

**Youth Culture Lesson**  
**Finding Teachable Moments in Culture**  
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**Sorry 'Bout That**

Golfer Learns It's Never Good to Quit

By Paul Asay

**What Happened:**

Rory McIlroy has become one of the best golfers in the world. At the age of 23, the Scottish player already has won two major titles and is the No. 1-ranked golfer in the world; but he landed in the rough a couple of weeks ago.

McIlroy was struggling mightily at the Honda Classic the last week of February. After he plunked a ball in the water on the eighth hole of his second round, the golfer packed up his clubs and left—quitting in the middle of his round. His excuse? He had a toothache.

The golfer was roundly criticized for quitting during the tournament. While professional golf allows players to withdraw for medical issues, they're normally issues that require medical attention and make it impossible to go on. A toothache wouldn't fall into that category—as McIlroy admitted later. “It wasn't bothering me enough to, probably, you know, quit,” he told *The New York Times*.

“I realized pretty quickly that it wasn't the right thing to do,” McIlroy said. “It was a mistake, and everyone makes mistakes, and I'm learning from them.”

He has a lot of company. Scientists say most people's brains are still growing and maturing through their mid-20s: Teens and twenty-somethings are more apt to make hasty decisions they might later regret, these scientists say; but let's face it: Everyone, no matter how young or old they are, can make mistakes.

Speaking of which, McIlroy is determined to learn from his. “I learned that when the going gets tough, I've got to stick in there a bit more, and I've got to grind it out,” he continued. “There's no excuse for quitting; and it doesn't set a good example for the kids watching me, trying to emulate what I do. It wasn't good for a whole lot of reasons, for the tournament, the people coming out watching me. I feel like I let a lot of people down with what I did last week; and you know, for that I am very sorry.”

**Talk About It:**

McIlroy's right. We all make mistakes. What was one of yours? (Youth leader, you chime in, too.) Was it embarrassing? How did it impact you? Can you look back on it and laugh now, or is it still a hard thing to talk about?

Mistakes show a lot about our character—not by never making them but by how we handle them after they're made. McIlroy did what he could to make up for his misstep.

How did you make up for yours? Did you apologize? Were you punished? Were you able to make up for it completely?

**What the Bible Says:**

“Do not lie in wait like an outlaw against a righteous man’s house, do not raid his dwelling place; for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity” (Prov. 24:15-16).

“After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth” (Jer. 31:19).

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘repent,’ forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

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Paul Asay has covered religion for *The Washington Post*, *Christianity Today*, [Beliefnet.com](http://Beliefnet.com), and *The (Colorado Springs) Gazette*. He writes about culture for *Plugged In* and wrote the Batman book, *God on the Streets of Gotham* (Tyndale). He lives in Colorado Springs with wife Wendy and his two children. Follow him on Twitter at @AsayPaul.