

# LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY 10, 2013

## SHHH!

*But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backwards and laid it across their shoulders. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked. (Genesis 9:23, NIV)*

AS A HIGH SCHOOL GOLF COACH, I get a lot of questions about rules. In addition to the Rules of Golf, the high school game includes rules about player behavior and spectator interaction (not that our game needs *more* rules!).

I'm always happy to answer these questions and go through scenarios with my own players. And I'm willing to be on the spot to help a player conduct himself properly when a rule comes into play. But I dread being an enforcer when a rule has been breached. In fact, most of the time when I know a player has made an error according to the rules, I'll say nothing if I know the outcome of the match will not be affected. Rather, I'll cozy up to the coach or player afterward, explain what happened, and help them be on guard for next time.

Because next time they may very well run into *that guy*. You know who I'm talking about. He's the one looking for others to break the rules, just so he can be the one to proudly point it out.

Many people see God this way. They've tagged him as *That Guy*—with capital letters, because he gets to make the rules *and* catch those who break them.

But this is not really God's desire. From the beginning, God has been about *covering* sin, not *uncovering* it. When Adam and Eve sinned, they thought to cover themselves with fig leaves. "You need more than that," was God's approach, and he provided them with the skin of animals whose blood was spilled. When Noah also surrendered to the fruit of the vine and lay naked in his tent, his son Ham looked upon him and told his brothers of their father's sin. But the brothers, Shem and Japheth, gently covered their father.

This is not leniency. Adam's sin and Noah's too were told for all time. But it is grace, the kind that says, "I want to forgive you, not embarrass you." And it is a call to us as God's children, to look not for ways to expose the sins of others but to cover that sin with Christ's grace: "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

## Opening questions: Rules

What golf rules do you relax when you play with your regular group? Are you comfortable playing under the more stringent rules of competition?

## Sin and grace

*Read Genesis 9:18-27.* Describe the contrast in the actions of Noah's sons, as well as the contrast in Noah's response to them.

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*Now read of Jesus' interaction with the adulterous woman in John 8:2-11.* What is most striking about the way Jesus dealt with this woman?

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What might we learn from Jesus' forgiveness? What is important about the way he ended his interaction with her?

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*Read Romans 6:15-18.* How does this passage explain the wonder of Christ's grace and our appropriate response to it?

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