



Links Players

I WHO AM I?: CREATED BY GOD

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14, NIV)

YOU WOULD SURPRISE ME IF YOU TOLD ME that you and your friends in your regular foursome entertain each other by sprinkling Latin phrases throughout your conversations. Oh, I'm not saying you're not all smart like that, but for all their sport-loving ways, the Romans didn't play golf. So while *ad astra per aspera* ("through adversity to the stars") might be an apt fit, your buddy in his polo shirt probably isn't pulling this one out when you've just shanked three shots. More likely, he's laughing at you.

No, Latin doesn't identify one as a golfer. But those polo shirts sure do. Or your colorful blouses and shoes, if your foursome is a group of ladies. However you show it, it's fun to be one of the gang and to set yourself apart as one who plays.

As we move into a new Friday series, we want to introduce the idea that when we are in Christ and Christ is in us, this deep spiritual connection will be reflected in our identities. Who we are and how this is shown to others matters greatly for two reasons. First, a changed identity is validation that Christ indeed lives in us. Jesus went so far as to say we are "born again" when we are changed by the Holy Spirit. Second, a changed identity validates to others that Christ is able to make us new and that this new life is something they are right to desire, too.

While change is the hallmark of one living newly in Christ, we can say that we all have the wiring of God built into us. As it is, you may even have heard Latin used to present this truth. We have been made, as the Scripture supports, *imago Dei*—in the image of God. This stunning fact is given to us in Genesis 2, just a few paragraphs before the purity of that image is erased by sin. These realities must be upheld together lest we fall into a sentimentalized take on "we are children of God."

That we are God's children is true in a creative sense. But whether it is true in the sense that we take hold of having been "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to" (Ephesians 2:10), makes all the difference. Not all biological children live in the same relationship with even the most loving parents; some estrange themselves. So while can avow with David that we have been "fearfully and wonderfully made," we must take care that we are humbly and supernaturally remade to live a life of fullness in Christ. Only then will we praise him for taking such care with our souls.

Opening questions What are some of the common phrases your golf friends use on the course? • Is the tone in your regular group more serious or more light-hearted? Why do you think this is?

READING Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 3:16-19; Ephesians 2:4-10

In the beginning (Genesis 1)

What was God's blueprint for creating humanity? How did this make men and women different than other creatures? What role did God have in mind for humanity?

Marred by sin (Genesis 3)

In these verses we read of the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience. How did these consequences reshape their identity? How does our sin mar God's intention for our own lives?

Lives rewritten (Ephesians 2)

What fundamental change do we see made in verse 5? How does this change come to us? In what way does the change enable the good works God has for us to do?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/DOUCFqfqtI>.