



# Links Players

## An Evening with Three PGA Tour Standouts Commending and Defending the Gospel

*...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect....(1 Peter 3:15, ESV)*

Joe Highsmith has enjoyed a successful career at every level. Among his accolades in college (Pepperdine), he was a two-time All-American, had the fifth-best scoring average (71:45) in school history, and out of 139 rounds, he was below-par 62 times.

In his rookie campaign on the PGA Tour, he went from outside the top 125 with six events remaining to 100 by finishing in the top twenty in five of those six events.

Beyond his many accomplishments in competition, Joe is deeply rooted in his faith. Of course, like the rest of us, what makes his faith matter is the object of his faith—Jesus, the Messiah.

It's one thing to have genuinely encountered the Spirit of Christ in one's personal life; it's another to joyfully and compellingly share that experience with others in biblically meaningful ways.

As Joe, Sam, and Wesley engage in gospel conversation, it's refreshing to hear apologetic appeals to creation, an innate drive for purpose, personal identity, the reliability of Scripture, the need for changed hearts, human sinfulness, redemption, hospitality, community, etc.

Why is this apologetic skill so essential in our current cultural moment? There was a time when Christians could confidently assume that their non-believing co-workers and fellow golfers viewed the world from a Christian perspective. That is no longer true.

Take any major Christian position, and you will quickly discover that your non-believing neighbor has adopted an opposing position. Christians believe in Creation, but your neighbor has more than likely adopted the theory of Evolution—the implications for this belief have devastating personal and cultural consequences.

Christians hold that God has given us an objective, absolute, and universal moral code of ethics. Unfortunately, many people have rejected this view in favor of radical relativism. Again, the consequences are

beyond the pale.

Christians believe in a meaningful universe defined by and destined for the Maker's appointed end; our opponents have primarily adopted the idea of a meaningless cosmos indifferent to human plight. Look no further for an explanation of the current epidemic of despair.

James Orr was right when he wrote, "He who with his whole heart believes in Jesus as the Son of God is thereby committed to much else besides. He is committed to a view of God, to a view of man, to a view of sin, to a view of redemption, to a view of the purpose of God in creation and history, to a view of human destiny, found only in Christianity. This forms a "Christian view of the world...."

Take a moment to reflect on that! Effectively commending and defending Christianity in today's cultural climate involves believing in and convincingly communicating many other truths, too!

Remarkably, we have three PGA Tour players who know "what and why they believe." At Links, we hope to equip thousands more to do the same.

**Prayer: Jesus! Teach us to love you with our minds as well as our hearts!**

**READING: 1 Peter 3:13-17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.**

1. How much knowledge do you possess regarding swing mechanics? Does it matter? What happens when your swing goes South? Discuss!

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2. After reading these texts, discuss the different parts of "defending the faith."

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3. Application: What major arguments against the faith have you encountered? Discuss.

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