



# Links Players

## Proverbs - In and Not Of The World

*Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. (Proverbs 13:20, ESV)*

*Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals. (1 Corinthians 15:33, ESV)*

They say, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." I'm not sure who the "they" are, but this surely seems right, right?

If you were a kid living in the Deep South in the late sixties and cared anything about college basketball, you wore floppy socks. Because Pistol Pete wore floppy socks, and you wanted to be like Pete Maravich.

This rule of imitation is especially true when it comes to the golf swing. When you are young, it is a good thing to choose that swing you admire most in a tour player; then do your best to duplicate it.

It is also appropriate to suggest that a young man choose a tour player whom he admires for his character, then model that in his own life. We could certainly pick any number of current tour players for whom young men would do well to imitate—Scotty Scheffler and Sam Burns come to mind.

What Solomon, and ultimately, our heavenly Father are after is giving wise counsel so that the follower of Christ lives a God-honoring, long, and productive life.

In short, spending time around those whose lives are dedicated to Jesus will rub off on you. And its corollary is not hard to grasp—running with the wrong crowd is foolish. The reason in both cases is that eventually you begin, even if unconsciously, to adopt their ideas and copy their behaviors.

Now to clarify, I am not suggesting that we remove ourselves from those who don't love Jesus. Paul is crystal clear about that misconception when he writes, "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world..." (1 Corinthians 5:9). Paul is making a critically important distinction.

He is teaching us that we should build relationships with those who are not yet Christians. Separating ourselves from those who do not follow Christ, among other things, eliminates our opportunities to influence them for Christ.

In summary, immerse your life in the company of men and women who are chasing hard after Christ. Make sure to build relational bridges to those who don't yet know the love of Christ. Finally, make sure to distinguish between the crowd you build your life with and the crowd you are trying to reach with the gospel.

**Prayer – Father, sharpen our discernment to distinguish between those behaviors to imitate and those to repudiate.**

### READING - Proverbs 1:7; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

**OPENING QUESTIONS:** Think of the golfers you admire the most for their swings, mannerisms, and behaviors. Discuss to what degree, if any, you've patterned your behavior after them.

1. According to **Proverbs 1:7a**, the wise "begin" with what? Contrasting in 1:7b, the foolish despise what? If the foolish despise instruction, what does this imply about the wise? Discuss!

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2. . In **1 Corinthians 15**, Paul, for argument's sake, assumes the false belief of his opponents that "Christ is not raised from the dead" to show them the logical outcomes of their erroneous beliefs. In verses 32-34, Paul argues that the resurrection—Jesus' and ours—should inform how we behave. Discuss the connection between the resurrection and our behavior.

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3. In **1 Corinthians 5: 9-13**, Paul makes an important distinction between with whom we are to associate and why. Discuss and debate the practical ramifications of this instruction.

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