



Links Players

Moment of Impact

*For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?
(1 Corinthians 3:4))*

I've been a golf instructor for twenty-five years. Part of evolving as an instructor involves remaining receptive to learning and refining one's teaching approach and philosophy.

Participating in continuing education sessions for golf instruction among seasoned professionals is vital to growth and often leads to stimulating and sometimes intense discussions.

Each instructor has developed their unique teaching philosophies and methodologies. They hold firm confidence in their approaches to golf instruction, having witnessed firsthand the effectiveness of their methods.

Similar dynamics surfaced during my time in seminary among professors, each with their distinct theology and doctrinal beliefs, albeit with variations. Even though there were differences in interpretation of scripture, my Professors always aligned on the foundational principles of the Christian faith.

In golf instruction, the ultimate objective is to develop a functional swing with a solid impact being paramount. The moment the clubhead connects with the ball is crucial, and seasoned golf instructors unanimously acknowledge its significance. It's all about impact.

As for Christians, it's all about the moment we believe in Jesus and surrender our life to Him; that is impact.

Sometimes, as Christians, it is easy to lose sight of 'impact.' Serving in ministry I often hear questions amongst Christians like: "What denomination do you belong to?" or "Which church do you attend?"

It's one way for the inquirer to learn where the person may fellowship, but it can also gauge theological leanings and church affiliations, whether Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, Orthodox, or non-denominational. The same would apply if you ask a golfer who their instructor is; you can gauge what instruction methodologies they lean toward.

I've reached a point where I deflect such questions, even if the intentions of the inquiry are good. Faith in Jesus Christ should not be categorized in such a manner. I don't believe God is as concerned about these labels as some humans are.

Just as in golf instruction, where we have exceptionally talented teachers who are often correct, they are not infallible. Likewise, Christian leaders and teachers, past and present, can err because they're fallible humans. We all are.

Consequently, we should be careful to follow too closely any individual, whether it be modern-day preachers, reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin, Augustine, Popes, or even the Early Church Fathers. While we can learn from them, as many of them are incredible servants of the Lord, focusing on Jesus Christ is the most genuine way to be a follower.

Jesus is the 'Word' meaning 'Logos' of God, the living Word of God, fully God and yet fully man, who came to reveal God to man and redeem all who believe in Him from their sin. We follow Him because He is perfect and infallible.

The Apostle Paul cautioned the Corinthians against following any man, including himself, emphasizing unity while directing attention back to Jesus Christ (Read 1 Cor. 3:4-9). He underscored that fixation on individual teachers and leaders' doctrinal differences fosters division.

If asked about my denomination, I respond with the words of the Psalmist, "I am a friend to all who fear God, to all who follow His precepts (Ps. 119:63)." This answer reflects the heart's disposition and emphasizes adherence to God's path for believers.

I desire my alignment to be with those who genuinely love and serve God, irrespective of creed or label. Our mission as Christians and golfers is IMPACT for the Kingdom of God in Jesus' name. Let's prioritize that focus. Let us follow the only perfect one, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer: "Lord, help us to remain united with all believers."

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Meredith Kirk

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