



Links Players

SWING ADVICE

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law [Torah] he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:1, ESV).

Could you ever imagine a scenario where receiving advice regarding your golf swing from Charles Barkley would make sense? Think of the commercial where he tells the kid, “Put your knees into it...” Hilarious! You might appreciate the sentiment but taking his advice on swing mechanics would tell us a lot more about you than him. Maybe you are unaware of the “hitch in his gitalong.” Maybe you are just that desperate. Maybe you are averse to offending him. Whatever the case might be, it would be foolish to listen to him when it comes to the golf swing. Now, on the other hand, if he offered advice on defending “inside the paint,” that would be an entirely different matter.

Having an extra set of eyes on your swing is, overall, a wise thing to do. There are rare exceptions, of course. But for most of us mortals, having a trusted, knowledgeable swing coach is smart. Notwithstanding all the possible ways that could go wrong (i.e., paralysis of analysis), we need someone who can approach our swing objectively. As a good friend of mine often reminds me, “feel is not real.” Which is to say, what we often feel is right is entirely wrong. Consider, for instance, how many times you’ve addressed the ball, thinking that you were square to the target, only to discover you were aiming way right. Ignoring a friend who calls attention to error is willful blindness.

Adding insult to injury, in any amount of time spent on the range, you may quickly observe that many golfers spend an enormous amount of time building bad habits. As we have often heard, “practice doesn’t make perfect; perfect practice makes perfect.” In short, practicing the wrong thing over long periods of time is irrational. The failure to invite outside input from a trusted source on one’s golf swing can lead to, among other things, prolonged slumps on the course. Repeatedly walking into the kitchen after the round and telling your spouse how much you “hate this game” will not cure your woes.

What is true in golf is infinitely truer in other areas of our lives. How many of us have that one knowledgeable friend who will “speak the truth in love”? Solomon reminds us, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy (Proverbs 27:6, ESV). Correction is never easy, and more times than not, it’s awkward. But in a candid moment in front of the mirror, how many of us would love to rewind the clock and have that trusted friend tell us the truth in previous seasons of life? Personally, I could have avoided squandering a great deal of a particular decade of my life if I had invited someone, anyone, to hold me accountable to practice the right thing. That is true in golf! That is massively true in day-to-day living.

For us to hit the fairway with our drives requires knowing the truth about our swings and working hard on the right things. For us to walk the “straight and narrow” requires knowing the truth about our lives and having the necessary grace-induced work to practice the right habits.

As our verse above commands, meditating in the Word (what James 1:23 calls “the perfect mirror”), and inviting input from a trusted friend are practices that will surely aid us in navigating the paths of righteousness.

Prayer: Lord! You’ve told us that you “resist the proud but give grace to the humble.” Grant us a deep grace to find that friend to whom we can say, “You have permission to speak into my life on behalf of Christ.” Jesus! “Bind our wandering hearts to you.”

--

Dennis Darville

Copyright 2022 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.