



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR JANUARY 18, 2013

## SIN AND GRACE

*Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. (Psalm 25:18, NIV)*

IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO CONVINCE ME OF THE REALITY OF SIN. I just take a look at my golf game.

Just a week ago, I teed it up with the friend of a friend of a friend (no kidding!). This last friend down the line was no ordinary player. His resume includes two PGA Tour wins and two Champions Tour majors. I did not, as a golfer with an index under four, roll my opening drive. No, I cold topped it, bouncing it maybe 50 yards, into the rough and trees. "Hello, Mr. Tour Veteran. I'm afraid that's what I've got."

Now let me offer three insights into this situation:

1. This was not the first time I'd played with or near great players. As a teenager, for instance, I once teed off with Gary Player standing right behind me, waiting to play in the next group. I was nervous, but I hit it just fine. *Sometimes we sin even when we're in the presence of those who should spur us to do our best.*
2. I rarely warm up before I play at home, and yet I never hit drives as ugly as that. This day, we'd had plenty of warm-up time, and I'd hit every driver just fine. *Sometimes we sin soon after we've had a time of excellent communion with God.*
3. I hadn't hit a ball like this since I was a kid. A few rollers, sure, but a miss as bad as this with such an easy club to hit? Nope. *Sometimes sins we thought were long gone rise up to remind us that we must always be on guard.*

With the beauty of grace, one of our other partners that day, immediately said, "Oh, hit another." I didn't hesitate for one half breath to take him up on his offer. This man was willing to "forgive my sin," just as God is in my life. The next drive was well-flighted, down the middle with my usual distance. *Grace restored me in the moment, and grace has fired my diligence since—I sure don't want to hit that shot again!*

## Opening questions: Big mistakes

What is the worst golf shot you can remember hitting, especially after you became an avid player? How did you respond in the moment to that shot? Did you make any adjustments because of it?

## The reality of sin

*Read Genesis 4:1-12 (with special attention to the LORD's words in verse 7) and 1 Peter 5:8-9.* How do these passages inform us about the presence of temptation and the draw of sin?

What challenge do they offer to the one who would do right?

## Sin and the Spirit

*Read Romans 7:14-8:4.* How do you identify with Paul's struggle with sin? What is the one remedy for sin he conveys here?

*Read Romans 8:5-11.* With the knowledge provided here, what should we ask of God if we are to be controlled "not by the flesh" (sinful nature)?