

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR NOVEMBER 30, 2012

STEERING CLEAR OF WRONG

...things the LORD hates: ...feet that are quick to rush into evil... (Proverbs 6:18, NIV)

NO GOLFER WITH HALF A WIT LINES UP TO HIT IT INTO TROUBLE. Sand, water, rough, gorse, trees, rocks—they're all to be avoided!

Why is this? The answer is simple, really. Low scoring—which is the goal of every serious golfer—happens best when we're playing from the much-praised "garden spot." As a high school golf coach, I made a habit last year of reminding my top players that "birdies are made from the fairway."

Of course, there are exceptions, those times when we defy the odds and pull off an outstanding (or downright lucky) shot from a nasty place and walk away from the hole better in relation to par than we came. But we never want to try to make a routine of that, for it doesn't take too many double and triple bogeys from those trouble spots to make us forget all about those birdies in a bad way.

When we walk with the Lord, we also find ourselves, as did Bunyan's Pilgrim, torn between two choices. There is the craggy path that lures us with promises of shortcuts. And there is the long, slow, proven way. The Bible separates these choices into two categories: righteousness and evil. That second label is so uncomfortable, though, that most of us prefer not to talk about it.

In Proverbs, we come across a list of things God hates. One of these is a quick jaunt into evil. How does that sit with you? Now imagine what you would do if your trusted caddie finds the many places on a course where you simply cannot hit it. Then, as you eat dinner together and prepare for the next day's round, he walks you through them. "At nine, you really need to be careful," he says. "There's a monstrous barranca all done the left side. I took one peek in there and said to myself, 'That place is evil.'" Your caddie's message would be clear: Stay away—*far, far* away. And that would not make you uncomfortable at all.

We may read Scripture and, encountering the notion of evil, skip right along. *Too strong for me*, we think. *Gives me the heebie-jeebies*. Yet what God has done is just what we need; he has blessed us with clearly defining the dangers. And in telling us where not to go, he has again been our faithful guide.

Opening questions: Nasty spots

What's the worst trouble you've ever found yourself in on the golf course? How about in life? How did you reflect on these situations upon emerging from them?

Things God hates

What does it look like when someone rushes into evil? Why do you think they do this in spite of their "better judgment"?

Read Proverbs 6:16-19. What other actions make the list of things God hates? Do any of these inclusions surprise you?

Which of these sins would you admit to in your own life? Why do you think you acted in this way rather than make a righteous choice?

God's willingness to forgive

Read John 8:1-11 and 1 John 1:8-10. How do these passages round out the context of God's desires for us?
