



# Links Players

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## Almost: Faithful Effort, Yet Feeling Defeated

*Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly clings to the ground. Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love! (Psalm 44:23-26, ESV)*

I am in a season of almost with my golf game. I have invested hours hitting practice balls lately, working on different parts of my swing. It feels right for short bursts, and then I find myself muttering, “almost.”

Likewise, during my competitive rounds, my swing has fumbled through the land of almost. The time and work I put in on the practice tee felt hopeful, but I haven’t been able to translate it on the course consistently. I feel disappointed, frustrated, and confused.

I confess that my attitude, self-criticism, and outward behavior have disintegrated as I muck my way through this period of almost.

I searched the Psalms for help and found Psalm 44, a communal lament giving voice to the inner struggle of God’s people when they were faithful but still experienced defeat.

Through the first three verses, the psalmist remembers how God used to show up for His people—how victories were won by His hand. But their current experience left them wondering where is God?

The next five verses speak of God’s people standing in faith, “In God we have boasted continually, and we will give thanks to your name forever (verse 8).”

Yet, while they remained faithful in their covenant with God, they felt rejected and disgraced (verse 9), left for slaughter and scattered among the nations (verse 11), taunted, scorned, and made a laughingstock (verses 13-14), and in disgrace and shame (verse 15).

All of this happened even though the people did not forget God: “Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way (verse 18).” The people had invested everything and had seen no return.

The psalmist expresses sorrow and deep frustration. He dares to say: “Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? (verse 23).”

There are seasons in life when we work diligently, press forward, and still fall short. We do the right thing, live with integrity, and seek God. And yet... the dream doesn’t happen, the breakthrough doesn’t come, and we end up frustrated, angry, and confused.

We often feel pressure to suppress this kind of emotion. But Psalm 44 invites us to bring all our honest anger, exhaustion, and disappointment to God.

The psalm doesn't end with resolution. It ends with a plea: "Rise up; come to our help! (verse 26)." Not because we have earned it, but because of the never-changing, longsuffering love of our God.

If you're living in the ache of almost, you are not forgotten. Your work is not wasted. And our God is not asleep. Remain faithful during the season of almost.

**Prayer: Lord, thank you for your steadfast love that remains through all seasons of life. Help me today to be honest about the tensions in a time of almost.**

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Tracy Hanson

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