



Links Players

The Journey of Faith - Defining Moments and Friendships

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15, ESV)

If you played high school, collegiate, or club golf, you know that lasting friendships are often found and forged in battle with the vicissitude's that this particular sport throws your way.

Shots that go awry, bounces that are anything but "member bounces," and elements (e.g., wind, rain, cold) that blow the outcome of your perfectly executed swing into the hazard are discouraging enough, but to have those things happen without a friend with which to commiserate is downright depressing.

The "19th Hole" is more than a place to play poker or gin rummy, nor should it be a place one gathers alone to drown one's sorrows in "one-too-many" drinks; rather, more times than not, it is and should be a place golfers gather to tell and listen to their stories with good friends.

Of course, it would be silly to think that friendships are only found or made at the course. However, friendships built around this game are some of the richest. Of all the gifts that come to us from above, the gift of friendship is certainly one to cherish and guard.

Anyone spending time with Bill Rogers quickly discerns the value of friendships he made across the different seasons of his life. From childhood to college to the PGA Tour, he forged lifelong relationships with men whose names you and I only know from watching the major networks.

To call attention to the importance of friendships is not unique to the Christian faith. However, to focus on friendships among those who know and love Christ is to take what is common to mankind and elevate it to a richer and more nuanced version of what God has entrusted us: lifelong companions to enjoy life's journey.

You might say having friends is one way God reveals something of himself through another. But for all the friends that the LORD has enriched our lives with, none is in the same league as the friendship he has invited us into with his only begotten son—Jesus Christ!

We who were once "enemies" are now called friends because of Christ's reconciling work on the cross. Nothing should arrest our attention more than this. Jesus, according to Paul, died for his enemies (Romans 5: 10). In giving his life for us, his enemies, he has subsequently transformed us into his friends.

One of the obvious things about a genuine friendship is the trust factor. With a trusted friend, we can confidently share our deepest fears, hopes, dreams, and failures. Now that Jesus is our friend, we should not have any fear entrusting the deepest longings of our hearts with him.

Infinitely more interesting, this text reminds us that Jesus intends to reveal the Father's heart and plans to us—his friends. That should boggle our minds! Indeed, "what a friend we have in Jesus!"

Prayer: Jesus, take us deeper and deeper into our awareness of what it means to be called your friend.

READING - John 15:12-17; James 3:23; Romans 5:6-11

OPENING QUESTIONS: Reminisce about friends you've discovered in golf through the years.

1. John 15:12-17 is loaded with themes and implications of friendships. Read and discuss what you discover.

2. James 3:23 refers to Abraham. Why does God call him a friend?

3. Romans 5:1-11 outlines with three different descriptors what we are before meeting Jesus. What are they, and how does this impact the importance of being called Jesus' friend?
