



Links Players

When the Pen Runs Dry

Concerning this, I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9, NASB)

Writing devotionals is tough. Writing golf devotionals is even tougher. I minored in writing in college, but I don't remember any electives called "Writing the Inspirational Golf Devotional." So, you can understand if, at times, the tank runs a little dry.

This time, as always, I started with prayer, but I got nothing. So, I considered a number of different ideas.

The first was to write about the authority of God's word by using Harvey Penick's *The Little Red Book* as a metaphor for the Bible. Penick's famous instruction, "Take dead aim," I thought, did not seem insightful until one believed in Penick's authority as a teacher.

That faith is what made possible the deeper understanding of Penick's words, "Take dead aim," and it is the same with God's word.

But then I realized I had never actually read *The Little Red Book*. How would I have the authority to write about the authority of a book I had never read?

And if I mentioned I had never read the book, you might question my golf bona fides and wonder how I ever cleared the Links Players writer background check.

So, I prayed again.

I thought of making the devotional a parable about a golf instructor and three students. One student was a scratch golfer who thought he knew a great deal about the golf swing, the second was a 10-handicapper who thought he knew a little, and the third was a true novice who knew he understood nothing.

In the end, the novice improved the most, the 10-handicapper also improved, but the scratch golfer improved the least. The moral of the story is that when we come to Jesus humbly, like little children, knowing we know little but believing He knows all, we have the greatest potential for transformation.

However, when I read my parable, it didn't seem profound like Jesus' parables. It then occurred to me that the thing about Jesus' parables is they were His parables, and that a lawyer pretending to be a devotional writer might not bring the same gravitas.

Like Paul, I prayed a third time.

Then, on Sunday, our pastor preached on Luke 19:28-30, where Jesus approached “Bethphage and Bethany,” and sent two of the disciples into the village ahead to get a colt for Him to ride into Jerusalem.

When I saw “Bethphage” up on the screen, I imagined a devotional where “Bethphage” is the location of A.W. Tillinghast’s “Bethphage White” golf course. Jesus is requesting the colt because Club Car didn’t exist yet, and none of the disciples offered to caddy for Him.

Instead of playing golf at Bethphage White, though, Jesus chooses to go to Jerusalem and ultimately to the cross. The message was that Jesus had the free will to play golf, but He chose the cross instead, demonstrating the depth of His love for us.

After a little thought, I realized some might find it irreverent, and I couldn’t figure out how to explain what the twentieth-century Tillinghast was doing in first-century Israel.

So, I come to you in weakness, with empty hands — false starts and unfinished thoughts. Yet, that’s where the grace begins. When the pen runs dry, His power fills the page.

Prayer: Lord, thank you that when I am weak, you are strong.

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Scott Fiddler

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