



Links Players

Putting and Spiritual Growth Basics

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Matthew 7:14)

I was the Chaplain at an FCA golf camp in 1993. I got to play 18 every day and attend the clinics where professionals instructed junior golfers. Recently, I found the notes from the putting clinic 27 years ago.

The most important thing you can do to improve your game is improve your putting. Contact the ball in the middle of the club head. Hit the ball in a straight line to the target. Accelerate the club head when making contact... don't slow down. Practice and then keep practicing.

As I read these notes, I thought about how obvious it was. Then I wondered why I missed so many putts last summer and was short so often. Why didn't I spend more time on the putting green and less time on the range?

The "Basics" are true in our spiritual lives as well. Honoring God is like anything else: you probably won't do it very well if you don't work at it.

Lots of Christians train their physical bodies yet put little effort into training on a spiritual level. Paul had something to say about this. "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." (1 Timothy 4:8)

Like any discipline, if you commit to practice, you'll notice your faith muscles strengthening, and your new nature will start having some wins over your old, sinful nature. There are spiritual disciplines that, like putting habits, seem basic, but they are often neglected:

Prayer is simply talking to God and building a relationship with Him. Imagine the dysfunction in a marriage without conversation, and you'll begin to understand the anemic lives of prayer-less Christians.

Try using the PRAY acronym. Spend some time praising (P) God for His blessings. Then, review your life and repent (R) of the times you failed to honor Him. Next, ask (A), praying for people and situations in your life. Finally, end by yielding (Y) to God. Remember that prayer is about aligning your will with God's, not the other way around.

Bible Study. Start by reading the Bible devotionally and try setting special times for a deeper dive. Use a study Bible or commentary to pick up on deeper truths. "You search the Scriptures because

you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.” As you make a habit of reading it, look for the threads that lead to Jesus.

Connection. Christianity is a team sport; you can't honor God in isolation. God's people always connect to each other in three environments: large (church), small (group), and individual (mentoring). “Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another... Hebrews 10:25

Mentoring. Jesus called it disciple-making. It's when you personally help someone else in pursuit of God. Jesus' final commandment...Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you... Matthew 28:19-20.

Which of these points are you most eager to improve in 2025?

Prayer: Dear God, sustain me with a willing spirit to practice the disciplines that will help me grow in my faith life this year. Amen

Bill Crawford

Copyright 2025 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at linksplayers.com.