



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR AUGUST 9, 2013

MORE OF THE SAME

To the married, I give this command (not I, but the Lord)... To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord)... (1 Corinthians 7:10,12, NIV)

ONE OF THE GREAT JOYS OF BEING INVOLVED IN A LINKS FELLOWSHIP or similar Bible study is the chance to talk with friends about matters of the faith. We share the golf context in which we can talk about the game, whether we are playing with believers or unbelievers; but when we sit together with a Bible in front of us, the conversation changes altogether. It is then that we are brothers and sisters under the one true Lord.

For me, this is also true when I sit with the staff at Links Players and dig into the Word of God. As Links Players president Jeffrey Cranford and I did this just a few mornings ago, the talk began in the golf context, exploring the question of tournament preparation.

We agreed that we are at a disadvantage in terms of tournament play when we enter the competitive fray only occasionally. The short putts are aimed at a “smaller” hole, we’re only 80 percent confident when the drive calls for a complete commitment, and every error is compounded by the tendency to panic. Why does this happen? Chiefly because it will be too many weeks—even months—before we get a chance to prove ourselves like this again.

Does that word *prove* scare you? Does it sound like we’re placing our worth in the hands of our flitting golf swing? Certainly it could mean that. But consider that one of the purposes of Scripture itself is to *reprove* us—that is, to set us straight against the plumbline of God’s design (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). This is where we turned our conversation as travelers on the same road with Jesus.

The common principle between the golf discussion and our life in Christ is here: The more regularly we play tournaments, the easier we will find competition; we will stop worrying about the proving and relax into the playing. Likewise, the more regularly we seek God’s leading through his living and active Word, the easier we will find it to recognize and follow his lead; we will need less reproof and be able to walk more freely and openly with him. Like the apostle Paul, we will come to recognize the difference between our own best thinking and God’s direct instruction. What a wonder to know God so well!

Opening questions: In the grind

How does your golf game feel different when you’re playing an important competition? Do you recognize an effect on your game? How do you try to counteract this?

The Word’s purpose

Read Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 119:11, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. From these passages, what purposes do you find for the study and knowledge of Scripture? How do these passages encourage you to read the Bible more effectively?

Read Hebrews 4:12-13. What kind of “proving” is spoken of in this passage? What role does Scripture play in this process?

Does this passage provoke a tentativeness in you before God? Why?

How does *Hebrews 4:14-16* offer a boost of confidence in the face of the Word’s reproving power? Where does that confidence come from?
