



# Links Players

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## A God Not So Kind

*For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10; ESV)*

Golf is a game of comparison, and if players aren't comparing their scores with others, they're comparing various abilities with previous rounds and other skills.

The conversation goes something like this: I drove the ball well but putted poorly; my iron game was sharp, but I missed some bunker shots; the front nine went great but the back nine was a disaster; man, I played great yesterday, but I don't have it today. Some imagined elusive perfection becomes the unattainable standard.

But it gets worse. There are golfers who exhibit a deep-seeded need to recount their round to anyone who will listen, gushing stroke by stroke, excuse by excuse. If you're stuck listening, eyes rolling, look toward a sympathetic friend, think in the golfer's vernacular and say, "I'm caddying for Bob!" It's painful enough to play badly. It's worse listening to Bob!

Playing bad golf is an offense to our pride. It's hard to admit we're not as good as we think we are. Golfers live the price of pride. Gentlemen golfers boil it down to one question – what'd 'ya shoot? Answering, etiquette prevails. Give a number. Say nothing else. Ask nothing else (The golfer's version of "hear no evil...").

Comparison surrounds us, a god not so kind. It's the devil's "gotcha" game. It's pervasive in our thoughts, a dividing line for Christians. Standing on either side, looking in any direction, as Christians, we fail as the thoughts rise. Jesus spent his life telling us so. We hear the message, but living it is hard. All that we hear, see and sense is in relation to our perception of it. How can we escape the norm? We cannot. We are human.

But here's the thing, and there's always a thing ... Christians cannot achieve something other than their humanness. Our lives emit the sound of a needle stuck in a worn-out groove on the old Victrola. It's the reason earning is not a part of grace and works absent from salvation. But aren't we called to be better than we are? Are we?

Attainment is comparison's seduction, the fallacy perpetuating our efforts. Comparison keeps us falling short as long as we believe in its power. Maybe the goal is not to be better than we are, but to be what God intended, his creation at peace with our imperfection and the imperfection of others. And how do we arrive but through acceptance of God, self and neighbor, but through submission to God's leading and working in our life?

When attainment ends, and comparison stops, when we give our self fully to God, by strange irony we become better than we are, not by worldly standards, but as children of God. Only by God's working within do we become enlightened to His good intent. It's never where we are going. It is where God is taking us.

“Those who have ears to hear, let them hear” (Matthew 11:15).

Prayer: Lord! Give us ears to hear!

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