



Links Players

PRAYING FOR BETTER 3: WORTHY LIVING

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way. (Colossians 1:10a, NIV)

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A CHURCHGOER to be familiar with the expression, "Sunday best." Though most churches welcome casual dress these days, you'll still find those who pay special attention to their choices in church clothes out of traditional respect for God.

We golfers should understand this, for we often talk of respect for the game. You may not think of this in terms of attire, but Arnold Palmer did. He once said, "I'm an advocate of the unwrinkled straight collar shirt, creased pants, shined shoes. All of those things are, I think, key to dressing with an emphasis on neatness. Golf is about precision." We might go so far as to say that a golfer who dresses with such attention to detail is worthy of the game.

This line of thinking gets us to considering our passage today and wondering about lives worthy of the Lord. We know that our sin makes us unworthy of salvation, and that only the grace of God rendered in the death and resurrection of Jesus gives us access to eternity with him. But we cannot escape this prayer of Paul and his fellow ministers: "May you live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way."

So let's first make sure that our ducks, as they say, are lined up. We cannot, apart from Christ, please God. We can neither placate his wrath nor wash away our sins. Only he can do this, which he has done through his Son. If we believe this, we are in Christ. And once we are in Christ, we can please God by the way we live our lives.

Practically speaking, our lives consist of three things: our thoughts, our words, and our actions. When we align these three with the ways of the Lord, we can be said to be living a life worthy of him. But be careful. We're not talking about the traditions of men. "Sunday best," for example, is a fine idea but not a directive of God found in Scripture. Instead, we need to review how Christ lived and how he ignites us to live. The way we do this is to keep reading the Scriptures. Here we see what God would have us do to please him. When we move the words off the page into our hearts, we begin to think, talk, and act as Jesus did.

Worthy living is "Christian living"—that is, living in the pattern of Christ.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/Jsp4X7fgkY>.

Opening questions Besides attire, what else do you think makes a golfer "worthy of the game"? • What golf traditions have you seen change through the years? Is this good or bad in your mind? • Did you grow up in church? Did you see differences between tradition and Scripture?

READING Mark 7:5-23; Hebrews 13:20-21

The fault of the Pharisees (Mark 7:5-13)

Around what did Jesus center his indictment of the Pharisees? To what measure are you guilty of honoring God with your lips but not with your heart? How well do you hide this?

Clean and unclean (Mark 7:14-23)

What are some ways a person can look good on the outside but be messed up on the inside? How can we reverse this broken order in us?

Working with God (Hebrews 13)

Compare this passage to Colossians 1:10. How do both God and we play a role in living a life pleasing to him? What is a specific change you can make in your life today to live in a way worthy of the Lord?
