

Daily View

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" Hebrews 3:13

July 3, 2020



Anaheim Hills Golf Course. I think this was the toughest course I've ever played. Besides the water and sand hazards, one of the holes was on a hill and you couldn't even see the flag.
[Stock photo]

"Keep on Swinging"

I've always loved sports and played many of them. In a few, I've had outstanding, but temporary, success. For example, one time I bowled and scored over 250. Everything went right; strike after strike. But I never got close to that score again.

Another time, when stationed at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, I joined a group playing billiards. When it was my turn, I ran the table from my first shot. That was a total fluke. I have to confess that I avoided playing billiards again so the other guys would think I was a great billiard player.

I played golf at least once a week with Don Canavello. He usually brought along some friends, either from work or church. One day, he brought two friends whom I didn't know. On the first four holes, I had two birdies and two pars. Four holes, shooting 2 under par. Walking toward the 5th hole, one of the strangers, duly impressed with my golf mastery, began talking to me about a golf tournament he was involved in and said, "you should think about signing up." I said, "just wait; you won't be asking me that by the time we're done." Sure enough, I ended the 18 holes somewhere in the low 90s, about 20 strokes above par, which was actually pretty good for me.

If you live long enough and try enough things, you're bound to have some extra good luck now and then. But then you have those days that you'd rather forget, too. Like the time I was called on to pitch in a Little League game in Vallejo. I walked four batters in a row and never threw another pitch from a mound again in a game.

Life is like that. Ups and downs are common. Most of our days are pretty average — we throw a few strikes, we hole a few billiard balls, play a little above par.

And God is OK with that, as long as we are making progress in the areas that count. "Super Christians" scare me more than "average" ones. As long as we are setting our sights on and aiming for higher ground, God will smile on us. But I have reasons to believe God is not pleased when we don't try very hard or when we get lackadaisical; when we "settle." The author of Hebrews says,

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

Some versions don't include it but the Greek word "seek" suggests that the word "diligently" belongs. Diligent means to work hard, but also having a sense of urgency about the things we do. God doesn't put up with laziness. "Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys," says Proverbs 18:9 (HCSB). I Corinthians 15:58 speaks to this. Paul says,

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

We'll have good days, great days, bad days and... days. But God expects us to "always abound" in the work of the Lord. Our work is not in vain, even if we shoot a bit below par. If we keep swinging, keep aiming, we'll see some results.

Maybe we should take a lesson from the golfer who swung and missed the ball, adjusted his stance and swung and missed again, and did it a third time: adjusted his stance, swung and missed.

Before he took the next swing, he said, "tough course." Then, he kept on swinging.