



Links Players

FAST FORWARD 5: SKYLIGHTS

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. (Genesis 1:14-15, ESV)

TIM PHILPOT, WHO SHARES THE WORK ON THESE GENESIS REFLECTIONS WITH ME, introduced me to a Scottish friend, of whom Tim now has many. Alexander MacDonald and I have never met in person, but we track each other across a couple of social media platforms. Alex, a longtime greenkeeper, and thus a man of the open spaces, lit up my feeds as winter was moving toward spring a month ago. He kept posting photographs of the stunning northern lights, or Aurora borealis, as seen from the shores near Royal Dornoch. Forget golf. This man was glorying in the wonder of God, transcendent above the landscape.

On the fourth day of the Genesis account of God's creative work, we are introduced to the lights of the sky, specifically the sun, moon, and stars. The auroras—northern and southern—are not these, but rather a phenomenon caused by the collision of electrically charged particles from that great light, the sun. They produce vast swaths of brilliant colors blazoned across the night sky. Believe me, they catch your attention!

It may be a perfect question to ask ourselves at this stage, then: Am I supposed to be catching people's attention—is this what Christ meant when he said that we are to be lights in the darkness?

We can answer this question in part by drawing from other passages of Scripture. Look at Daniel 12:3: "And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." What we find here is a combination of *should* and *will*. Our metaphorical starlike "shininess" is a promise fulfilled after we have caught people's attention.

But let's be quite careful, for the way we catch others' attention as men and women of Christ looks nothing like the attention-catching of celebrities and wannabes. What people should notice in us is not glamor or intellect or physical prowess. We shouldn't put much stock in what our handicap index means to our golf buddies. Instead, if Christ is working in us, we will stand out with qualities like wisdom and righteousness. They will say of us, "That person has qualities you don't find every day. No wonder they stand out. I need to get to know them more."

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/-lco0AvfMnk>.

Opening questions What are some of your favorite spots on the course you play most often? What catches your attention in these places?

READING Genesis 1:14-19; Matthew 5:14-16, Philippians 2:14-16

Sun and stars (Genesis 1)

Do you ever consider the sun's importance in the sustenance of life on earth? Do you think of this in a scientific sense, a worshiping sense, or a combination of the two?

Righteous light (Matthew 5)

How does this passage align with Daniel 12:3? What might others see in us, causing them to worship God? Do you consider yourself as someone who points others to God in this way? If not, what's holding you back?

Blameless and pure (Philippians 2)

Consider the progression of the three verses here. How does the first lead to the second and the second to the third? In a practical sense, what do you think it means to "hold fast to the word of life"?
