



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

# Links Players

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## It's Not a Prank or a Practical Joke!

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

In my former career, playing practical jokes on each other was common. It's been 36 years ago, but it remains etched in my mind. We were playing the Astros. This particular episode happened at TPC Woodlands in Houston.

Rick Mahler, Jerry Royster, and Paul Runge rounded out our foursome. Playing the 15th hole, a gentle dogleg right, par 5, featuring an island green, water off the tee, and an OB on the right, we sensed Paul's frustration.

He played a hard slice when it wasn't controlled and had already lost a dozen balls that day. Teeing on the left side wasn't the best strategy for fades and after hitting two balls OB right he walked off in total frustration saying, "I'm done".

In unison, we replied, "No way, finish the hole!" He yelled back, "I've got to get another ball," walking toward his cart. Immediately, I pulled a ball out of my left pocket that had been burning a hole in my pants for 14 holes and said, "Here, Paul, I've got one." I teed it up for him on the very far right side, giving more room for his fade. What a friend!

Only Rick and I knew what to expect. I think I drew blood on my hand as I bit it to keep from laughing at the inevitable.

With built-up anger, his big swing made dead-solid contact. Anticipating a beautiful result, he was surprised to see a cloud of smoke, plastic fragments airborne, and grown men rolling on the ground in uncontrollable laughter.

His face was filled with shock and confusion. Not realizing the prank, he finally joined us in robust laughter that still brings a smile today.

He didn't see it coming, which happened in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Friends, there is a day coming that will lead to ultimate delight, pure elation, and overwhelming joy for those who have trusted in Jesus and received His gift of eternal life.

Perhaps you're on your 15th hole in life and ready to sit this hole out, give up, throw in the towel, or become complacent because life has been hard.

Have your fades turned to double-crosses and OBs? Is the advice, counsel, and therapy you are getting feel like God is pranking you? One day, it will all make sense.

Sadly, many are offering ways to get this peace, happiness, and joy with erroneous non-biblical self-help ideologies such as.. "God helps those who help themselves," "God wants you happy, rich, healthy," and... you can fill in the blank.

Just like exploding golf balls, it's all smoke and broken pieces of plastic, and the only laughter may be from those who mock people who have decided to trust, love, and follow Jesus. Surrendering your life to Jesus isn't a prank, practical joke, or smoke and mirrors.

If you're not sure where you stand, reach out to one of your Links friends or to one of our Links staff. If you do know Him, reach out to someone going through a bad round in life because you don't know when it might be their last.

Rick Mahler passed into the presence of Jesus on March 2, 2005. I remember many rounds of golf together, but the best memory is the answer he gave when asked why he thought he would spend eternity with Jesus. His answer was spot on: "Because of what Jesus did on the cross for me, I accepted His gift of eternal life."

What about you?

**Prayer: Jesus, thank you for taking all my sin, guilt, and shame, forgiving me, and giving me your righteousness. Spirit, help me share your love and gift of salvation with others.**

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Jose Alvarez

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