

January 2017

Dear Links Player,

**Sometimes a new year is eagerly anticipated.** Both in normal conversational settings and simply overhearing passers-by, it seems a lot of people have been waiting with great hope for 2017. Their 2016 was “bad”—to use the least offensive descriptor I’ve heard. If I know the people speaking, I might have instant understanding of why their past year was not a happy one. But when I chance upon two strangers agreeing on how ugly 2016 was, I wonder why they feel that way. Maybe, like me, they received an unwelcome diagnosis and had to endure some rough treatments. Or maybe it was something else, something relational or financial or political.

I have kept reminding myself, however, that Scripture has not changed, nor the Holy Spirit who inspired it. And at times like these, my mind turns frequently to Philippians 4, which offers four poignant lines of encouragement:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! (v. 4)

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (v. 7)

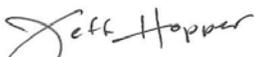
I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. (v. 11)

I can do everything through him who gives me strength. (v. 13)

I know that honesty is an important characteristic for followers of Jesus, so you may report and even lament with all authenticity that 2016 was a struggle. You might go so far as to call it awful, or a word with similar bearing. But set against that “realism,” you must hold fast to the greater reality of God’s truth, and that truth as it is presented in Philippians 4 leads us to rejoicing, to peace, to contentment, and to strength—despite the awful.

**I hope your 2016 was not at all bad and that you are looking for more of the same in 2017.** I know we were blessed quite greatly at Links Players in 2016. More men and women than ever before are meeting in Links Fellowships and talking about the wonder and work of Christ. They are increasingly intentional about changing the conversation at their clubs, so that others are led to seek Jesus with them. And there are many who have come alongside to support our workers in the field, who are helping more Fellowships get started so more people in more clubs can hear the gospel of hope and salvation written in the sacrifice of Jesus.

Thank you for catching this vision with us. No matter where you live, your support is helping reach golfers in clubs like yours—and maybe in your very own club. When that happens, we are doing just what God has called us to do!

  
Jeff Hopper, COO

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755 N. PEACH AVENUE, SUITE E11, CLOVIS CA 93611 • 800-90-LINKS • WWW.LINKSPLAYERS.COM

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