



Links Players

KINGDOM HABITS 2: SMARTER TARGETS

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise... (Ephesians 5:15, NIV)

FOR MANY GOLFERS, the problem with their game isn't their grip or their stance or their swing. It's that there's a flag on the green and they aim at it. Every time.

This is where it may help to watch more golf on TV, because commentators are quick to point out the “sucker pins,” the hole locations that lure players into ignoring the risk and zeroing in on the reward. “You can't miss it long here,” the analysts will say, or “Left is dead.”

Whereas tournament professionals are good enough to take that risk at times, very few of the rest of us are. We'd be much smarter—and see better results—teacher Jon Sherman recommends, if we would aim the same place every time: the middle of the green. At first you might think, *How boring!* But remember your game, my friend. How often do you hit it where you're aiming? With that answer in mind, you'd do well to give yourself maximum margin for error.

Today's focus verse is simple to understand in the New International Version: “Be very careful how you live.” But several of the older translations rely on a different word: circumspectly. “See then that ye walk circumspectly” (KJV). That is, keep your eyes open to everything around you, then make wise choices.

Paul was concerned for the Ephesians, that they lived in a dark, deceptive world. “The days are evil,” he told them in the next sentence. They still are. We are surrounded by sin and by sinners, by those who have wicked intentions of profiting off our reckless firing at “sucker pins.” They hide in religious clothes and offer bad theologies; they dress up as entertainers and tell us that “whatever happens here (and not just in Vegas!) can stay here.”

What do many of us need in life? To pick smarter targets. When it comes to golf, Sherman says this takes “a lot of discipline and analysis.” We can say the same for our walk of circumspection. Do we take the time to be sure of God's road for us? Then do we take it?

If we are in Christ, we are certainly covered by his grace, so we do not need to live in paralytic fear of doing the wrong thing before God. But how much smarter it is to get things right with him the first time around!

Opening questions How often do you seriously think about the best place to hit your next shot? Do you use reminders when you play that help you remember your game plan?

READING Ephesians 5:15-17; Hebrews 12:1-3; Psalm 119:17-24

The wisdom of God's will (Ephesians 5)

If knowing the Lord's will is the antidote for foolishness, how do you come by such understanding? What is something you have learned from the Lord through the years that has saved you from real grief?

Focused eyes (Hebrews 12)

According to this passage, where should our eyes be trained? What reason are we given for considering Christ (v. 3)? What tends to make you weary in your walk (run!) of faith?

Full attention (Psalm 119)

How can dedicated focus to God's word produce excellence in us? What do you need to do with regard to your own habits and routines to make room for this kind of productive concentration?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. Jon Sherman's “7 Habits That Can Lead to Major Breakthroughs in Your Game” may be found at <https://practical-golf.com/golf-habits/>