



# Links Players

## HOLDING COURT: CHRIST AS JUDGE

*“By myself, I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me.” (John 5:30, NIV)*

FOR 11 SEASONS, I COACHED HIGH SCHOOL GOLF. As gently as possible, let me say that it wasn’t all pretty. Some tremendous golfers have shone on tour after growing up here in Central California, but many more have left the game behind while trying their hand at it as teenagers.

In addition to the iffy play, we coaches would often see some “creative” applications of the rules. I was always slow to call a young golfer a cheater, but I would be sure to tell them that if they continued to do the things they were doing—shaving strokes off their scorecard or tossing a ball back in play without penalty—others would call them that for sure. Meanwhile, I had to give them the proper ruling for the situation. I had to play judge.

Because of the place of sports in our society, nearly all of us understand the role of officials as arbiters of the game. They apply the rules from the book to the play on the field, court, or course. And, more interestingly, we can have an intense interest in justice when it comes to the way these rules may be applied to our own team!

All this may be part of an innate sense of justice God has built into us. We get upset when someone cuts in front of us on the road, even though the resulting delay is only seconds. Why? Because even here we know what is right and wrong.

Our existential relationship with right and wrong may be altogether different. We want the universe to be run fairly, but if this means getting what we fully deserve standing before a holy God, what we really want is mercy. More than that, what we need is mercy.

So what about the judge who presides over all? Will he grant such mercy?

If you have been following along in recent weeks, you should be able to unpack this answer. Jesus Christ became a victim unto death, shedding his blood for our sake. This was the ultimate act of mercy. Now he stands in heaven as our advocate, making intercession for us, even us we sin. Again, what mercy! And as we read and study today, he himself has been established as judge by God the Father. This same merciful one will apply his saving provision for us, so that while our sin would convict us, his blood washes us clean. In him, we are not condemned. What joy!

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youm.be/1NUdDTS-Z3o>

**Opening questions** How closely do you and your regular group follow the official Rules of Golf in daily play? How well do you know the rules come tournament time?

**READING** John 5:19-30; Hebrews 10:26-39

### The Father, the Son, and judgment (John 5)

What do we discover about the relationship between the Father and the Son in this passage?

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According to Jesus, what does it take to stand “uncondemned” before God?

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How do you find Jesus trustworthy as your judge? How does this lead you to gratefulness for his mercy?

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### The holiness of the judge (Hebrews 10)

In what ways does this passage catch your attention? How does it emphasize the call to righteous perseverance before God as judge, and how does this inform your own life today?

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