

The Legend of Bagger Vance

Themes:

1. Find (or be reminded of) that which we were made for

From the film: The phrase "find his swing" is about finding that which you are good at, and which God has made you to do. The spiritual equivalent is finding your place in God's kingdom.

Quote from the film: "Inside each and every one of us is one true and authentic swing. Something we were born with, something that's ours and ours alone...Over time, the world can rob us of that swing. It gets buried inside us under all our wouldas and couldas and shouldas."

At the end, the narrator quotes Bagger Vance: Golf "is not a game to be won, but only played. So I play on. I play for the moments yet to come, looking for my place in the field." One could substitute the word "Life" for Golf and the sentence is even more true.

Verse: Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

2. Confront our wounds

From the film: He's battle-worn. He's fallen into drunkenness. He has a calling on his life to be a great golfer, but he suppresses it; he tries to drown it. But you can't make it go away. He isn't a whole man.

Quote from the film: After the battle, he was "confused, broken, unable to face a return to a hero's welcome"

In the scene in the woods, he confronted the wound; which means exposing it, inviting Jesus into it. Bagger Vance says "You've been carrying this [burden] long enough; time to go on, lay it down."

Verse: Matthew 11:30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Often, the wound is based on a lie that we were told:



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3. Restoration requires that we accept the healing that God offers through Jesus, and it requires that we allow Him to breathe life back into us;

From the film: Notice the contrast between the Junah that you see in the poker game, all strung out and defeated, and the one who is trying to win the tournament. Notice the change (i.e. the healing) didn't come after he experienced success at the end; just the fact that he now had purpose again put life back into him.

The meeting with Adele, where she tries to seduce him, is what changes his mind, and right before she comes in, a wind blows; you see the curtains. (we'll get into this when we quote Genesis 2:7)

Junah decides to quit until he runs into several Savannah citizens who are there to encourage him. He had decided to quit because he saw enormous risk (when he packed in the hotel and drove away). When we step into the calling that God has for us, there is risk. But the encouragement of the people set him right again, because he was reminded that he had purpose. Typically, God's purposes for us will require us to serve others, and consider their needs and wants before our own.

Quote from the film:

Bagger Vance: See, the trick is... to find your swing...

Junuh: What'd you say?...

Bagger Vance: Well you lost your swing... We got to go find it

This is a picture of restoration that God offers us. In fact, it's one of the main purposes Jesus announced about Himself when He announced the beginning of His ministry:

Verses: Luke 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; HE has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed.

Genesis 2:7 "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

4. Allow Holy Spirit to guide us, then we will find joy when we walk in our purpose and gifts

From the film: Bagger Vance is a picture of the Holy Spirit. He comes in talking about "taking in God's glories" in his first line of the film. He isn't talking so much about stars on a clear night as he is about how God will be glorified when Junuh engages, embraces, and walks in that which he was made for.

Later, when Bagger tells Junuh that they have to find his swing, he says "...it's somewhere... in the harmony... of all that is... All that was... All that will be.." This is a reference to Scripture's description of God in Revelation ("He who was, and is, and is to come"). When the Holy Spirit guides us, He always points us to God.

("I'm right here with you. I've been here all along.") Notice he doesn't make himself the centerpiece of each scene, as Will Smith normally does. He stays in the background, saying what He needs to say in order to be the Helper. He's so subtle that you don't realize the impact he is having, but his impact is huge. He moves Junuh gently.

Joy: Notice that Junuh starts smiling when he starts getting it right in 2nd round. We find joy when we walk in what we were made for. In "Chariots of Fire," the runner says "when I run, I feel God's pleasure." In this movie, Bobby Jones tells Junuh he saw him play that time in 1916. He says he "never saw a swing so sweet, or a man get so much pleasure from it."

Quote from the film: Bagger Vance: "Yeah, I always felt a man's grip on his club just like a man's grip on his world..."

Bagger Vance: "Yeah the rhythm of the game's just like the rhythm of life..."

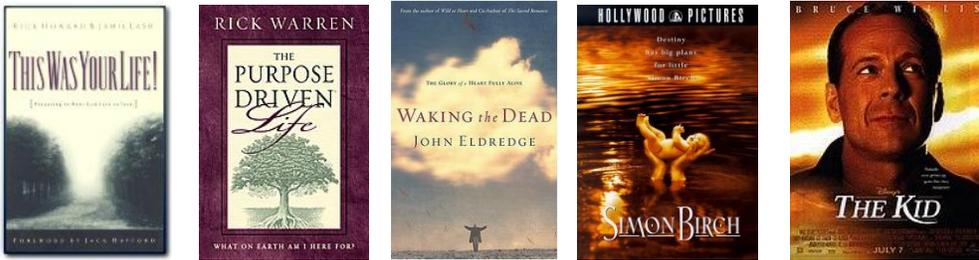
The above quotes are just two reminders that when he talks of golf, he's really speaking of life.

Verses: John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

Call to action

One way to get started in finding your calling is to find your Spiritual Gifts (Tim Wright can help you with this), then go to <http://shape.gracearlington.com> and answer the questions about your gifts, natural talents, passions, and experiences, all of which can help point you to your role in this church's ministry.

Additional resources to help you find and understand your calling:



This Was Your Life by Rick Howard and Jamie Lash -- Provides an understanding of the eternal importance of how we choose to use our gifts and talents.

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Waking the Dead by John Eldredge – “The Glory of God is a man fully alive”

Simon Birch – Even our weaknesses can be used by God — “Destiny has big plans for little Simon Birch”

The Kid – Discovering how our past experiences—even painful ones—are an integral part of our calling; also deals with the importance of recognizing and rebuking the lies told to us by the enemy