



# Links Players

## ALL WE HAVE GAINED 8: LIFE

*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9, NIV)*

WE'VE COME TO THE END OF OUR SERIES on many of the things we have gained through Christ. And yet perhaps this is where we should have begun. Like playing a nine-hole course twice through, there is a sense of familiarity when we return to the first tee.

In Christ, we have life. Through Christ, we live. And when we understand what this life is like, we recognize in it that we are at peace with God (reconciled), know his ways (understanding), and grow in our faith (belief). We possess a confidence beyond our brashness, a comfort beyond our sentiment, and a strength that has nothing to do with muscle or moxie. Finally, despite all our sin and suffering, we can anticipate crossing the finish line of life victorious in Christ.

Maybe you have never been able to outline so clearly what is different when you live through Christ. You know that Jesus declared he had come to give us life and life "to the full" (John 10:10, which some translators render with the word *abundantly*). But before now, you've thought of this in general terms: *deeper, richer, more spiritual*. Life, though, is not lived in general terms. It comes at us in waves of appointments and tasks and emergencies. The demands of details never thrilled anyone, but at least we can see them and do them.

Life in Christ is not some "higher thing." Instead it is a matter of living through the specifics of the day, as we wash our face, wash the clothes, wash the car (maybe even as we wash the dirt off our much-used 7-iron!). It's as easy to crush our thumb beneath the wayward blow of a hammer as it is to crash our new Mercedes into an unforeseen obstacle. These things happen in the moment, each one bringing pain and staring us down for a response.

What do we do when life comes at us this way, be it in splinters or slashes? Apart from Christ, we may cuss and cry and despair. In Christ, we may still cuss and cry, as the "old man" is wont to do, but we have no despair, for we know that we are heard. We know that peace can be ours, coming as quickly as what hurts us. We know that our God—the God of all mercy, love, and grace—knows us, and he will enter into this wretched hour, redeeming it for a purpose we could not imagine. His comfort wraps us and we find confident strength to walk again. This is a life we can find nowhere else, in no one else. It is the life we are given in Christ, our Savior.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/j8Dqa7AeuOA>.

**Opening questions** What's the best nine-hole course you've ever played? Were you eager to make the trip around again? How was it similar and how was it different when you played it the second time? (You might also think of playing any nine holes twice in a row.)

### READING 1 John 4:7-16

#### A loving life (1 John 4:7-11)

How are love and life intertwined in this passage? When God's love lives in us, what does this mean for the way we interact with others? How does it cause us to reshape our priorities and emphasize "what really matters"?

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#### Life in the Spirit (1 John 4:12-16)

What several evidences do we have that God lives in us? Can you say that the Holy Spirit is at work in your life? If so, how do you know?

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#### A satisfied reflection

In thinking back through this series, what comes to mind as the things for which you're most thankful when you consider what you've gained in Christ? How is your testimony improved by what you have learned?

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