



Links Players

WHY AM I HERE? 1: BEARING GOD'S IMAGE

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." (Genesis 1:26a, ESV)

WHEN I FIRST STARTED PLAYING GOLF—no, when I first started caring about golf—Arnold Palmer was The King. In our small Illinois town, we had a nine-hole course with front-nine tees and back-nine tees (par 71), a basement locker room with concrete floors and metal lockers, and nine brand new grass greens.

Somehow Arnie, through the magic of television and newspapers, made his way to that small town and into my heart. I soon forgot Walter Hagen, whose signature was on the clubs I started with but whom I had never seen on TV, just as I soon forgot the sand greens I had learned on.

It never entered my mind that I should try to look like Palmer, but in almost every other way I wanted to be like him. When I finally made enough money to buy my own clubs, they had to be Arnold Palmer's. I bought a shirt with an umbrella logo, and I started hitching up my pants. I still do that today.

Thinking back on it now, I didn't try to emulate Arnie's swing or swagger. I wanted his charisma, emotion, fearlessness, and ability to win. Many young people today wear orange to look like Rickie Fowler, just as Bryson DeChambeau wears a style of cap to honor Ben Hogan. That's fine, but for me it was the inside that mattered.

That same thing should be true for us, I think, when we contemplate being an image-bearer of God. We were all made in his image, but that is not an outward thing. God, after all, is spirit, not flesh. The most we could ever "look like" God is to look like him in spirit.

But the idea of being an image-bearer (made in the image of God) perhaps goes even deeper. Image may go beyond appearance or likeness and move into areas of roles and responsibilities. Dorothy L. Sayers, in *The Mind of the Maker*, noted that only humans, out of all creation, create. Certainly part of our image-bearing is found in being creators. Likewise we are to be stewards and overseers.

When Jesus said that we were to be salt and light, he added to the image-bearing of Christians. He himself was the light (John 1:9) and the Savior. We cannot save, but we can preserve. Let us bear that image of God, not from the outside, but from the inside out.

Opening questions Is there a golfer you've wanted to swing like or play like? Did that help your game? Would you teach someone golf by having them look like you?

READING Genesis 1:26-28; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:12-14

'In our image, after our likeness' (Genesis 1)
In what ways does humankind not resemble God? When that list is full, in what ways can we say that we are image-bearers of God? In the "like God" category, how do we differ from other created beings?

Salt and light (Matthew 5)
How is Jesus the light of the world? Since he also said we are the light of the world, are we like him with less wattage? As salt, how do we preserve? As salt and light, can we slow the growth of sin and darkness?

'If I have washed your feet...' (John 13)
When Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, he said that if he as their Lord and Teacher had done that, they should do it too. Is being a servant part of being an image-bearer of Christ? How does that look in our lives?

Written by Lewis Greer ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/E4KxW6s63Ys>