



Links Players

FAST FORWARD 2: LIGHT AND DARKNESS

...and he separated the light from the darkness. (Genesis 1:4, NIV)

LONG AGO—WHEN WOODS WERE WOODS and no more voluminous than what we now call a hybrid—I played small college golf. I was reasonably good for my conference, which didn't allow scholarships, but that was about it. I was famous for shooting 79. Come to think of it, I'm about the same today!

When the conference championship came our way when I was a freshman, we headed to a course in Pasadena, California, called Annandale Country Club. I mention it because some of you will know it. It should perhaps be called Over-Hill-and-Dale Country Club, especially the back nine.

At Annandale, trouble lurks. In the morning round, I found it. Lots of it. I would have rejoiced in a 79. I carded an 87. But since this was a 36-hole event and my coach wasn't driving back to Redlands to find a replacement, I teed it up again, and by the time I was done, I would have spit on that ol' 79. Instead, I posted a 73. Yep, 87-73. Night and day. I jumped from far, far back to fifth in the tournament.

That expression, "night and day," is one we use to describe a significant difference between any two things. There's no guessing where the idiom came from. It's as plain as, well, day. It came from God's creation.

In what is called the first day in the creation account of Genesis 1, God spoke light into existence, saw that it was good, and separated the light from the darkness, calling the former "day" and the latter "night." But this was, we know, only the beginning.

In other parts of Scripture, we find reference to darkness and light, night and day. In the natural sense, we would expect this. But there is more. In John's Gospel, Jesus was established as giving life that was "the light of all mankind." The Lord himself declared that he was "the light of the world." Again, therefore, the light had come into the realm of darkness.

Those who prefer the darkness, John's Gospel explains, are those whose deeds are evil. They can hide out in the darkness. Until Jesus comes. When he sheds light on our sins, we are given only two choices: retreat into further darkness or step into that life-giving light. Exposed but humbled, we can repent. Then salvation becomes ours through Christ.

Opening questions What are the two most disparate rounds you can remember shooting back to back? Why do you think they were so different?

READING Genesis 1:3-5; John 1:4-5 & John 8:12; John 3:19-21

The created difference (Genesis 1)

Do you read this passage as mythical, literal, or something in-between? Can you see God at work no matter how you read it? What captures your attention about the work of God on this first day?

The embodied difference (John 1 & John 8)

Who was Christ in relation to light? How does this metaphor help you recognize more of the nature of Christ? Why do you think the darkness does not understand the light?

The embraced difference (John 3)

What opportunity for personal change is given to us as we read it here? Is this an opportunity you have seized in your own life? If not, what are your hesitations?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/6bLn9INPtU>.