



# Links Players

## Immortality - The Tree of Life

*Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"...he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the Tree of Life. (Genesis 3: 22-24, ESV)*

Trees! Trees are everywhere on many golf courses. Many of us grew up on tree-lined courses with narrow fairways, left and right doglegs, and Trees!

Those who have played these beauties will know you must go over, around, under, and through trees on more than a few rounds to arrive safely at the green.

We have ruined more than a few rounds by spraying our tee balls right or left and finding our balls stymied behind something that resembles the largest Sequoia in the history of the world.

I recently discovered that the largest of the Sequoia is called the General Sherman Tree, and the second largest is the General Grant Tree. No Southerner would have ever considered naming these giants by either one of those names.

We recently closed our course for a year. The greens and bunkers were rebuilt, and a few holes were rerouted. This historic "1909-Course" was and is magnificent. In the process, we took down more than a hundred trees.

I understand that removing most of these trees was necessary to give the sun more access and allow the course to breathe. A couple of majestic, sprawling, and towering oaks were chopped down and then had their stumps ground to powder.

The two mighty oaks I am thinking about were as majestic as any oak trees you've ever seen. I've often told my playing partners, "If only these two trees could talk; imagine the stories they could tell." They might even have had something to say to Generals Sherman and Grant.

Trees figure prominently on many golf courses, and trees are the central theme throughout many biblical narratives. Think of the Tree of Life, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Olive Trees, the Fig Tree (especially the one Jesus cursed), and most importantly, "The Tree" atop Calvary's Hill—cursed is the one who hung on that tree (Galatians 3:13).

It is often overlooked that God offered everlasting life to Adam and Eve on the condition of perfect and personal obedience; the Tree of Life symbolically

represented life everlasting to our primal parents once they had passed through that probationary period of trusting and obeying.

Sadly and tragically, they chose the one thing God forbade: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which represented the attempt to build a life apart from the Creator's wisdom and a life entirely on what they thought best.

To right the wrong, God sent his Son to die on the greatest of trees, the "Tree" on Golgotha's Hill (a skull-shaped hill outside old Jerusalem). At that moment, Jesus paid sin's debt and once again gave access to immortal life to those who humble themselves by trusting and obeying the Lord of All Trees!!

If you want to live forever with the King in his eternal Kingdom, entrust your life to Jesus!

**Prayer: Jesus! Open the eyes of men and women at golf clubs worldwide to the reality of IMMORTALITY IN CHRIST.**

**READING:** Genesis 3; Revelation 22:1-5, Galatians 3:13-14

1. Remember when you encountered some "tree trouble" on the course. Share a story of great success through a gap or a providential ricochet, or tell of a time when it cost you a great round!

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2. After reading Genesis Three, make observations about the trees, especially the two prominent trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

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3. Discuss Galatians 3:13-14 and how Jesus hanging on Calvary's Tree solves our biggest issue, sin!

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