

AN ORDER TO IT ALL 3: THE BEST OPTION

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. (1 Corinthians 10:23, NASB)

I AM VERY HESITANT TO CALL SOMEONE A CHEATER. To me, cheating comes with ill intent. Everything else is a mistake. I would say this is especially true in golf, where many players think they know the rules or have been taught a rule by someone else who didn't really know what's what.

Earlier this summer, a sticky situation arose on the PGA Tour, when one player's ball wound up in a hazard. The first step when this happens is that the point of entry into the hazard must be determined, which can be hard to do when a ball is curving and the entry may take place two or three hundred yards away. In this case, the player and his fellow competitor disagreed on that point of entry, and in the end the competitor called the player a cheater on social media. Ouch.

In golf, when it comes to the rules, we want to get it right. And we want our competitors to get it right. In fact, we are responsible the field that they do. If we see a player doing something wrong and say nothing, we bear a measure of guilt ourselves.

But what about in God's kingdom? If we see a brother or sister in Christ do something wrong, are we also responsible to speak up? Or should we stay focused on our own motives and decisions, making sure we get these right?

The apostle Paul took up this matter in his first letter to the Corinthians. He told them all things are lawful. We first need to understand that Paul was adding to a specific context when he made this statement. He was not saying that the neglect of one's neighbor or sexual immorality or malicious violence are lawful. But he was saying that in some arenas—and specifically here in regards to eating and drinking—we have choices. There is more than one way to get it right.

That said, Paul went on to teach that some options beat others, because not all things are profitable and not all things edify. This is true whether we are considering ourselves or others. If we are in certain sin, we should expect challenge, from the Holy Spirit and from our friends in the faith. And if we are engaging in non-beneficial behavior, we should receive intervention, assessing the spirit in which it is brought, changing what we are doing if it is not the best option, and doing so all the more if what we are doing hurts others.

Opening questions Have you ever found yourself in an uncomfortable situation with another golfer who was breaking the rules? How did this get resolved?

READING Galatians 6:1-5; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

Sin and restoration (Galatians 6)

When we know a brother or sister is in the wrong, how should we approach them? What does this passage say to us about assessing and addressing our own actions?

Motivations for our decision (1 Corinthians 10)

In verse 24, what should be our focus in guiding our actions?

In verse 31, we are given another motivation to guide us. What is it?

What was Paul's final desire in the way he treated others (verse 33)?

Considering this passage as a whole, how can you do a better job at making the best choice among multiple good options?
