Purpose

A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This, too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment...This, too, is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 2:24-26)

In the ongoing debate about “distance in golf,” we are often told that it’s due to either the ball or the technological advancements in equipment. Mr. Nicklaus is on record as saying that the ball needs to be rolled back.

Bombing it 300-plus yards off the tee for many of these guys is hardly anything new. “Sending it” is as common as tapping in a one-footer for the best players in the world.

Many of us envy this kind of power. We “come out of our shoes” chasing extra yardage. Finding another 20 yards off the tee is significant.

A close friend of mine recently bought a new driver with a super-duper shaft. I don’t know how much he paid for it, but considering the distance he gained, it was worth it—he chased distance and found it. Sadly, in my efforts to keep up with him, I now need surgery to repair a hernia.

Chasing distance is one thing, “chasing the wind” is another. This “chasing after the wind” mentioned repeatedly in Ecclesiastes is a Hebrew idiom for futility, as in, “not going to happen.”

It’s the author’s way of making an enormously important point: life lived in passionate pursuit of wisdom, wealth, happiness, and various pleasures without first finding the meaning or purpose of our existence is futile.

As Tim Keller remarked, “He [God] made us on purpose and for a purpose.” And finding our purpose in life can only happen if we first discover the overarching purpose of the world.

Interestingly, when discussing who could win the U.S. Open this week, Paul McGinley argued that Rory lacks the necessary ‘energy’ to win it because he lacks purpose. After achieving the Grand Slam—his driving sense of purpose for the last fifteen years—he has lost a sense of purpose.

I hope Paul is wrong! But what we all know deep down in our souls is this: no one can live a meaningful life without a sense of purpose. To have

a personal purpose rooted in reality, we must place our lives within the larger true narrative of the world.

Ironically, Ecclesiastes also contends that unless God intervenes to reveal the purpose of existence, we will continue to wander in the darkness of our rational, irrational, mystical, or hallucinogenic efforts to “break the code” of “The Meaning of the Universe.”

A meaningful and purposeful life can only be achieved when God reveals what is true and empowers one to live it. This raises two essential questions: 1) Where has God revealed the origin, destiny, and meaning of the world, and 2) Where does one find the power to live it?

Answers: 1) Jesus Christ and Scripture, and 2) The Spirit of Christ in the soul of a man or woman.

If you don’t know the story of Scripture, you will never know the “true story of the whole world.” If you don’t personally know Jesus, you will lack the power of living in truth.

Prayer: Jesus! Please open my eyes to understand Scripture and empower me to live meaningfully in its storyline.

READING: Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; 3:1-13

1. At this point in your golf journey, are you losing or gaining distance? What will it take to chase and find another 10 yards off the tee?

2. Focusing on Eccl. 3:9-13, what is the author driving at? Contrast “eternity” with “time.”

3. Application: What will it take to find or rediscover your purpose in life?
