



# Links Players

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## The Greater Lesson Taught

*Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe, and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. (Acts 2:43, NASB)*

The Links Players study guide was on the subject of “Peace.” Our editor encouraged us through the video to focus on peace during Advent.

I was visiting the Fellowship at Eagles Bluff near Tyler, Texas, with 31 other brothers who had come on this cool Wednesday morning, just a few days before Christmas, to learn more about that attractive word so appropriate and prominent during the Christmas season—“Peace.”

We never opened the study guide. The sudden and recent death of one of the beloved leaders of this Fellowship took center stage. He had died of a heart attack just six days earlier. He was on a text thread with some of the guys in the Fellowship the morning he died and sent his last text at 8:14 am. He died of a massive heart attack at 8:30 am.

So, our time together began as we told stories and affirmed this man of faith. Oh, how he loved Jesus and was known for inviting others to join and change the conversation. He reminded everyone, “Come join us. You never know when it will be too late.”

We celebrated his life. We laughed uncontrollably and wept unashamedly. We acted like men who had hope because we knew death was not the end. It was contagious. We loved our dear friend but are certain we will see him again and rejoice. What a reunion that will be!

That man, Neal Thompson, was the best athlete in the bunch. He played centerfield for the Texas Aggies and also played basketball. He loved to hunt, and every year, he would travel to Kansas, shoot pheasants, and bring them back to share with his friends.

The chef at the club would prepare scrumptious wild game meals to serve to the men and their wives. What great times those were. We ended those meals with a prayer, and then we would all stand, hold hands, and sing God Bless America. I attended once and cried tears of joy.

Neal was 79 when he went Home to be with Jesus. One story was told of his 70th birthday celebration. Sitting at the head of the table, he was full of joy and asked his friend, “Do you think I look 70?” His friend responded. “No, you don’t. But I remember when you did!”

Well, Neal looks perfect now. He loved Jesus and wanted everyone to know Him. His burden was for all to come to faith in Jesus before it was too late. He lived it out that morning.

There was one man there for the first time. I talked to another who had been there just two other times, and he wept with us. The story of Neal's life was telling others about Jesus while there was still time.

This wise Cherokee proverb captured what happened that day: "When you were born, you cried, and the whole world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that when you die, the whole world will cry, and you will rejoice."

So, back to the lesson of peace. Peace is knowing that death is not the end but only the beginning. It was exhibited that morning through the tears and laughter of authentic men who have hope. This may be what a golf ministry is about. Peace and hope during the pain. I am glad I was in the room.

**Closing prayer – We are so grateful for lives lived well and stories that honor You, Lord Jesus.**

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Randy Wolff

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