



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Hold Loosely

He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. (John 12:25, NASB)

I stopped wearing a golf glove years ago. I was gripping the club too tightly, and I found when I played without a glove, I was more conscious of my grip pressure.

That I gripped the club too tightly should not have surprised me. The way we do anything is the way we do most everything, and my default is to try to control everything, whether it be a golf swing or a jury trial.

I had to learn that, as much as I might practice or prepare, the less I tried to take control, the more I could achieve.

The problem with a tight golf grip created tension in my forearms, which seeped into my biceps and shoulders and inhibited my turn away from the ball. By the time I set the club at the top of my swing, instead of being loose and flexible, I was tense and rigid.

As a result, I had very little lag in my downswing, and the power of my 6'1 frame was not fully transferred to the club at impact.

It's no coincidence that our best shots often follow our worst: the chip-in after the chili dip or the perfect drive following the rope hook. When our will interferes, it disrupts our game. But when we let go, we achieve our best golf.

Likewise, Jesus said that if we hold onto our lives—our will, wants, and desires—too tightly, we will miss out on the abundant life He came to provide.

Conversely, when we die to our own will, wants, and desires, we let ourselves become a conduit for the love and power of God to bless others. The grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die to bear much fruit. (John 12:24).

It can be hard to loosen our grip, though. Sometimes, it takes an on-course tragedy like an out-of-bounds tee shot to help us loosen our grip. In the same way, it sometimes takes a traumatic loss, a life-threatening disease, or a major financial setback for us to loosen our grip on our own lives. C.S. Lewis called such an event “a severe mercy”: it is painful, but it brings us closer to God by enabling us to die to ourselves.

I met a visitor a few months ago at our church in Houston. He was in Houston to receive treatment for a life-threatening cancer. He told me how this life-changing tragedy helped him realize the futility of the things he had spent his life chasing and turn his heart fully to God.

As he told me his story, he wept. They were not tears of sadness but tears of joy. He had discovered how to grip the club of life loosely.

Prayer: Lord, help me to learn to take up my cross daily and make myself available as a conduit for your love and power to bless others. Amen

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