



# Links Players

## FAST FORWARD 4: WATER AND WEEDS

*And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. (Genesis 1:9, NIV)*

**B**Y NOW, YOU SHOULD HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING that God pretty much did what he wanted when it came to establishing the world. He spoke things into existence and they were.

On what Genesis 1 calls the third day, God established the difference between water and dry land, with the seas set in place, then added the production of vegetation, with seeds set in soil and water giving them life. Your local farmer and golf course superintendent share a common understanding of this day's significance. The world is a beautiful place when it is lush and fruitful.

Of course, golf can't be all green—not if it's going to present reasonable interest. In fact, it's the bunker's sand, the tree's hardwood, and the water's finality that allow us to laugh at the golfer who says he needs a wager to "make things interesting." Any architect with an ounce of creativity has already beat the gambler to *that* punch.

Then there is the rough. Even a course's grand finery—its turf—can become a player's nightmare when it is allowed to grow to a tangly gnarl.

Golf presents the challenge we love because good and bad exist so close to one another. Today's bounce a foot to the right allows the ball to curl toward the hole and set you up for birdie. But hit that same shot tomorrow, when it caroms a foot to the left, and you'll find yourself staring up the face of a deep bunker with the green running away from the flag.

For all the laments of God's psalmists and prophets that he has allowed the wicked to live among us, God has made no change. School kids live with bullies, CEOs of utter integrity face corporate raiders, and the drunk driver and the thief do their harmful damage to the innocent.

What might be God's purpose in staying his hand like this? Does he really not care that troubling people make troublesome days for us all? Sometimes, our only solace is to see all the way back to Genesis, when it was so clear that God did everything by design. It's no different now. He enacts his intentions and he has placed us among them. From there we grow, like fruitful vegetation stretching above the weeds.

**Opening questions** What is your least favorite obstacle on the golf course? Have you figured out a way to cope with its challenges?

**READING** Genesis 1:9-13; Matthew 13:24-30; 2 Peter 3:8-9

### Blooming and growing (Genesis 1)

What are some of your favorite examples of vegetation? How do you allow nature to remind you of God's creative mind and power?

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### Wheat and tares (Matthew 13)

What are some of the surprising elements of this parable? What does it do to your sense of judgment to be reminded that God will sort out the wicked from the righteous? • What is the harvest to which Christ referred here? How can we be prepared for it?

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### God's desire (2 Peter 3)

What insight does this passage give us into God's patient purpose? How glad are you that he waited for you to come to him?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/xND35wZDQ8Y>.