



# Links Players

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## Skins Game?

*...since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame.*

*Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne (Hebrews 12:1-2).*

For several weeks in the summer of 2025, the Links Friday devotionals have been about "Transformation". Many great interviews of people sharing their stories have inspired devoted readers across the country.

Yesterday, at one of our Links Fellowships in the Upstate of South Carolina, we were discussing the process God sometimes uses to work in our lives for our good and His Glory.

One of the guys gave an insightful description of how a snake sheds its skin. Okay, confession time for me... I HATE SNAKES, and I'm only afraid of two kinds: live ones and dead ones!

During spring training in 1990 with the Giants, I took my 3 ½-year-old son, Seve, with me to play nine holes at Troon North in Scottsdale, AZ. As we drove down the cart path, we saw a 7-foot rattlesnake crossing it.

Like an idiot, I jumped out of the cart and struck its head with my four iron, killing it on the first strike. If only I had the same accuracy striking a golf ball.

Within seconds, a maintenance worker drove up and asked me what I planned to do with it. Concerned I might have just killed a protected species in the desert of Arizona, I said I didn't have any plans.

He asked me if he could have it. Confused, I asked, "What are you going to do with it?" and he said, "I want to eat it". I spent months trying to explain it all to my son!

The Apostle Paul encourages us in Philippians 1:6 with, "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."

Biology lesson regarding snakes; before shedding its skin, a snake's eyes may appear a milky blue color or cloudy, indicating that the old skin is loosening. This change is part of the physiological process that prepares the snake for shedding.

Once the eyes clear, the snake will start rubbing its head against rough surfaces to peel off the old skin around its nose and mouth, eventually crawling out of it entirely. This process leaves the snake with a fresh, vibrant layer of new skin.

The growth comparisons for us as believers and followers of Jesus lit me up. As a snake prepares for this new growth, its eyes get clear.

When growing in our faith in Jesus, we see more clearly how sinful we are in comparison to a Holy God.

The snake rubs its head against rough surfaces to remove the skin. Paul says for us to “renew our minds” and to “lay aside every weight of sin that entangles us. Snakes eventually crawl out of the old and crawl again in new skin.

Believers and followers of Jesus don't crawl; we run with perseverance, looking at Jesus (Heb 12:2).

Jesus has crushed the snake's head (Satan), and the end of the road for the enemy is certain. For those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, the victory is ours because of Christ, and we have the promise that we will one day live in a sinless eternity.

Because of Jesus, I'm not afraid of this snake because he is defeated.

The questions are: What is the Spirit showing you that needs to be shed so you can grow in your faith? Are you renewing your mind with the truth of scripture? What rough things is God allowing in your life that are causing you to grow in your faith and trust in Him?

**Prayer: Jesus, because I am a new creation, old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. You defeated the enemy. Thank you for the victory. Spirit, open my eyes to see you clearly and show me what I need to lay aside so I can run with perseverance, keeping my eyes on you.**

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