



# Links Players

## ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE

*To the Jews, I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak, I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:20-22, NIV)*

Statistics reveal that modern elite golfers are hitting the ball further. Technology, better swing mechanics, and more strength training influence more distance.

Lexi Thompson, known as a long hitter on the LPGA Tour, recently took her length to the PGA Tour and made a valiant attempt to become the first woman since 1945 to make the cut in a men's event. She shot 73-69, missing the cut by two.

A recent Golf Digest article shared how Lexi, "through an adept combination of elite level skill and smarts, was able to mitigate the distance discrepancy between her and the male pros."

In other words, Lexi morphed her tee shot depending on what was needed on each hole. On holes that didn't require extra distance, she hit a standard drive (slightly higher, more backspin, and mostly straight). Other holes requiring more distance, Lexi made her right-to-left draw more severe. This reduced the amount of backspin, allowing maximum roll and more distance.

What is impressive about Lexi's shot-making is her control and creativity to play against a longer course compared to the LPGA Tour's length. The circumstances required her to be skillful and creative, and that is what she did.

How creative and adept are we as followers of Jesus when it comes to relationships with people from different backgrounds, cultures, opinions (whether political or religious), values, and socio-economic status than our own? Differences create discomfort, which can lead to walls if we do not remain open, adept, and curious.

The Apostle Paul was creative and adept in relationships with all people. He didn't compromise his values and beliefs. As a matter of fact, he spoke very boldly about his conversion to Jesus. And he was able to become all things to all people so that by all possible means, I might save some.

The world is hostile – international wars, natural disasters, economic crises, and an increased intolerance to following Jesus and God's Word. Our tactics need to be skillful and flexible. What does it mean for you and me to hold fast to our values and faith while at the same time befriending those who are different?

The words from the prophet Micah are a good place to start: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Secondly, "everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry (James 1:19)."

**Prayer: Lord, help me today to befriend other people as Paul did. Teach me your ways: to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.**

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