

**EIGHT GREAT TRAITS 3: KNOWLEDGE**

*Knowledge puffs up, while love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1, NIV)*

THE REFORMED THEOLOGIAN R.C. SPROUL was once asked about a round of golf he played with the legendary heavy metal rocker Alice Cooper. In the telling the story, Sproul referred to his playing companion as “Vince,” which is Cooper’s given name, but which may also have been a way to set up Sproul’s punchline. As Sproul told the story, Cooper left his first putt of the day short, flinging the door wide open for Sproul to say, “Nice putt, Alice.”

Perhaps little digs like this, along with Yogi Berra’s immortal line, “Ninety percent of putts that are short don’t go in,” cause many golfers, even some on the professional tours, to make sure they *never* leave a putt short. And that, we might say, is a key to putting success—until you keep facing three-footers back to the hole.

We could add, then, that aggressive putting speed, like the accumulation of knowledge, is a double-edged sword. For the most part, it is a helpful practice. But you need to know how to manage it.

The opening line of the Links Player’s personal mission comes from the Great Commandment. We are to love God. And how are we to do this? With all our heart, soul, and mind. We can never be afraid to use our brains.

In Deuteronomy, Moses told the people, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 29:29). While the Lord does not give us all knowledge, he does give us the knowledge we need, and it is something we can hold on to and live by all our lives, as well as pass it on to our children.

More than this, we have a promise of one day knowing far more. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). The *then* to which he referred is in eternity with Christ.

So what is the other side of the sword? Well, Paul also warned his readers that “knowledge puffs up.” Just as we learned with goodness in last week’s study of the eight great traits in 2 Peter 1, we must be humble with what we are given. To know more is a worthy endeavor, but to keep in mind how much we have yet to learn is a good way to avoid getting cut by our own sword.

**Opening questions** How aggressive are you with a putter in your hands? Can you think of other “two-edged swords” in the game, where a strength might also present difficulties?

**READING** Proverbs 1:7; Philippians 3:7-11; 1 Corinthians 8:1-3

**God and knowledge (Proverbs 1)**

According to this passage, what is the foundation of knowledge? What do you think is meant by “the fear of the LORD”? In contrast, if you despise wisdom and discipline, what are you?

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**Knowing Christ (Philippians 3)**

What does Paul say he wants to know? How are *knowing about Christ* and *knowing Christ* similar? How are they different? What takes you aback about the level of knowledge Paul speaks of here, when you consider knowing Christ in this way yourself?

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**Humility and knowledge (1 Corinthians 8)**

How do we stay humble in the midst of our growing knowledge (v. 2)? Why is love of God a key to life?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study with Jeff Hopper and Tracy Hanson is available at [https://youtu.be/xGB\\_3GJcX-8](https://youtu.be/xGB_3GJcX-8)