



Links Players

LINKS PLAYERS MAG 3: TED'S FORGIVENESS

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV)

THINK ABOUT THE COURSE WHERE YOU REGULARLY PLAY. Is there a hole there with which you have a love-hate relationship? It seems you either play it with brilliance or botch it so badly that you apologetically pick up for the sake of your companions. It's a nemesis, but it will give you birdies just as kindly.

Or perhaps it is a club. You talk of your trusty 8-iron, but how about your 7? Does it produce a clean, high, soft-landing shot one time then bare its shanking teeth the next time you draw it from the bag?

Dichotomies can be hard to live with. We're a people more comfortable with the middle, the gray, the non-controversial. So when we are told we must choose from extremes, we squirm. Can't you offer me the soft sell? I'll buy it.

Jesus delivered many stark contrasts in his Sermon on the Mount. It's either this way or that. Such were his words about forgiveness. If you forgive, you will be forgiven. If you do not, you won't. Simple as that.

I'm not comfortable with this arrangement. Not when people are so complicated. Not when they say and do things that make it hard to forgive. *How about if I hold out for a bit, Lord—you know, make them feel the consequences of their actions for a few days? There's time to heal these wounds. I can forgive them later.*

But in the meantime, I am trapped by my own devices. Forgiveness does not come for me. My grudges eat into my joy. I have to avoid the other person and avoid my conscience. Unforgiveness estranges us—from others and from God.

The story of caddie Ted Scott and Bubba Watson is a beautiful one. Bubba is a quirky sort, given at times to rashness and rudeness. But in him, Ted sees a mirror of his own character. He is one who makes mistakes, who mistreats others, who sins. We've all done it, he reminds us. And because this is so, we must all be ready to forgive.

Surely this lesson is not new. It's as old as the earth and the forgiving Lord who made it. He stands eager and ready to forgive. Do we?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study can be found at <https://youtu.be/DR9DwWzcXY>.
The Links Players magazine article with Ted Scott is available here: <http://www.linksplayers.com/articles/ted-scott>.

Opening questions Talk about that love-hate hole or love-hate club for you. It's good to hear a funny story! • Would you admit to harboring unforgiveness toward someone in your life right now?

READING Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-5; Colossians 3:12-14

Generous forgiveness (Matthew 18)

What contrast is painted in this parable? How does Jesus' conclusion draw us to account for our own forgiving actions?

Repentance and forgiveness (Luke 17)

How common should our forgiveness be? How does repentance come into play here? Are there times we should be forgiving even when the other person does not repent? How do you assess your own willingness to confess and repent to receive forgiveness?

A centerpiece of right relationship (Colossians 3)

Verse 13 of this passage speaks right to the forgiveness with which we are to bless others. What is the impetus Paul supplied for this forgiveness? What are the greatest challenges you fight in forgiving others?
