



Links Players

Rules and Guidance

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)

When it comes to the rules of golf, the basic principle is straightforward: play the course as you find it and play the ball as it lies. But as any golfer knows, things are not always that simple.

I recently observed a friendly dispute over a golf rule on the course. It was just a weekday outing, and while it wasn't a heated discussion, both sides were firmly convinced they were right. It made me wonder which version was correct, or, to put it another way, who had the truth on their side.

If you have a question about a golf rule, where do you go to find the definitive answer? Your source will be the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, whose contents are jointly determined by the R&A and the USGA. These two governing bodies collaborate to publish and update the book as needed, with the most recent changes occurring in 2023.

The Official Guide to the Rules of Golf is sometimes called “the Bible of Golf Rules,” which I think is a pretty impressive description. And speaking of the Bible, we find that it shares some similarities with the Rules of Golf.

In the Old Testament book of Exodus, we read about a set of rules that God gave to Moses, known as the Ten Commandments. Roughly 1500 years later, when Jesus was walking the earth, Jewish precepts and practices had expanded a bit; the nation of Israel was observing over 600 different rules and laws, even as all of humanity was struggling to fulfill the original ten.

But while the books have some similarities, we also find major differences between the Rules of Golf and the Holy Scriptures. The golf book can tell us how to interpret the rules, but it can't tell you how to play the game. If you want to know how to draw or fade the ball, or how to hit a flop shot, you're out of luck, because it's a rule book, not an instruction book.

Fortunately for us, the Bible is much more than a rule book. It's a history book, a book of poetry, and an account of the life of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But it's not just a book about God; it's a book from God, reflecting the truth of His Word. The Bible is a road map for how we should live, as Psalm 119:105 says: “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” Yet it does even more than provide sound guidance; it leads to life transformation, pointing us to Jesus Christ.

If you want to know how to interpret a golf rule, consult the Rules of Golf. If you want to know how to live a rich and meaningful life, consult the Word of God, known as the Bible.

Prayer: Father, we thank you for the gift of the Bible. Help us to embrace this privilege you have given us, by reading it and applying its guidance to how we live our lives. Amen

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