



Links Players

FAST FORWARD 7: MAN ALIVE!

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27, NIV)*

A FEW WEEKS AGO, Beth Ann Nichols wrote an in-depth piece for Golfweek about whether courses on the LPGA Tour are set up too tough for the women to go low in the same exciting way that the men do. It was one of those articles that produce all kinds of conversation around the game—among tour players, recreational players, and fans—though when we say “conversation” in today’s hypertense world, we might as well say “debate.”

Debates have always been around. Whether they look like the formal face-to-face events on academic and political daises, or they are just conducted in the cultural landscape, these disagreements are the conflicts that fill the plots of our thinking and conversation.

Some of these debates are theological in nature, often without people knowing it. Here’s one such big question: Is man basically good?

If you’ve spent any time around our devotions, you’ve spent time around the gospel. And as the gospel is typically presented, it begins with the bad news: You are a sinner. Everyone is. You’re not good on the inside, and your not-goodness is precisely what separates you from God and leaves you in need of redemption.

Now you’re probably aware that a lot of people don’t want to hear this. They have, you see, a few things to debate: “Didn’t God make us? Isn’t his work perfect? Why would he make us broken? No, I think people are good and just need to have that goodness drawn out of them.”

As usual, God’s word, beginning in Genesis 1, unfolds a complete picture. On the sixth day, when God created man and later woman, they were not only “good” but “very good” in his eyes. We see, however, that God had also created them to multiply. You don’t have to know much about science to know that genetics pass from parents to child, or much about Scripture to know that spiritual legacies do, too. So when, in Genesis 3, Adam and Eve fell into sin, they introduced bad into the good for all time. Sin became a fixed part of our identity. Do we still see remnants of good in people? Absolutely! And when we see it, we should rejoice, for we know we are seeing God’s original beautiful design.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: https://youtu.be/8tvvMsLJB_Lk.

Opening questions Would you consider yourself a good golfer or a bad one? Where do you draw the line between these two descriptions? Would others draw it somewhere else?

READING Gen. 1:26-31; Psalm 139:13-16; Ps. 14:1-3 & Luke 23:50-51

God’s big finish (Genesis 1)

Why do you think God saved the creation of humanity for last? What purposes did God give to humanity? How well do you think we have followed God’s intended design?

When you were made (Psalm 139)

What did the psalmist understand and rejoice in? Do you ever consider yourself with this kind of God-centered reflection? Does this passage produce a new or renewed sense of meaning for your life?

The good and the bad (Psalm 14 & Luke 23)

When you read these two passages together, how do you hold them in balance? Who is someone you know that you would call “good and upright”? Do you still see sin in this person? What is the answer for our sin?
