



Links Players

KINGDOM INVESTMENTS 6: FAITHFULNESS

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness.” (Matthew 23:23, NIV)

GOLFERS, LIKE MOST EVERYONE ELSE, EARN THEIR REPUTATIONS. It happens on tour and it happens around the club. The Gambler, the Hothead, the Statistician, the Big Hitter, the Rules Freak—these aren’t just stereotypes but real people. They earn their reputations over time, by behaving the same way again and again.

Not every reputation is bad, of course. Many are neutral. But when you become known as someone who possesses the tendencies of a jerk, it can be hard to shake. Such a reputation among tour professionals is that of Caddie Killer. This is a golfer who seems never to be satisfied with the work his or her caddie is doing, and a firing could be just around the corner.

In the big, general sense, we might call Caddie Killers unfaithful. That’s a powerful word, connected with everything from habitual ball-dropping to adulterous affairs. When you can’t stick with a commitment or a friend, you risk the tag being given to you. What a shame!

When Jesus confronted the Pharisees because of their attention to small details over and above the things that really matter, he selected faithfulness as one of the most important traits we can possess as people of God. This should not surprise us if we know our Old Testament, where God repeatedly compared the wayward actions of his people to the lives those who turned from him in adulterous idolatry. God expressed his relationship with his people, both before and after Jesus’ life on earth, in terms of covenant, of marriage. A broken marriage, where one or both partners are unfaithful, breaks the heart of God.

So we land on a penetrating question when it comes to our own relationship with our Savior: Are we faithful to him? Because of sin, a faithful follower of Jesus will not be perfect. But a faithful follower will keep coming ’round—in contrition and repentance and a desire for restoration. Faithful followers will confess their sins, certain that God is “faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). You see, God’s faithfulness should prompt ours.

Any investment in the kingdom of God is for the long-term. Its gains come through faithful commitment, through the ups and downs of “the market of the heart.”

Opening questions Do you know if you have a particular reputation as a golfer? Does it sit well with you, or is it something you would like to change?

READING 2 Kings 20:1-6; Psalm 51:1-6; Matthew 24:42-51

Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Kings 20)

On what three-part basis did Hezekiah appeal to the Lord? How do you see these traits connected in a true person of God?

David’s return to faithfulness (Psalm 51)

How hard do you think it was for David to come ’round to God in this way after his grave sins? At what point did David say God desired faithfulness in him? What do you think this says about God’s emphasis on faithfulness?

Faithful servants (Matthew 24)

What stark contrast did Jesus paint here? What do you think faithfulness to Jesus entails on a day-to-day basis?

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