

**THE GREATER PURPOSE**

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*Then I would still have this consolation—my joy in unrelenting pain—that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. (Job 6:10, NIV)*

The LPGA lost its playoff gamble on Sunday, April 30th, 2017.

When a tournament goes to a playoff, the officials must employ the rotation of holes they have decided upon prior to the start of the event. This time, the LPGA had no rotation. Their playoff consisted of the eighteenth hole. That’s it.

**“Let me be damned,” we might paraphrase Job’s words, “but never the Lord!”**

Often this makes sense, because a great number of fans are already assembled around the last green, with its large grandstand. But it makes sense only if the playoff ends in short order. Sunday, it didn’t. Cristie Kerr and eventual winner Haru Nomura went six extra holes—all of them played at the eighteenth. Can you say “déjà vu all over again”?

Life is actually quite full of tradeoffs, and sometimes, despite our best research and clearest intentions, we miss in our choices.

More common, however, is the self-preserving path of least resistance. Our flesh loves the least effort for the greatest gain. From fast food to insider trading to the one-night stand, man’s sinful self cries out for more payoff with less outlay.

It’s not easy in the face of such go-get-it gratifications to read the account of Job, the ancient caught in the middle of a cosmic experiment of allegiance. Could Satan lure away the affections of a righteous, God-fearing man by wiping out his many holdings, sending his children to the grave in a bitter catastrophe, attacking the man’s flesh with festering boils, and turning his own wife against him?

In short, no.

Job considered the tradeoffs. He could have gotten his wife and even his critical friends off his back if only he had wavered in his faith. Satan would leave him if only he would deny God.

Job wouldn’t have it. Instead he wished for God to crush him. This, he said, would end his struggle with him on the right side—the side of holding fast in his faith. “Let me be damned,” we might paraphrase his words, “but never the Lord!” Job knew that in death there was peace, a lasting rest for the weary (Job 3:13). Better this death with God than a life free of suffering but without the Lord.

Jesus, too, chose the greater purpose, enduring the cross for the joy set before him. The tradeoff meant the harshest possible course on earth, yet the highest possible reward in heaven.

How hard it is to make the choice of Job or of Jesus! In this, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow him (Luke 9:23). But with it, we will “shine like stars in the universe,” holding out the word of life before our crooked and depraved generation. (Philippians 2:15-16).