

LINKS PLAYERS

DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR AUGUST 16, 2013

THE KING ON HIGH

He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. (Isaiah 40:23, NIV)

QUITE OFTEN I’VE FOUND MYSELF IN CONVERSATION with leaders of Links Fellowships about the conversation that is happening among their participants. They want to know what works when it comes to talking about God. What I often find myself saying in so many words is this: talk about God.

Does that come across as simplistic? It would be except for that fact that so many groups formed to talk about who God is and what the Scriptures say about him disintegrate into public discussions of anything but God.

For instance, in Links Fellowships, which bring golfers together for explorations “beyond the game,” we can get stuck talking about the game and never reaching beyond. Moreover, because golfers often have professional backgrounds or professional interests, they can become bogged down in conversations about business or the markets. But maybe the most daunting enemy of true spiritual conversation is political engagement, because such conversations are comprised almost completely of boisterous opinions replete with accusations but bereft of resolutions. If it’s such political pontificating you want, you can get that over beers in the grillroom; you don’t need to show up at a Bible study for it.

Readers of the Bible should know this already. They should know it not because their political discussions are driving potential earnest seekers away (though that is reason enough); rather, they should know this because those we call kings have no more permanence than the rest of us in the pages of Scripture. God directs us to respect our governing authorities because he has established them (Romans 13:1-2). But he never tells us to look to these earthly leaders as those who can save us. They are truly “here today and gone tomorrow.”

When you recognize that God ordains, sustains, and deposes the rulers of the world, you’ll find why you do not need to expend much worry or words over them—though prayer for their leadership is always in order! With the right consideration of the hierarchy of God and men, we always do best when we attend to the person of the everlasting God rather than to the persons he has put in temporary power.

Opening questions: Kings among us

A recent business magazine cover featured Amazon founder Jeff Bezos on its cover with these words: “King Bezos.” Besides political leaders, what other “kings” are given unique authority over large groups of people? What might we learn from watching these leaders? What are the limits of their example to us?

God’s preeminent position

Read Isaiah 40:10-31. List several specific ways God’s character and power are shown to be above and beyond the strength of even the best earthly leaders.

Which of the descriptions of God in Isaiah 40 carry special promise for personal circumstances in your life right now?

Respecting those in authority

Read Romans 13:1-7. What reasons do we find in Romans 13 for respecting governmental authorities? What might be the limitations to such obedience (see Daniel, chapters 1 and 3)?

How would respecting governmental authorities improve the quality of your own ambassadorial role in Christ’s kingdom (see 2 Corinthians 5:20)?
