



Links Players

IDOLS | ICONOCLASTIC CHRISTIANS

Now, while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked [Greek- “profoundly upset”] within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. (Acts 17:16, ESV).

If any of us started telling stories about breaking clubs, we could spend a great deal of time trying to one-up each other. Between outbursts of belly laughter mixed with intermittent groans, we might not finish these tales of tirade before Jesus returns.

Recalling first-hand stories of watching boyhood friends snap clubs over their thighs, wrap clubs around skinny pine trees, or tomahawk irons into the ground requires no mental effort.

Years ago, I watched a friend and great player set his carry bag at the end of the club’s parking lot, then drive his 280Z to the other end of the lot. As we gawked, he floored that speedster and ran right through them— he never looked back. Laughter echoes!

Breaking clubs as an expression of anger or just plain old impulsive behavior has a long history in our sport. Famously, young Bobby Jones was known to sling a club or two. The legendary Tommy Bolt, when asked about throwing clubs, responded, “I never threw one that didn’t deserve it.”

If asked, “Have you ever broken a club?” after a moment of trying to hide my childish pride, I could share a few sad tales of immature behavior.

Once, as a high school junior, I went to the club after class and found out that UPS had delivered my long-awaited new irons.

The first five holes suggested I would have a long, loving relationship with these thin-top-line muscle backs. That is, until I shanked my seven iron on #6.

In a fit of rage, I turned around and accidentally hurled that iron into my “bag.” Not only did it break, but a couple of other irons also shattered. Trust me, I had to eat some humble pie in front of my head pro.

Breaking someone’s personal property might just lead to regret and financial loss. Intentionally damaging someone else’s property carries more serious consequences.

Yet some counterexamples illustrate why, at times, it is wise to do so. In a just war, destroying the enemy’s weapons stockpile would be beneficial— clearly, eliminating Nazi strongholds was a virtuous act.

In Scripture, stories of iconoclasm (i.e., smashing or destroying idols) are not only virtuous and courageous but also receive the approval of the true and living God.

Countless stories of Yahweh’s prophets destroying idols are found throughout Scripture. This often offends our modern sensibilities. We are so immersed in political correctness, religious pluralism, and the cultural acceptance of polytheism that we barely notice.

In contrast, the list of First Testament kings and prophets who tore down idols and destroyed the “high places” would include a team of “All-Stars” such as Moses, Gideon, David, Josiah, Elijah, and many others.

Paul’s reaction to idols was markedly different from our casual indifference as well. “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked (Greek- “profoundly upset”) within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.” (Acts 17:16).

And while Paul did not physically smash Athens’ idols, he did, by proclaiming the truths of Scripture, destroy the false ideas each idol represented. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

The cultural moment we’re in is one of proliferating idolatry. We’ve seen a sharp rise in temples dedicated to false gods across America, along with more ideas tied to false religions and speculative philosophies embraced by far too many of our fellow citizens.

Are we supposed to destroy these temples built for idols? “No!” Should we gather the courage to proclaim the truth of the gospel and tear down these false ideas about God? You bet!

Everyone needs an idol. Idolize Jesus!

Prayer: Father! Grant us the courage to combat the idolatries of our age.

