



# Links Players

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## DRAWING NEAR

*And without faith, it is impossible to please him, for whoever would **draw near** to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6, ESV)*

Let's begin by asking what might appear like a couple of silly questions: Would you rather be nearer or farther away from the hole on your approach shot? Unless you are better at making putts from forty feet than ones from four feet, your answer will quickly be "nearer."

After your drives have landed and rolled out, would you prefer to be closer to the green or farther away from the green? Unless you have the chipping yips, you would answer "closer to the green" every time.

You probably, like me, take it for granted that we want to be closer to the green after our drives and that we want to be closer to the hole after our approach shot. So, why ask these questions?

For one, it is good to return to fundamental issues and consistently remind ourselves of what is foundationally important. Being close to the green and close to the pin are fundamentally important if we are to go low or just get better.

The next question is the one we normally ask right after we ask the ones mentioned above: Are you prepared to do the necessary work to achieve being closer to the green and then the hole?

After asking and answering this question, the first two questions don't look so silly anymore. Suddenly, these are no longer hypothetical questions.

If you've watched the recent 30 for 30-Shark, ESPN documentary on Greg Norman's career, you will remember that he went to Jack Nicklaus for advice. Greg was in a slump. Jack simply mentioned the notion of "purpose." Jack asked Greg, "Why do you do what you do—What's your purpose?" Greg was jolted out of his slump.

He proceeded to win the Canadian Open the following week and captured his second Open Championship soon thereafter. Asking and correctly answering basic questions can jolt the listless one out of a slump, whether in your golf game or your spiritual journey.

If we answer yes to all three of the earlier questions, then the next set of questions reflect some of the ones we should ask to demonstrate we are serious about getting closer to our targets. How much time on the range do I dedicate to practice to achieve these goals? How much time, if any, do I commit to instruction and training? Am I willing to abandon old swing habits and adopt new ones?

Maybe all this discussion about various commitments to getting closer to our targets is irrelevant to you. Perhaps you are happy with the status of your game. Or maybe the game of golf for you is, as Mark Twain once quipped, “a good walk spoiled.”

In short, you are content to play when you can and live with the results. That’s quite okay! After all, you weren’t exactly asking for anyone else’s approval about how you approach this game.

However, the following question is fundamental for all Christians regardless of how you play golf—Do you desire to “draw near” to God? Or asked another way—Do you desire to walk closer to Jesus Christ more consistently?

If the answer is yes, then the following questions resemble the ones we asked earlier: Are you prepared to do what it takes to achieve this goal? Are you prepared to seek out a teacher/pastor/mentor who can coach you into a deeper walk? Are you committed to set aside the time to make this happen? Are you willing to abandon old habits in exchange for newer ones?

**PRAYER: Spirit of the living God, come again to us in refreshing ways. Revive us again!**

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Dennis Darville

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