

MONDAY MANNA

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BOUNCING BACK – IN BUSINESS AND IN LIFE

By Jim Langley

I have been playing the game of golf since I was 19 and still remember playing my first nine holes on the Texas A&M University golf course without any prior golf instruction. Even skilled athletes would be wise to get some instruction before playing a round of golf for the first time. As I discovered!

Golf was by far the most difficult sport I had ever attempted and was determined to do it well. I do not remember my first birdie but do recall my first eagle – at Breckenridge Park Golf Course, the long-time site of the Texas Open in San Antonio. I can remember every detail.

One of the major challenges in golf is to “bounce back” from shooting over par on the previous hole. We often hear TV golf announcers talk about players bouncing back from a bogey (one over par) when they get a birdie (one under par) on the next hole. These days, bounce backs for me are more along the line of getting a par after several bogeys in a row, since my golf game has suffered with age. Because I still love the game, bouncing back still provides feelings of exhilaration.

We might not all be golfers, but can all appreciate the need for bouncing back – even if we never pick up a golf club. I have experienced this in business over the past 30-plus years; it is likely we all have. We interview for a job with great anticipation, but someone else is hired. After years of hard work, we think a much-desired promotion is deserved, but a colleague is chosen instead. We invest many hours in cultivating an important client, confident of making a major sale, but a competitor is selected instead.

Personal life experiences also require a bounce-back mentality. Whether it is a health crisis or financial struggles, difficulties within the family or unexpected and costly emergencies, we all learn the importance of being able to bounce back from adversity. It has not always been easy, but occasions like these have proved to be both memorable and significant for me, important lessons in learning how to persevere. Especially if we have done nothing to deserve the negative position in which we may well find ourselves.

As we read the Bible to apply its teachings to the everyday opportunities and struggles of the marketplace, we discover the early followers of Jesus Christ learned much about how to bounce back from adversity and hardship. Jesus’ disciples – those closest to Him during his earthly ministry – went through many trials. Most of them died as martyrs, and yet their faith enabled them to persevere for Christ until their last breath.

We find a classic example in the words of Paul in his letter to the ancient church in Philippi. He wrote, “*I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two; I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body*” (Philippians 1:20-24).

This is what I believe God desires from us. He is not necessarily looking for martyrs, but for devoted followers willing to place Him and others ahead of their own needs. He wants us to bounce back from whatever negative developments our spiritual enemy throws at us and remain faithful to the very end.

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© 2019, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been writing for more than 30 years while working as a life and health insurance agent. In recent years, his passion has turned to writing about his relationship with God. His goal is to encourage others to draw near to Him as well. A long-time member of CBMC, he started writing "Fourth Quarter Strategies" in 2014.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

Can you relate to this description of having to "bounce back" from a poor performance in golf, or another sport? How easy has it been for you to disregard the bad hole, the mistake on the tennis court, or even an ill-advised move on a board game, to bounce back for the next opportunity?

How about your experiences at work? How do you typically respond when your hopes or expectations are not met, or goals you have worked hard to achieve are not attained?

What is the role of perseverance in being able to bounce back, as Mr. Langley calls it, from various forms of adversity at work – or in the everyday realities of life?

Do you think faith in God should play an important role in our trying to bounce back when times of hardship and disappointment come, especially in the workplace? Why or why not? If so, in what ways?

NOTE: For more about what the Bible says, consider the following passages:

John 16:32-33

Romans 8:28,35-39

1 Corinthians 4:10-13

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

James 1:2-4