



# Links Players

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## Through Example of Faith

*Remember that at that time, you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and God in the world. (Ephesians 2:12, NIV)*

It is a delight to play golf, especially in the middle of a good round. But then you catch up to the group ahead of you, and they are S.....L.....O.....W. You keep thinking that they will call you up on the next hole or maybe even step aside and let you play through. But, alas, they either smile and wave, ignore you completely or give you the evil eye.

Many slow players have no idea they are slow. No idea! They even complain about slow players to others because they know there are slower players on the course than themselves. We have all seen it. If you are not sure you are a slow player, ask the group standing in the fairway behind you with their hands on their hips.

And sadly, that is the condition of many in the world regarding their spiritual state. We delude ourselves into thinking we are not sinners, separated from God, and condemned already, as John 3:18 tells us.

We can easily find others that are not nearly as good as we are, who do not give to charities, don't help their neighbors, or aren't generous with their families. It is easy to look around and find people who are not as good as us.

The problem with this approach to goodness is that it measures our standing before God by comparing ourselves with other people like us—sinners. Instead, we should measure our life against the commandments of God.

The truth is that no one gets into heaven by "good works." God does not grade us relative to another person. He uses a pass/fail system, and Jesus is the Father's standard. Jesus said in John 14:6b, "No one comes to the Father except through me."

Years ago, at the funeral of my pastor, a man with the gift of evangelism told a true story. My pastor had finished playing the front nine with his foursome, and they had gone into the men's grill to grab refreshments between nines.

A fellow yelled mockingly across a packed room, "Hey, Preacher, you still preaching about hell?" Without missing a beat, he loudly hollered back, "Sure am. You still going there?"

We must recognize that we are lost before we can be saved—to know we need salvation. The book of Romans spends the first two and a half chapters telling us the bad news: “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his (God’s) sight by observing the law [doing good works]; rather, through the law, we become conscious of sin.” Romans 3:20.

But keep reading! The following two-and-a-half chapters of Romans tell us the good news (the Gospel). “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:22, 23)

When these twin realities finally dawn on us that we are sinners and that salvation is offered freely through faith in Jesus Christ, we should humble ourselves, admit we are sinners and ask Jesus to forgive and transform us.

This is what our Links Fellowships are all about. Living out our faith in the world allows others to see a different way of living. Possibly a way of life that never occurred to them as possible. Christians are called ‘peculiar’ people, set-apart people, people different from the world (because of Christ).

So “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

**Prayer: Father God, please give me holy boldness in sharing you, the world's hope, through my words and lifestyle**

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Cheryl Martin

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