



Links Players

Realizing Your True Score

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

But when he came to his senses, he said, “How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.” (Luke 15:17-19, NASB)

When Roberto De Vincenzo finished the 1968 Masters, he was tied with Bob Goalby and appeared headed for a playoff. But when De Vincenzo signed his card, it was wrongly marked with a par on 17, instead of the birdie he’d made.

Under the rules of golf, if you sign for a higher number than you actually made, that becomes your score. As a result, De Vincenzo lost the Masters by a shot.

When he realized his error and that it had cost him the Masters, De Vincenzo, an Argentinian who understandably did not speak the king’s English, famously said, “What a stupid I am!”

I remember when I first came to my senses. I was twelve years old, sitting at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting after school. The leader explained that God loved me and had a wonderful plan for my life. But he also said I was separated from God because of my sin.

Perhaps I had heard the gospel before then. If I did, it had never truly registered. I thought I was a pretty good kid. This time, when the FCA leader said that my sin had separated me from God, I saw my self-righteousness with shocking clarity. Like De Vincenzo I thought, “What a stupid I am.”

I prayed for forgiveness, put my trust in Jesus, and began following Him.

Jesus described that moment of repentance in the parable of the prodigal son as coming to one’s senses. He was introduced to reality. He saw the gravity of what he had done. He saw what all of us watching the story unfold could already see.

That is the moment of repentance, when we understand it is not merely that everyone makes mistakes. We understand we are not merely “mistakers” but sinners. We have sinned against a holy God and are not worthy to be called a child of God. We understand we are hopeless to change ourselves and helpless to save ourselves.

That kind of clarity is difficult to explain to someone who has never experienced it. It is the moment when we see reality — when we finally understand our true condition before God.

That realization can be frightening, because instinctively we know “it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Hebrews 10:31. But it is that realization that leads us to repentance.

When we come to our senses we see Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as the answer to a problem we can't solve on our own. Trust in Him suddenly becomes obvious, just as returning to his father in that moment was so obvious to the prodigal. We realize that we are the prodigal.

What a stupid I am.

But by the grace of God, I finally came to my senses.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for Your grace and for bringing me to my senses and drawing me to You.

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