



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

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## Intelligent Prayer

*I pray that out of His glorious riches, He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being.... (Ephesians 3:16)*

Do you ever pray on the golf course? My partner looked over as he was about to tee off for our league match and said, "Pray I don't duff my drive."

I recently re-read the USGA Rule Book and realized I may be violating Rule 10.2a, which governs Advice and Help, restricting what players can say or do to influence what help they can receive.

In fact, a golfer who prays after striking the ball, while it's still in the air, hoping that miraculously the ball will come back into play after they've sliced it, is violating Rule 10.2b, the wind rule. "If a gust of wind moves your ball, you can play it from its new position. But, if artificially propelled air moves your ball, you must replace it without penalty."

The Apostle Paul offers a prayer for which there is no penalty in Ephesians chapter 3. How often do you pray for someone to be strengthened in their inner being? Usually, we pray about a lot of external circumstances. It would have been so easy for Paul to say, "Hey, everybody in Ephesus, I'm praying for you guys." "I'm praying your business will go well, and you'll be able to have better jobs and make more money. I really pray that you get some rain so you have good crops this year and can feed everybody. I hope your local football team plays well and makes the play-offs. I sure hope your candidate wins the next election."

But Paul resisted the temptation to pray for fair weather circumstances for those Christ-followers in Ephesus. Rather, he prays that whatever circumstances come their way, they'll be strengthened in their inner being.

He wants them to stand strong no matter what comes their way because it's going to be a mixed bag of good and bad. Oftentimes, we start talking about some of the difficult circumstances that we're in, but how often does our conversation turn to things like how we are doing in our inner spirit?

Years ago, I played a round with the retired captain of a nuclear submarine. My inquiring mind wanted to know more about submarines and his experiences. He told me about an American nuclear submarine named the Thresher, the fastest and quietest submarine of its day.

In April of 1963, the Thresher sank during a deep dive, killing all 129 crew aboard. Evidently, the water pressure on the outside at a certain depth became greater than the air pressure pushing on the walls from the inside, and the sub imploded.

I think sometimes we can get so focused on external circumstances that it weakens our faith, our inner being. Obviously, I'd never suggest we pray for bad things to happen, but Paul prays that we will be strengthened in our inner being by the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can stand up against anything that the world throws at us.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is an intelligent and non-penalizing prayer to pray for myself... and for others. Put your name or someone else's name in this prayer. Who do you know right now who's beaten down, and whose circumstances are pretty much overwhelming to them?

**Prayer: God, would you strengthen me... or them... by your Holy Spirit, in our inner beings, so that no matter whatever we are going through, we can withstand the pressure.**

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Bill Crawford

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