

**PRAYING FOR BETTER 8: OUR MOTIVATION**

*...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. (Colossians 1:12, NIV)*

IN AN ARTICLE WE INTRODUCED EARLIER THIS WEEK, “Did Someone Say Mulligan?!” Tim Philpot, an excellent and avid golfer who has long been part of the Links Players ministry, offered a new version of the game. You’ll want to enjoy the article, so we won’t give away too much here, but know that part of Tim’s impetus comes from having witnessed a host of overly complacent golfers through the years. These are the players who have presumed upon the grace of the handicap system, knowing they can compete against even the best players without doing anything to improve their game. They show no motivation to get better.

It’s hard to know how common this condition is, because we see plenty of golfers who do look to improve if they’re young or work to maintain their game if their age now places physical restrictions on what they can do.

In the universal congregation of those who say they believe and even follow Jesus, we find something of the same dichotomy. There are those who apply themselves to “getting better,” while others excuse themselves and never display much growth.

Who are you? That’s a question you’ll have to answer before the Lord and among those you’ve given an open door to speak into your life. But this we know for sure: God wants his people to be growing, improving, getting better. And he has given us every motivation to do so.

When Paul wrapped up his prayer for the Colossians that they would get better in the way they lived out their faith, he reminded them that the Father had qualified them to share in the inheritance of the saints. They did not qualify themselves. In their sin, this was not possible. But he did the qualifying for them. By his Son, he justified them, making them righteous in his holy eyes, on par with everyone else who had gone before them on this path we call life in Christ.

What God has done already in drawing us to him and providing for our salvation is what should drive us to do the things he would have us to. For the Colossians, Paul hoped this meant acquiring wisdom, bearing fruit by good works, increasing in the knowledge of God, and gaining power, endurance, patience and joy—all for which they were thankful. What a great guide for us, too, as we take up the motivation we’ve been given and pursue the things of God.

**Opening questions** Do you consider yourself a motivated golfer? What feeds or saps your motivation? Is this different than in other parts of your life—are you a driven person or one who needs some prodding?

**READING** 1 John 4:9-11; Luke 19:11-27; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

**Responding to God (1 John 4)**  
How does this passage affirm that we respond to what God has done for us? What motivation do you personally find in these verses?

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**The rewards of good work (Luke 19)**  
What rewards were given to the faithful workers? What judgment came to the lazy servant? In what way does this parable inspire you to diligently do the work God has given you?

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**Work pleasing to God (2 Corinthians 5)**  
What is the goal Paul wrote of here? Do you see the eternal purpose in this goal? How does today’s study freshly motivate you to serve the Lord?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/UQk4IiId-aU>.