

# LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY 17, 2013

## FOR STRENGTH

*What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of this must be done for the strengthening of the church. (1 Corinthians 14:26, NIV)*

**Y**OU CAN'T ESCAPE IT. If you want to be a modern golfer, you can't just play golf. You need gym time—or at least a good stretching and strengthening routine in front of the TV. Golfers these days are athletes.

In truth, though, most of us would prefer to go on doing things just the way we've done them. We show up 20 minutes before tee time, hit a few balls to loosen up, stroke a handful of putts, and declare ourselves ready. I could probably contend that I've made as many first-hole pars without a warm-up as I've made with one, but I know in my golfer's heart that's not the way to go!

If we intend to get better at any endeavor, we will not accomplish that mission by doing "more of the same." This is why we have to be careful when we gather as believers, whether that is in a formal church setting, in a Links Fellowship, or talking out some personal matters with a Christian brother or sister. We have to be careful that what we are doing is strengthening one another and not just adding to the noise.

First, we must avoid carrying our conversational habits from outside the fellowship context into the fellowship context. We really do talk on another level when we speak of the things of God and the counsel of his Word. But when we let our politics or our neighborhood gossip or our me-first golf stories pepper the conversation, we offer nothing different, nothing stronger, than what the world offers.

Second, we must be equally cautious to not to let our "traditions of men" overtake plain biblical doctrine. Any adamant contributions should be made about central matters of the faith rather than peripheral topics.

When we contribute to one another's lives as believers, we are called to do this purposefully, that we might fortify each other. Let's be sure that's what we are doing.

## Opening questions: Hindrances to excellence

What keeps you from getting better at golf? How about in other matters, such as your career, your marriage, or your spiritual life?

## First importance

*Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 and 12-19.* How do these passages, so closely placed to Paul's instruction that we must engage in strengthening one another, help us maintain the right priorities in our church and fellowship activities and conversations?

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## Edification

*Read Ephesians 4:29.* What kinds of unwholesome talk are like conversational junk food? Conversely, what kinds of talk lead to our spiritual nourishment?

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*Read Romans 14:19.* In the midst of instruction about differing opinions on religious traditions, Paul calls the people to mutual edification. What can your brothers and sisters do to help you grow in your faith right now? What can you do to help them?

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## Taking action

Consider now a specific edifying word of encouragement or challenge that you can give to someone this week, then do it. Report back to your group how it went.