



# Links Players

## Giving Thanks - Giving Back

*...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38, ESV)*

Of all the lasting impressions regarding great sportsmanship, very few, if any, rise to the level of Jack Nicklaus giving Tony Jacklin a two-foot putt on the final day, in the final match, to halve the match and The Ryder Cup in 1969 at Royal Birkdale.

As Matt Hardisty reminds us, “Nicklaus’ concession is now widely regarded as one of the greatest acts of sportsmanship ever seen in golf or anywhere else and many, including Jacklin, believe it set a tone for the event that lasts to this day.”

I agree with Matt that it was “one of the greatest acts of sportsmanship ever seen in golf,” but I am not yet convinced that it “lasts to this day.”

Far too much counter-evidence could be adduced that demonstrates some of our players—on both sides—  
have either forgotten about this gracious moment of giving or have failed to embrace its significance for themselves.

As every golfer knows, conceding a putt is well within the opponent’s right in Match Play. We also know the contestant cannot presume to “take” the putt. That’s why the player waits or looks up to see if his opponent concedes the putt.

The art of giving is deeply embedded in Western Culture, even if we don’t regularly practice it. We know “it is better to give than receive.” Some would argue that we know this as a “self-evident truth.”

Personally, I rather doubt that! I think a better case for recognizing this truth, practiced or not, is that it, along with many other truths, has been bequeathed to us by Christianity’s enormous influence on culture.

As Christianity’s hold on American culture weakens, this habit of giving also loses its influence on our personal and collective behavior. It appears that our society is all about “take, take, take.”

Even when Christianity was the dominant view shaping American culture, we still had to train little Johnny and Susy to “share” when they were

toddlers. However, back then, the culture outside our homes reinforced this virtue. I am not so sure that’s the case anymore.

Even though there are signs of American drift, there remain more than a few bright spots of charitable and generous giving. One such example is the partnership between Links and the Orange County Rescue Mission.

Every year, they partner to host a golf tournament, raising over one hundred thousand dollars for the many needs challenging Southern California (see video). In a world that looks more and more to “Big Brother,” let’s take up the torch and once again show the world the ultimate “gift,” Jesus, the Savior of the world.

After all, remember God “gave his Son.”

**Prayer: Father, visit our hearts again with the gift of giving.**

**READING** - Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; Proverbs 11:24; Proverbs 19:17.

1. Recall a time on the course when, in friendly play or a competitive match, your opponent conceded a putt, a putt that you were stressing over. What feeling did that evoke? Discuss.

---

---

---

2. In light of our reading for today, jot down and discuss some of the blessings of giving.

---

---

---

3. Application: Ask the Lord to open your eyes to a need in your neighborhood, workplace, or golf course, and then, perhaps with others, endeavor to meet that need.

---

---

---