

REFLECTIONS

October 7, 2007

**...let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles, and
let us run with perseverance the race
marked out for us.**

Hebrews 12:1

A Game that Can Be Won

“Golf is a game that can’t be won, only played.” These are words from the title character in the movie and book *The Legend of Bagger Vance*. Bagger Vance was an encourager to the fictional golfer, Rannulph Junuh, and his words aptly describe the possibilities of mastering the game of golf. And while the reference is a truth about golf, the inference is a truth about life.

Once I played a round of golf with a visiting pastor who shares my passion for the game. He observed to me, “I don’t think God cares much about golf.” But I didn’t agree. I believe God *does* care about golf. Not only have I felt God’s presence on the golf course, but I believe God uses the game to teach us wonderful lessons of life.

Through golf I have learned that the playing field is not a level one. I have learned that sometimes good shots bring bad results; and I have learned that bad shots sometimes produce sterling outcomes. I have learned that not everyone has the same talent; and I have learned that on a given day the best player does not always win.

Just as in life, golf is played on the honor system. There are rules to obey, but there are no enforcers throwing orange flags, no whistles shrilling to call a foul, and no umpires ruling someone out or safe. One’s character is measured by the manner that the spirit of the game is honored.

Other games we play also have lessons to teach. Whether it is football, basketball, baseball, soccer or tennis, games teach us endurance, preparation, patience, dependence on others, and perseverance. They teach us to play within your own ability, to win with humility and to lose with grace. These are lessons taught through the games we play, but the lessons apply in the places we work, in the families we nurture, in the world we share.

I have come to agree with Bagger Vance that golf is a game that can’t be won. A given golf match will produce a winner, but there will be no mastery of the game itself. Life is also a game beyond our own ability to master. But life is a game that can be won.

*“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*¹

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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¹ 1 Corinthians 15:57

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