

## **Greetings!**

It's a new year with new opportunities! So, did you make those New Year's Eve resolutions? I bet you thought about it, didn't you? Wouldn't it be great if every year at 12 midnight, December 31<sup>st</sup>, all your mistakes were erased and you'd start the New Year all fresh?

Maybe what you need is a mulligan!

## **May I Have a Mulligan Please !!!**

I want a mulligan! That's right a mulligan.

No, it's not a fish, a fruit, or the newest tech gadget, it's a "do over". Every serious golfer knows about a mulligan. If on the tee off, he "messes up", he can ask for a mulligan. If granted then he can "do it over". Thus, a do over. How about you, could you use some do over's? How's this? What if every time you messed up, you could just call for a mulligan and there you'd have it; a second chance to get it right.

I can see the wheels turning in your head already. "What would I do over?" "How could I change where I'm currently at in my life?" Now, think seriously, what effect would it have on your life if you could erase every mistake instantly and then do it the right way?

I remember a movie called, *The Butterfly Effect*. A boy named, Evan, had the ability to change the past, thus changing his present. Sounds kinda like a mulligan, doesn't it? Do you think it went well for Evan? Not at all! Every time Evan changed the past, there were unintentional effects on the present. There are two different endings for the movie depending on which version you're watching, but trust me, it never worked out for Evan.

I need some mulligans, but not the kind you think. Oh, if I could really change the past, it would be tempting! But truthfully, I don't think it would help things any. In fact, I think like Evan, though my intentions would be noble, the effects would just have made things worse. I've heard a lot of people say that if they could start over in life and know what they know now, they'd be a lot better off. I doubt it.

You see, there are different ways to learn how to be smart. One is to read some books (Something few people do anymore.), you could just listen to some smart people (There's a few of them on PBS every week.), or you could just learn some of the stuff the way many of us do. How is that? We do stupid things. We mess up! We learn from our mistakes.

When I read the stories of God's folks in the Old Testament, I'm amazed at how they messed up so much of the time. Really, just pick a few stories and look at the stupid things they did. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul tells us that they are our examples. Whaaaaat? That's right; we're to learn from their messes as well as from their victories. Now, if they had gotten mulligans whenever they wanted, what would we learn about not making the same mistakes they did? Nothing.

If you had never made a mess of anything, you'd not be as smart as you are today. You wouldn't be who you are today either. You would be different, maybe even worse. Think about it. It's the experiences in life, both good and bad, that have made you into the person you are today. Now, maybe you're thinking, "I really don't want to be the person I am today. I don't like how I turned out." I'm going to guess that if you turned out "bad" because of your messes, then you spent too much time wanting a mulligan rather than learning and growing from your experiences.

I've learned over the years that there are people who've had similar bad experiences and yet they each turned out very differently. One grew smarter and stronger making something good come out of their hardships. The other, lived with regret and disappointment wishing they'd done things different in their past. The first one increased their "life" because of the experiences, while the other stagnated in their frustration over them.

I said earlier that I wanted a mulligan. I know I sound confused. I want a mulligan, but not from life's mistakes. I need a mulligan from God. You see, as I grow older, I have more to look back on and though I can't go back and change anything, I need a do over. Let me explain.

When I first came to know God in my life, I waffled back and forth a lot in my walk with Him. I'd go out on Friday and Saturday nights and do a lot of things that I shouldn't have (stories of these omitted on purpose). Then, on Sunday morning, I would walk into my little country church with a lot of bad feelings over what I'd done that week. We would sing, my pastor would preach and then he'd give an altar call. If no one else came forward, he could always count on me! He would pray for me, I'd cry a little, and then we'd all walk out into the fresh Florida sunshine to start a brand new week. I recall one particular Sunday, driving away from church and thinking to myself how clean and fresh I felt inside. Nothing dirty, no internal mess, just clean. God had granted me a mulligan!

I haven't done anything drastically bad lately, but as I said, as I get older there's more for me to look back on. I could sit around with a lot of regret wishing I could go back, with everything I know now, and correct the mistakes, but that isn't going to happen. So, I've been asking God lately for a lot of mulligans in my heart and spirit; opportunities to rid myself of regrets, disappointments and the frustration I sometime feel at not being able to change the past.

It's a wonderful thing to know that He's the God of do over's.

May I have another mulligan please?

***And that's just a thought . . .***

## *My Final Word*

I hope you had a great Christmas. Sharon and I spent ours quietly as our kids took care of other obligations.

I really appreciated the great feedback on *Mom's Christmas Miracle*. I've been asked if it really happened the way I said, and the answer is, "Yes". I had a wonderful conversation during Christmas with my brother Ron who was there on that night along with Sharon and our three children. We reminisced about mom until it was time to move on to a lighter subject, and we both agreed it was a God moment for all of us when the snow started falling.

I'm not a golfer – in fact, I can't tolerate the game. After hunting one long day from sunup until dark, I stopped by the house of the landowners where I was hunting to say, "Hello". They began telling me about their trip to Myrtle Beach to play golf for the week, to which I said, "You need to go get a life rather than wasting your time chasing a little white ball around somebody else's yard." Looking at me intently, she replied, "And this comes from a guy who spends an entire day sitting fifteen feet up a tree, in freezing weather with ice on the ground!" Nuff said. I went home.

As you begin this New Year, you can't go back and undo the mistakes you made last year, and in some cases you'll have to live with their effects for years to come. David did. Yet, God was always able to overcome David's lapses in good judgment and use him to build a great nation.

I would be willing to bet that God is much closer to the circumstances of your life than you think and, if given the opportunity, He'll give you a mulligan in your heart and spirit as well!

The first time I heard of a mulligan I thought, how cool is that! There aren't many things we participate in where we can just – do it over. Maybe golf isn't so bad after all.

*Have a blessed New Year!*

*Chris*

