



# Links Players

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## Importance of Fellowship

*He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30, ESV)*

It has been said that golf is an individual sport. However, for quite some time now, it has become some sort of team play. Whether it's just among the guys in my foursome on a Saturday or in a little bigger game with several groups competing against each other, I almost always have a partner. I still play my own ball and hit all my own shots, but the day's results truly depend not only on my performance but also on how well my partner does too.

When I've played well, I often catch myself thinking way more of myself than I should. The key word here is "myself." I might be thinking, "I played really well today and counted on 13 of the 18 holes," or "I made a birdie on such and such a hole, and that was the difference."

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Of course, the opposite can be said as well. My partners have done the lion's share of the work many times over the years, and yet I have equally shared in our winnings. When that happens, I sometimes find myself thinking, "I can't believe I just did that." Again, my focus is far too often on myself and what I did or didn't do.

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The older I get the more I realize golf is not about my performance or the day's results. It is about what happens during and after the round that really matters. You might say I no longer play golf for golf. It's about relationships, serving others, and finishing this earthly life well.

For us as Christians, living that way means recognizing God's grace in every aspect of our life and our willingness to share the good news with others.

I do love the game, but it is increasingly more about the fellowship and the opportunity it affords to do life in community with others. The same can be said about most of the things we do each day. When we put the emphasis on enjoying a conversation and encouraging the people we are with, we feel the pleasure of the Lord (and we will probably sleep better that night, too).

Ten years before his death, the Apostle Paul called himself the "least of all the apostles" (1st Corinthians 15:9). Seven years later and just three years before his death, he called himself "the least

of all the saints” (Ephesians 3:8). And one year before his death, he wrote these words captured in his 1st letter to Timothy where Paul said he was “the foremost of all sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Paul's progression here demonstrates to us that he was headed in the right direction. Jesus was increasing, and he was decreasing. He was doing a lot in the name of Jesus, but he very much realized it is all about grace. We should approach each passing day this way as well.

As we mature as believers, we realize more and more that it is all about Jesus. The lesson for us is that we not only see ourselves differently but that we see others differently as well.

So, a couple questions: Are you consciously promoting the grace of God by serving others rather than focusing on your performance? Or trying to be noticed for what you are doing for God? Are you becoming less so Jesus can become more among the people you encounter each day? Ponder these questions, and join me in asking for our Savior’s help in living John 3:30 during your prayer time today.

**Prayer: Father, we come to you today praising you and worshiping you. We ask that you help us tell others about the truth of the Gospel and that we are indeed saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ—not by our performance.**

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Marty Jacobus

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