



Links Players

3 WHO AM I?: CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, NIV)

ANYONE CAN TALK ABOUT BEING CREATED BY GOD. You don't have to believe in him much beyond that. Many also speak openly of being children of God, even if they are hesitant to declare who God is. But when you speak of being crucified with Christ, you move into different territory. You just don't do this unless you're willing to be entangled with Jesus.

Most every arena of thought or discussion includes a similar dynamic. You'll find the broad-based, acceptable center of thinking, and then you'll find the fringes. No one will look funny at you for saying you've moved to an overlapping grip on the club, or that you're working to reroute your swing on a more inside path. But slide over to embracing Natural Golf or The Golfing Machine and you'd better speak in whispers. Now you've gone over the top—and, in a golfing sense, we'll be curious to see if your game is about to go in the can.

So it's not often that you'll hear evangelists speak of being crucified with Christ. Preachers, yes; evangelists, no. This is insider language. To be sure, it's not "secret knowledge," like a mystic or cult leader might sell you. It's right there in the New Testament, in Jesus' words and Paul's. Anyone can read them. But not everyone is willing to dig into what they mean. The verbiage alone scares them.

Let's approach this from the plainest direction, then. No mysteries, just the words themselves: "Crucified with Christ." To be crucified is to be put to death. There's no halfway in crucifixion. The Romans adopted a method of execution that worked every time. Jesus suffered this death—not as a criminal, but as a dissident to the ways of justification by religion. He became the "kernel that falls to the ground and dies" so life might emerge from it.

Everyone has a past. We have lived without Jesus, either ignorant of our sin, or dismissing it, or whitewashing it. We have confessed, perhaps, but not repented (turned to God). But crucifixion is the ultimate repentance. It says, "My old life is dead. I cannot return to it." This is what it means to be crucified with Christ. Paul wrote to the Galatians that he had been crucified with Christ, because he had turned violently from the idea and efforts that tried to justify himself before God. In his new life, the old was gone. His identity had been changed.

Opening questions When would you say a person has "gone too far" in their thinking about golf? • Can people go too far in their faith?

READING Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Matthew 16:24-26

A closer look (Galatians 2)

Break down today's verse. What happens when we are crucified with Christ? Why is he worthy of our trust and affections? To what extent can you say that you no longer live but Christ lives in you?

The power of God (1 Corinthians 1)

What sets the crucifixion apart from other religious or philosophical pursuits? Why is it important that we speak openly of the crucifixion, though it may be uncomfortable for some?

A cross-carrying life (Matthew 16)

The idea of crucifixion can apply to the daily life of one who follows Jesus, who said prospective disciples should "consider the cost." What costs of following Jesus are bound up in the idea of taking up your cross daily? What value is there in regularly meditating on the question of verse 26?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/MMj4RISAJJM>.