



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

When Bad Becomes Normal

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Golf's simple purpose, made complicated by its attempt, satisfies our desire for pursuit while it frustrates an equal one for beauty and precision in accomplishing it.

The game requires striking a ball into a four-and-a-half-inch cup in the fewest amount of strokes using an implement designed for the intent on varied ground and held by someone ill-equipped to do so.

For me, permit me my stick, my ball, and the game, and allow me discovery's joy, anticipation, and intent. Give me the moment when all effort gives way to a single swing completed and described only as pure.

Give me a ball lasered in flight against deep cerulean skies toward a target, landing quietly on verdant, manicured greens and rolling a well-struck putt to hear the ball rattle as it drops in the cup.

There is joy in the pursuit and excitement in executing a satisfactory swing when, at once, purposed practice expresses its intent on a perfectly struck ball. Familiarity, habit, and intentionality reward the careful golfer.

Success for a golf shot begins with three important fundamentals – grip, ball position, and alignment. Each has a singular role to play in its execution, and each works in concert with the other. If one is askew, the other two must offer a compensatory salvage operation for the shot at hand. More often, what's delivered is a demoralizing and diminished return.

A lax and unobserving player must depend on luck, a most fickle and semi-occasioned companion. Because he takes his fundamentals for granted, the careless golfer falls prey to his compensations and misconceptions. Fooled by those misappropriated assumptions, bad golf becomes normal and unnoticed.

Isn't our Christian life the same? Don't we sometimes forget our faith fundamentals and allow laxity to become normal and unnoticed? And let's ask a more important question – what informs our Christian response to life's reality after grace?

I am not suggesting one engages an ascetic life to affect selfish desires. I'm told no one can drink themselves sober or spend themselves rich or behave their way to heaven. Such a life spills empty

into a dry well. Grace accepts us but also calls us out from ourselves toward repentance and transformation. And when God transforms us, doesn't the world change?

When bad becomes normal, another set of eyes is needed. To take heed, to be informed about prolonged misconceptions requires an angel – friend, teacher, spouse and even God Himself – to open the way. Grace is but the halfway point. Observing intentional faith walks a path toward becoming.

To seek God through familiarity, habit, and intentionality arouses within us sincerity in prayer, devotion, and solitude, the fundamental means by which God transforms and calls His children to mission. Daily, if we pray, read God's word, study with quiet diligence, does God reveal Himself in all things. To reach for God any other way, forgets God. To not reach for God, forgets grace.

“Those who have ears to hear, let them hear” (Matthew 11:15, NKJV).

Prayer: Lord! Give us ears to hear!

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