



# Links Players

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## *Always Teaching*

*All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. (John 14:25-24)*

I have a friend I play golf with occasionally; I'll call him Joe. His skill level is similar to mine, which means he's your basic bogey golfer. When you play with Joe, you will likely receive his unsolicited advice several times throughout the round.

For example: "You lifted your head...you decelerated on your follow through...you had it teed up too high." Sound familiar? Maybe you have friends who offer similar commentary when you play with them. Unfortunately, my lack of skill gives Joe multiple opportunities to provide suggestions.

While I am sure he means well, Joe's running commentary tends to become pretty annoying. My usual response is just to nod my head, but if I'm having a rough day, it sometimes reaches the point where I'll politely ask Joe to refrain from making suggestions - which works for a couple of holes, and then the unsolicited guidance starts again.

One area where we should always seek guidance is from our Heavenly Father, and there are several ways to receive his instruction. Prayer is an essential discipline to ensure we are in constant conversation with the Lord. Reading the written Word of God provides instruction in how we should live.

Another source of learning is the difficulties we face in our everyday lives. While we may not think of those situations as providing guidance, I believe God is always trying to teach us, and He may use challenging conditions or tests to get His message across. A quote I share often with friends sums it up nicely: "When we find ourselves in a difficult situation, our first reaction is usually 'God, get me out of this!' But the better response is, 'God, what do you want me to get out of this?'"

In 2022, I was diagnosed with and treated for cancer; earlier this year, it was determined the cancer had returned. Over the two years, I have experienced a series of doctor appointments, scans, biopsies, shots, radiation, and surgery.

While this journey was unexpected, I have felt amazing peace through the process, which has been a blessing to me and my family. It's also been an appropriate time to remember the quote above and reflect on what God has been trying to teach me through this experience.

Looking back over the journey, I can see there have been several lessons. God taught me perseverance, enduring temporary highs and lows while focusing on the long-term goal. There have been lessons on patience and waiting for appointments to open and test results to become available. God also taught me perspective in seeing others facing health situations much more challenging than mine.

Most of all, the experience has reinforced a theme that runs throughout the Bible – the call for us to trust in the Lord. As David said in Psalm 62:8, “Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” That’s a wonderful reminder to daily put our trust in Him, the one who provides “the peace that passes understanding.” (Philippians 4:7).

**Prayer: Father, we know that you work for the good of those who love you (Romans 8:28). When we face challenging situations, help us to turn to you for comfort and peace and to reflect on what you are trying to teach us. Amen**

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