



# Links Players

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## Standing Strong

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil...Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:10-13, NKJV)*

“In the beginning,” God created the heavens and the earth, and then He created all natural elements and creatures of the earth and all the physical elements in the heavens.

As golfers, we are fortunate to witness the beauty of God’s creation. When we play early in the morning, we see glistening grass, we hear the waking chirps of birds, and we see the smooth contours of freshly raked bunkers. At the end of the day, we see the golf course in that special light from the setting sun. God’s glory is manifested by the golf scenery around us.

At other times of the day, the harsh light exposes the long, gnarly grass of the rough, trees that block an otherwise easy shot to the green, or a bunker too tough to escape on the first (or even second) try. We ask, “What happened to the beauty of the earth, the course we saw in the fresh and soft early morning light?”

The golf experience, like life, holds both joy and struggle. Hazards and challenges are natural elements built into a golf course, including intentional targets, distractions, and illusions created by the course architect to catch a golfer off guard and create an opportunity for golfers to hone their skills, focus, and level of play.

As we refine our training, we have the opportunity to learn about ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, and how to overcome them. Likewise, our life journey presents daily challenges in our relationships and decision-making, identifying, understanding, and coping with emotions.

The apostle Paul tells us plainly in today’s passage one way we can train to overcome our life challenges: “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians).”

Paul goes on to say that the Word of God equips us with truth, righteousness, the gospel of saving grace, faith, and salvation as our tools to navigate life’s challenges.

These tools guide us to put relationships in perspective, to give us wisdom in decision-making, and to help us rely on God’s strength in emotional and other challenges.

The process of equipping ourselves with spiritual tools is not unlike training for golf. It takes having the right information, which we get by reading God's Word.

It takes prayer to submit to hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, like a coach. It takes daily practice of applying the Word to our activities. And it takes being tested with challenging conditions that strengthen us through application or show us where we still need to grow.

While we love even the small victories after a day of golf, how much more rewarding is it to stand in victory with God at the end of your day, living life with its challenges, and at the end of your life, when you stand before Him?

**PRAY: Lord, help me today to put on the full armor you have provided so that I may stand my ground each day. Help me to rely on you to meet all my challenges.**

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Carol Buxton

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