



# Links Players

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## Overcoming Adversity

*His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Genesis 50:18-20)*

Juan Antonio Rodriguez, better known as Chi Chi, was one of a kind. While he was small in stature at 5'7" and 125 lbs., his personality was larger than life.

Who could ever forget his famous putter-sword dance, or his classic one-liners? He also achieved notable success on both the PGA Tour (8 victories) and the Champions Tour (22 victories). But what most people aren't aware of is the adversity he overcame to achieve success.

Chi Chi was born in Puerto Rico to a very poor family. By age seven, Chi Chi was working as a paid water carrier on sugar plantations. One day, he accidentally wandered onto a nearby golf course and soon afterward became a caddie.

He eventually started playing the game, teaching himself by hitting a rolled-up metal can with a tree branch. Chi Chi dropped out of school during the 11th grade and joined the U.S. Army, continuing to develop his golf game in his spare time.

After leaving the service, he turned pro and joined the PGA Tour in 1960, launching a 37-year Hall of Fame career.

Although he later achieved great success, Chi Chi never forgot his humble beginnings. He started a foundation for at-risk youth in Tampa, Florida, saying, "A man never stands taller than when he stoops to help a child." Chi Chi Rodriguez is a great example of overcoming adversity to accomplish a life well lived.

The Bible contains many stories about overcoming adversity, but let's focus on Joseph, a hero from the book of Genesis. Unlike Chi Chi, Joseph's life started well. He was the favorite son of his father Jacob, but that favoritism caused a rift with his older brothers.

When he told them about a dream in which they all bowed down to him, it was too much. Driven by jealousy and anger, the brothers sold Joseph to traveling merchants and led Jacob to believe that a wild animal had killed Joseph.

Joseph ended up in Egypt as the property of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. Joseph's many skills soon got him noticed and promoted, eventually becoming manager over Potiphar's entire household.

All was good until Potiphar's wife lied and claimed that Joseph had violated her, leading to more adversity as Joseph was thrown into prison for a crime he did not commit.

While it was Joseph's interpretation of his dreams that angered his brothers, his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams ultimately led to his release from prison and, ultimately, to becoming second in power in Egypt, behind only Pharaoh himself.

Joseph's capable leadership skillfully managed Egypt through seven years of good crops, enabling it to survive the seven years of famine that followed. The famine forced Jacob's family to seek food, leading them to Egypt and an unexpected, emotional family reunion with Joseph.

Joseph's story is a wonderful example of why we can trust God to fulfill his good purposes, even in the face of adversity. God uses today's difficulties to strengthen us for tomorrow.

**Prayer: Heavenly Father, when we face challenges in life, help us to remember that you are shaping us for your purposes.**

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John Bown

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