



# Links Players

## KINGDOM INVESTMENTS 3: RIGHTEOUSNESS

*“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33, NIV)*

**R**ULES ARE RULES. We all know that. But it doesn’t make the pill any easier to swallow when you have to stop looking for that lost ball and go back to the tee, or when you realize you’ve signed for a score better than what you shot and you will have to accept disqualification.

As golfers, there is a reason we allow for the firmness of the game’s stiffest rules. We love golf. If we are casual players, we may make some adjustments to the rules, often for the sake of speed. We give shorter putts and pick up once a hole has embarrassed us enough. But we know the rules and recognize that the game in its competitive form must have strong parameters. It’s what makes golf golf, in the same way rules define any game or sport.

Now, can we say all this helps us understand the value of pursuing the righteousness of God, even when it demands much of us? Surely, if we are regularly reminded of God’s love for us and we are earnest in our love for him, this makes all the difference. While I may obey someone simply because of her authority, as I did my dreadful third grade teacher, there is no desirable impetus behind my adherence. I go through the motions to keep from being punished.

But this is not our way with God. The more we recognize his holy nature as the one who made the sacrificial way for our salvation, the more we come to submit to him. “Show me the way, Lord. I so want to follow you.”

Motivation that comes because we recognize his great love for us is critical, because the righteousness of God would otherwise overwhelm us. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had said to his disciples, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20). These religious leaders of whom Jesus spoke were the ultimate rule keepers. Jesus was asking for more than that?

He was asking for more, because he knew that the motivation of the leaders was all wrong. They didn’t know God. They didn’t love God. They were building identities on having their act together, on being better than “the riffraff.” But the riffraff came to love Jesus, so when he said, “Seek God first,” they already possessed the only reason to do so. It’s the reason that must compel us as well.

**Opening questions** Have you ever had to submit to the Rules of Golf in a truly painful way? If so, why did you come back to the game anyway?

**READING** Psalm 36:10; Matthew 6:33; Romans 3:21-26

### God’s love and righteousness (Psalm 36)

How does God demonstrate his love to us? And his righteousness? Reflecting on God’s love and righteousness toward us, how does this motivate us to return love and righteousness to him?

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### Seeking righteousness (Matthew 6)

What do you think it means to seek God’s righteousness? How would you set about this? Would you agree that God’s righteousness is more than doing right and avoiding wrong?

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### The righteousness of faith (Romans 3)

What does Christ’s righteousness look like? With what kind of righteousness do we respond to him? When we live a life of faith in Jesus, how does this shape our decisions and actions?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/LeA-Z9RpYEs>