



Links Players

What You Practice Is Very Important

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. (1 John 3:7, ESV)

When my wife and I moved from California to Arizona about a dozen years ago, I took a break from working. But I did not take a break from golf. Once we found a house and got settled, I consistently played the game I've loved since forever.

Somewhere in there, I helped start a Links Fellowship and volunteered at church, but over the next six or seven months, I hung out at a public course, made friends, practiced a lot, and played golf.

In one special round, I birdied all four par three holes and couldn't wait to tell my wife. To that news, I added, "My game hasn't been this good in almost 30 years."

She asked, "When was the last time you practiced and played this much?" And I said, "About 30 years ago." There is a reason we get better when we practice: it works.

In fact, it works in every walk of life, including our walk with Christ. As John wrote, "Whoever practices righteousness is righteous."

He also defines the unrighteous as "those who practice sinning." Paul talks about the unrighteous in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, then verse 11 says, "Such were some of you, but you were washed...."

Many Christians like to say they are sinners, and it is true that we all sin. But both Paul and John differentiate between those who practice sinning and those who practice righteousness.

I still practice golf, though not as much now. In some ways, I'm still improving, and I'm still a golfer.

I am also righteous. I know that because I practice righteousness. Yes, I still sin. But I don't practice sinning, so sin does not define me. I'm also a very good putter; my misses don't define me there, either.

Golf is a difficult game. So is life—and it is also slightly more important.

To improve, practice making the right choices, actions, and attitudes. You'll still get it wrong sometimes, but you will be righteous.

And maybe even a golfer.

Prayer: Father, give us the courage and desire to practice righteousness. For your glory, through Jesus our Lord. Amen

—

Lewis Greer

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