



# Links Players

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## Anger & Grace

*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger. (Ephesians 4:26, ESV)*

A fan-favorite golf writer told the story of his explosive temper. Friends who only knew him off the course couldn't believe what they heard regarding his antics from his playing partners.

His anger could burn slowly, spilling over onto the fellowship of the foursome as he missed one short putt after another and cursed himself under his breath. It could, at last, ignite, exploding with expletives and a paroxysm of club-throwing.

One lovely morning, while playing his favorite course alone, he approached the green on a par five where his ball had come to rest three feet from the pin, nestled there by his best drive of the day, followed by a perfect three-wood.

Sinking the three-footer would mean an eagle and a personal best round. He carefully lined up the short putt, missed it, and calmly picked up his ball and stepped off the green.

His anger had left him, never to return. But why? How? The writer initially saw what happened as Zen-like, a mystic change in his soul that he can't explain. I wonder if the revelation of God, described in Romans 1 as plain to all, asserted itself in all its clarity in the quiet of that morning. He was responsible for the missed putt; he is a creature and not God; missing putts is what mere creatures regularly do.

Paul tells us to "be angry, and do not sin." Should I be angry over a missed two-footer? Why should I? My son and sometimes golf partner shared an insight that helped me with anger on the course: "I get angry because I think I am a better golfer than I am."

Exactly right! And why do we think we are better than we are? Could it be that we long to be praised? Don't we hate to be humbled with the truth of who we are: Finite, imperfect creatures?

I should be angry over sin, especially my own. I should be mad over death, as Jesus was at the tomb of Lazarus. But angry over my mis-hits? That's only possible if I forget who I am and replace the truth of the living God with an idol; if I worship myself rather than my God.

But the most incredible power to expel unwarranted anger from my heart is affection for Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave himself up for me. The Scottish preacher and theologian Thomas Chalmers wrote about this and called it "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection."

The next time you are surprised by your anger on the course, remember who you are: A sinner redeemed by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And remember the future

he is preparing for you: Presented to himself “in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing...holy and blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

**Prayer – Lord! Give me the ability to see myself as I truly am—a sinner in need of daily grace.**

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