

## The “Gimme” Putt

**The strongest way we can grow in our faith is to see the daily curve balls coming at us, and rather than succumb to the Old Man nature say....”Lord help me get through this one with Your nature.”—Steve Silver**

I don’t know about you, but my tendency is to give myself more credit for Christ-like behavior than reality would bear out. One would think that after 50 years of discipleship, my default actions and reactions will be rooted in my New Man (in Christ) nature, and that I pretty much have my Old Man well under control. I wish that were the case, but it simply isn’t. I find that I’m every bit as capable of prideful, self-defending and self-serving behavior as those who don’t know Christ. So what am I to do?

An incident with my golf “friend” (he certainly was no friend at the time) is illustrative of the all-too-common episodes in my daily life. The question is not whether the episodes are occurring, but whether I see them in real-time, and involve the Lord in managing through them and influencing their outcomes.

The golfer who never takes a short putt that wasn’t given to him is rare. When I play with one I have great admiration for him and consider him a “purist.” These are almost always better players, who got to be better by not giving themselves any wiggle-room. I’m neither good enough nor honest enough in my game to fall into the purist category. I rationalize this position by telling myself I’m just like 95% of all other non-professional golfers—We all do it. That works until we come up against a purist who expects the same standards from us as he does from himself. Such was the case with my “friend” when he challenged me for giving myself a three-foot putt which didn’t effect our team score. He cut me to the quick and my reaction was the opposite of what Christ would have it be. Rather than thanking him for keeping me honest and bringing me up to his standard, I turned on him. He was now my enemy. “How dare this guy challenge me? Who does he think he is? I’ll teach him a lesson...I won’t ride or speak to him for the rest of the round.”

Mature Christian behavior? Of course, I knew at the time that it wasn’t. That I was in a bit of an emotional and spiritual tailspin. But that didn’t matter—my anger and pride were now in full control and I wasn’t open to being pulled out of the mud. What was interesting is that this was my private battle. My “friend” may have been somewhat aware that I was pouting and avoiding him, but it wasn’t his problem and he just went on with his game. In reality, this wasn’t between me and him at all—it was between me and the Lord. After walking seventeen holes and nursing my irritation, I finally invited the Lord into the situation. I’m not one to hear the Lord’s audible voice, but this was about as close as it gets. I’m pretty sure I heard Him say—”He’s right...you’re wrong.”

So, the Lord weighed in. He took me by the hand and made me do the right thing. I told my friend that I’d been thinking about the putt incident for seventeen holes and confessed that he was right and I was wrong. He simply reached out his hand. We shook and to this day we are friends rather than enemies.

I know this incident sounds like small stuff. However, I find that life is filled with little daily battles like this one. These are where our New Man nature is hammered out. For every little scuffle we give to the Lord to fight, He is victorious—and we come that much closer to being controlled by His nature in all situations. That’s our New Man Journey. Can you think of one of these stories in your life?—*Steve Silver*

Click on the link to watch Steve’s 4 minute story

<https://vimeo.com/322932828>