



# Links Players

## Five Solas - Meritocracy and Grace Alone

*...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. (Romans 3:23-25, ESV)*

Until the recent rival tour appeared, discussions of meritocracy were usually confined to political, social, or economic debates.

Historically, the PGA Tour was built on a “system of merit;” every player earned his standing on the money list, his way into the Golf Hall of Fame, and his position on the OWGR. Yep! Golf has been, and remains, largely about “merit.” Rightly so!

When Talor Gooch recently expressed his opinion about adding an asterisk beside Rory’s name should he go on to win The Masters and complete the Grand Slam, Rory responded, “Work harder.” Implicit in Rory’s retort is the idea of “merit”—if you want to be in the Majors, “earn it.”

The infinitely more pressing issue is this: Is there a place for “merit” in our relationship with the eternal, holy, and transcendent God? Or, asked more straightforwardly, “Can we earn a relationship with God who has been offended by our sin?”

Nothing could be clearer in Scripture than that salvation is entirely the “gift of grace to be received by faith.” Yet, I meet countless men and women who think that by living a so-called “good life,” God will accept them. These folks fail to understand this: God requires perfection to come into his presence, and only one man has achieved it.

G.R.A.C.E. is often described as: “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” Grace is certainly an expression of “God’s Riches.” There’s no doubt about that! But what about “...At Christ’s Expense?” What does that mean? In short, it means Christ purchased our salvation with his perfect life and substitutionary death.

When exploring the inexpressible beauty of God’s gift of grace to us, there are, at minimum, two foci: Christ willingly sacrificed his life in our place, paying our penalty for the betrayal of breaking God’s law. That’s what “propitiation” means—the Father, in love, sent his Son to appease the wrath of God to satisfy God’s justice. Jesus drank the cup of God’s wrath due to us bone dry.

Second, as mind-bending as Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross for us is, Christ’s perfect life of obedience staggers our imaginations. Both realities require our unalloyed allegiance and deepest reverence. Jesus lived a perfect life before the Father from birth to death in active obedience and, consequently, earned eternal life.

We often miss the significance of Jesus’ perfect obedience because we fail to situate it in the biblical storyline. The First Adam was promised everlasting life on the condition of perfect obedience. He miserably failed, thus plunging himself, Eve, and all their progeny (us) into eternal ruin.

However, the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, though tested in ways we can hardly begin to grasp, obeyed the Father perfectly, thus earning or meriting eternal life for himself and all those who give their life to him.

**Prayer: Jesus! By grace, enable us to put “amazing” back into grace.**

**READING:** Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 3:21-26; Titus 3:1-8

1. Recall and discuss when you got a “member’s bounce.” By definition, a member’s bounce is not deserved or earned. What was your reaction?

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2. After musing over the suggested reading, list and discuss some important aspects of grace (God’s unmerited favor).

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3. Application: Pause, reflect, and pray—thanking God for the grace that comes to us through Jesus, who redeems, restores, heals, and sustains us in life.

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