



Links Players

On the Back Nine With A Swing Thought

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

My first set of golf clubs was a gift from an elderly farmer friend of my family. They had been stashed in a barn for years. The shafts were made of steel but were covered with plastic featuring a wood motif – the steel shaft revolution was still in its infancy.

But the clubs were modern compared to the golf shoes I was given. Recovered from the barn and filled with mud dauber nests. After soaking in warm water and receiving a thorough rubdown with saddle soap, I was ready. The bag was about to fall apart, but it contained a decent stash of old Sarazen's and Po-Do's, so I was ready to tee it up.

I was around twelve, and naturally, I just wanted to tee it up and hit the wooden-headed driver as far as possible. I never even considered seeking some help on how. There is an important lesson to be learned from that.

Years later, I came to Christ at a Young Life ski camp. It wasn't long before I knew all the songs and relished every message I heard from the leadership. I even highlighted the verses in the New Testament, but I never even considered reading that Bible on my own.

As I look back, there's a clear pattern in the way I started in golf and my faith. No lessons in golf; no earnest Bible study to nourish a shallow faith. This continued through high school and college. I was a mile wide and an inch deep.

Looking back, I see how vulnerable my faith was and how clueless I was about golf swing fundamentals. It wasn't long before I began to struggle on both fronts for similar reasons.

This condition persisted through graduate school. That period was proof of the old saying, "Man's lofty opinion of himself survives every accumulation of contrary evidence." I didn't even pay attention to Dean Martin's advice: If you drink, don't drive. Heck, don't even putt!

Years later, I had a life-changing encounter with an amazing pastor who gave me a loving but firm rebuke about the importance of regular Bible study. It changed my life. Embracing readily available resources – both for my faith and for my golf swing – was a game changer.

Swing Tip – Develop a Solid Stance

Get familiar with your Bible and don't tense up about adding some solid Christian theology to your regular study. Getting to the "good stuff" – stuff we can see, feel, and depend on requires a solid stance and a firm foundation in sound theology. Eventually, I learned that "good theology" just means a sound knowledge of the Bible.

R.C. Sproul showed me how foolish I had been to miss the importance and the pure joy of study:

No Christian can avoid Theology. Every Christian is a theologian. The issue for Christians is not whether or not we're going to be theologians but whether we are going to be good theologians or bad ones. A good theologian is instructed by God.

Expecting to improve your handicap without instruction, lessons, practice, and probably quite a bit of physical training is almost certain to bring disappointment.

If golf demands our time, attention, and effort, how can we approach our spiritual growth any less seriously?

Prayer: Jesus! Draw me deeper and deeper into my knowledge of you and your purposes.

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Rod Clark

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