



# Links Players

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## Luck or Grace?

*He saved us, not because of the righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy. (Titus 3:5, NIV)*

Golf is full of good breaks and bad breaks. I want to think that practice results in good swings that send the ball right on target, elegant pitch shots that hop and stop on command, and putts that snuggle up to the hole or go in.

But we all know that the game of golf is never predictable or consistently rewarding. It is a tough game, due to uneven terrain and unpredictable breaks the golf course gives us.

A good shot can start out the way we plan and still take a bad bounce. Conversely, we can top the ball, yet see it run up on the green with just the right speed to stop next to the hole.

My friend says, "I'm so unlucky" when a shot doesn't go well, but I don't hear her say how lucky she is when she gets an unexpected, good bounce.

I have come to believe that golf doesn't promise us anything except the opportunity to play the game. What is predictable is a general golf course layout, playing by the Rules of Golf, teeing off, and stroking the ball until it's in the hole.

Because of the built-in variability of the golf course, we experience an infinite variety of situations that we see as challenges to overcome or as problems that leave us frustrated. Our attitude is key to how we approach the game.

We can expect similar challenges or problems in life as well. Without faith or belief in something greater than ourselves, it is easy to attribute everything to luck or chance.

As a follower of Jesus, I know that the challenges and joys I experience are not random, but a part of the plan God has for me. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

As a follower of Jesus, I have been saved through faith, by grace, and not because I have done anything to earn it. In his letter to Titus, Paul wrote, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy."

Paul continues in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." As a recipient of his mercy, one of the good works I can do is extend grace to others.

Looking at life through the lens of God's grace changes my perspective on everything. When I think of a bad golf swing that got a good bounce or the equivalent in life, I don't take it for granted. Instead, I am grateful.

While I don't expect the good bounces to be God's doing, I am thankful that I am a recipient of his grace in my life, and it makes me want to extend grace to others in return.

**PRAYER: Lord, thank you for your grace, as I have not earned it and don't deserve it, but receive it thanks to your love and the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

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