



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR JULY 26, 2013

A FULL UNDERSTANDING

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. (Philemon 1:6, NIV)

OH, TO FULLY EXPERIENCE WINNING THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP AT MUIRFIELD! Or how about playing some of the great courses, like St. Andrews, Pine Valley, Augusta National, and Pebble Beach? At TPC Sawgrass, they offer a “PGA Tour Experience” where you come for a day and get the same treatment the tour professionals do—that would be great!

Everyone naturally wants to experience the fullness of what they love, and as golfers, we are no different. We want to see it, taste it, feel it, smell it, hit it, find it, stroke it, pure it, and then talk about it hole-by-hole for hours on end.

The same desire should be true in our spiritual lives, but if we are honest, most of us don’t often experience the fullness of joy that we hear others speak of.

Recently, I led a six-week conference call book study of David Platt’s *Follow Me* with a group of about eight professional golfers and 10 college players. In the introduction of the book, Francis Chan writes, “When people say they don’t ‘feel close to Jesus,’ I ask them if they are making disciples... While every Christian wants to experience the power of the Holy Spirit, we often forget that the Spirit’s power is given for the purpose of being his witnesses.”

In Philemon 1:6, Paul wrote of experiencing the fullness of our relationship with Christ, explaining that this greater understanding comes by sharing our faith. The reverse of this verse is that we will not have a full understanding of the goodness of God if we don’t make purposeful attempts to give to others the salvation we have in Christ.

In regards to the life I have in Christ, I want the same things I enjoy in golf. I want to see it, taste it, feel it, smell it, find it, stroke it, pure it and then talk about it for hours on end. The fullness of our life with Christ is only experienced as we share our faith and make disciples.

Lord, please change our hearts to where our priorities are centered on you and making you known. We know this will be for our good and your glory. Amen.

Opening questions: Fullness of life

What’s the difference between playing a par-3 course and a championship course? How does the broader experience of the latter increase your understanding of the game? What experiences in life increase your understanding of how to live, especially in following Jesus?

Encouragement and exhortation

Read the short letter of Paul to Philemon. What examples of commendation and encouragement do you see?

What examples of exhortation and challenge?

How might we take these examples as a guide for the way we speak among ourselves as brothers and sisters in following Christ?

Today’s devotion challenges us to share our faith. Is this a challenge you need to hear today? For what other faith endeavors could you also stand for some exhortation?