



# Links Players

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## Gimme Putts & Cheap Grace

*Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for? (1 Corinthians 6:20, The Message)*

In our golf group, we establish a game each week. Be it skins, match play, or medal play, the game is chosen, and small bets are made. If you play in a group like ours, you know it's inevitable that you run across the recurring problem of the "gimme" putt.

Gimme putts are short enough putts that a player is not required to make the putt. The assumption is that they would easily make it. Therefore, it's a "gimme"—a free shot awarded to a player. As you know, you have a gimme putt when, while on the green, a team member declares, "That's good." This allows players to pick up their ball and move on to the next hole.

The big problem with gimme putts is that they get longer and longer over time and the team member making the call on free putts gets increasingly lax. Eventually, longer putts are cheapened by calling it a gimme, and the integrity of the match is compromised.

The German theologian and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer observed a similar dynamic in our spiritual life. He coined the term "cheap grace." Cheap grace is like a gimme putt. It comes easy, requires no effort, and we often abuse it.

Bonhoeffer says:

Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, and communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

We often treat Jesus' forgiveness like a gimme putt. We thoughtlessly profess the doctrine of grace and cheapen it by abusing it. We reason, "It's free, after all."

Though free to us, the cost of forgiveness and our redemption came at an incomprehensible price to God. God's Son, Jesus, carried our pain, became our curse, and took our punishment. It was our sins that were piled on Jesus. He was crushed for our iniquities. His punishment brought us peace. His wounds healed us. His oppression liberated us. His rejection won our acceptance.

Bonhoeffer adds:

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it, a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy, which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

**Prayer: Lord, you have given all for me. Help me to walk in the truth of your great love for me daily. My life is yours.**

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Boo Arnold

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