

Accepting the Challenge!

by Wayne Goff

Almost every year at this time I participate in a golf tournament. And almost every year I come home asking myself **“Why?”** The weather is usually hot, the golf course is a physical and mental challenge, and playing once a year in a “competition” works on the nerves. Often I have come home with a reward, but I have never come home completely satisfied. You see, golf always leaves you wanting to do better. It is the most difficult sport I have ever undertaken. So on the drive home I often reflect on why I put myself through this event.

Finally it hit me — **it’s the challenge!** I am stubborn, if I am anything, and it really “gets my goat” that I cannot conquer this challenge. So why don’t I just quit? The competitive side of me has a difficult time giving up.

But did you know that Christianity itself is a challenge?! The word “challenge” does not appear in the Bible, but the concept certainly does. The apostle Paul wrote: *“I **press** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 3:14). One cannot conquer the challenge of Christianity either. Paul had already explained: *“Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended;...”* (Phil. 3:13). It is a life-long pursuit. For the one who thinks he has **perfected** Christianity in his life, Paul wrote: *“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall”* (1 Cor. 10:12).

So why don’t we just quit?! We cannot afford to; heaven is worth all our struggles and efforts! We shall win the eternal prize by the grace of God who supplies that which we cannot. *“Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind”* (Phil. 3:16). In simple terms Paul is saying, “Don’t quit! You have made progress, so keep on progressing!”

I may some day give up on the challenge of golf (though I doubt it), but I pray to God that I **never** give up my faith in Jesus Christ and the **challenge** to *“become blameless and harmless, (a child) of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,...”* (Phil. 2:15). I accept the challenge.

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