

STREET WISE 1: DEFEATING BAD IDEAS

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV)

THE LUCKIEST PEOPLE IN GOLF may be those who live in a small town with only one course for miles around. You might think that’s not so good in terms of supply-and-demand pricing or competition-driven excellence, and you’d have a point. But consider: If there is only one small course in your little town, there is probably only one golf professional to help you with your game.

In many ways variety and choice are a good thing. But when you’re trying to learn a game as confounding as golf, too much input can lead to all sorts of confusion. Should I swing inside-out or outside-in? Choke down or choke up? One plane or two? Should I use a conventional grip when I’m putting, or go cross-handed, or employ the claw? It doesn’t take long to turn into a second-guesser, unsure how to play even the simplest shots.

But if you have one teacher, you are free to trust fully in what you are being taught. Conviction and confidence, as we have seen in players like Jim Furyk and Bubba Watson, can bring as much success as a thorough hunt to find one’s golfing self and develop the perfect swing.

When we consider the ways of the world, we might say this: They are many. The ideas and philosophies you hear as you go through your day emerge from a hundred places: co-workers, grandmas, country music singers, Twitter-savvy millennials, newsmakers and news reporters, billboards, greeting cards, cranky neighbors and kind ones, professors, bank tellers, radio DJs. Keep adding to the list and you won’t exhaust it today.

Because of this onslaught, two questions result, *How do I sort through all this input? How do I know what to believe?*

The apostle Paul established for the Corinthians that there are plenty of bad ideas in the world—ideas that misrepresent and challenge God and the gospel. We can’t do nothing about these. We must confront (and demolish!) false teaching, even when it’s voiced by the tamest of sources. We must govern our thoughts singularly, giving ground only to Jesus, freely trusting that what he has told us is right, and going forward with conviction and confidence that this is so.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. In introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/hfW1lpZvbBw>

Opening questions How have you learned to play golf—through limited sources of input or many? Has any one teacher helped you most? • What is a worldwide philosophy that doesn’t sit well with you?

READING Isaiah 55:8-9; Genesis 3:1; Matthew 4:1-11

Thoughts beyond ours (Isaiah 55)
 How does this passage establish a basis for recognizing our limitations in thinking rightly? If what we need are God’s thoughts to guide us, where do we go for these? How often do you think we should access God’s input?

Questioning God (Genesis 3)
 How many of the world’s philosophies effectively ask Satan’s same question: “Did God really say?” How can we become increasingly mindful of this subtle challenge to God and the integrity of his words?

Knowing Scripture (Matthew 4)
 What do the exchanges between Satan and Jesus show us about our need to know and understand Scripture well? How might you bank more knowledge of Scripture to help you address and defeat bad ideas around you?
