



Links Players

Love One Another

Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV)

Recently, I played in a one-day qualifier for the USGA Senior Women’s Amateur Championship. I wanted to feel the pressure and measure my skills against a challenging golf course. The course was longer than I usually play, and the field included some of the best women players over 50.

Within my pairing, I was the mid-level player sandwiched between a higher handicap golfer and a former USGA Sr. Women’s Amateur champion.

The higher-handicap player hit shots into the water and struggled to get out of bunkers. The former champion hit it straight and made par putts until the back nine. Then she, too, struggled and missed qualifying.

My play was not what I had hoped for, but about what I expected. I tried too hard and lost focus. The few good shots I had were not enough to qualify.

Throughout the round, the higher-handicap player worried that her poor play was bothering us. We tried to put her at ease, knowing that she was trying her best.

The other player and I each expressed some frustration at our own errant shots while talking and joking to keep our perspective. This alone felt like a win, given the brutally slow pace of play.

Late in our five-hour round, the group behind us walked onto our green while we were still putting. We were challenged to remain calm and not let it influence our attitudes.

The three of us exchanged numbers after our round, hoping to stay in touch. When I texted the former champion later how much I enjoyed our time together, she replied: “Yes, except for the golf, it was fun; glad we got to spend the day together.”

While experiencing both the joys and difficulties of golf with my new friends, I wondered what God’s Word tells us about friendship.

Proverbs 17:17 says, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” And Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 adds, “Two are better than one ... If either of them falls down, the one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.”

The kind and considerate ladies I was paired with made it easy to be kind and encouraging. It’s not realistic to expect every person we meet to become a friend. But Jesus made it clear that we are to love one another, “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8 NKJV).

Neither golf nor life guarantees us perfect pairings. We may play (live) with people who are unpleasant, rude, slow, or associate with others who would not naturally be our choice for a friend.

However, following Jesus clarifies how we are to think and act. The challenge is choosing to love one another, even in the face of adversity.

PRAYER: Lord, remind me that loving one another is Your command; fill me with Your Spirit of love and encouragement for everyone around me.

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