



# Links Players

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## By Invitation Only

*For through him [Jesus], we have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household. (Eph. 2:18-19, ESV)*

It's Masters week, and my guess is that just about everyone reading this will be watching a lot of golf Thursday through Sunday.

Augusta National Golf Club is undoubtedly a very special place. Everyone knows you can only play it when invited and only with a member. It's the place where even if you have something important on your calendar when the invitation comes, **YOU CHANGE YOUR PLANS!**

Dare I say that going to the Masters is the dream of every real golfer? The thought of actually playing the golf course does not even enter most of our minds, let alone the fantasy of being a member. I am extremely fortunate to have been invited to play Augusta National a couple of times. It was a friend-of-a-business-friend kind of thing. My invitation had nothing to do with who I was but rather who I knew and who knew me. It was truly just a matter of God's favor at the time.

Everyone was very polite, and the staff was keenly focused on serving the members and their guests to the utmost. They only have a few rules but the ones they do have you are expected and required to follow. It started with getting through the gate. The only way you get to drive down Magnolia Lane is if your name is on the list.

When I arrived, I was escorted inside, where my host for the day was waiting for me. Everywhere I went on the property, I went with the member. We dressed for dinner and the dining room was full of green jackets and blue blazers. There was a very clear distinction as to who are the members and who are the guests.

I thank God for the wonderful memories. But each time I left Augusta National, I had a deep sense of sorrow. I had this knot in my stomach as reality set in. I wondered if I would ever step foot on this beautiful piece of real estate again?

One could make many spiritual parallels to my experiences at Augusta National. One being if we want to get into heaven, it will not be because of how good we are. If our name is not written in the Lamb's Book of Life, we will not be allowed access to God.

However, if you are united with Jesus Christ, your name is written there, and you are a member of the most remarkable place. Until the day when we are invited into heaven, the Bible teaches us to think and act like the members we are by serving the Lord and others with distinction.

If you are a born-again follower of Jesus Christ, you don't have to worry about being denied access to God's presence now or in the future. Jesus' earthly work is finished, and he is sitting at the Father's right hand, praying for you and waiting on you.

On the other hand, what if you were not only invited to attend The Masters or play the golf course but actually asked, perhaps even multiple times, to be a member of Augusta National? What if you said no each time? Most everyone would say you were foolish!

If you have said no to God in the past, it is not too late. I would urge you to accept the invitation that Jesus extends to you, namely to become a member of His family, with membership benefits on earth and in heaven.

God loves you, my friend. He proved it at the cross when Jesus died for your sins. And now Jesus is waiting for you to join him. In a simple prayer to the one true and holy God, repent of your sins against Him. By faith, receive His free gift of salvation.

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Marty Jacobus

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