

BLESSING ISRAEL WITH JESUS, PART 4

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now... (Philippians 1:4-5, NIV)

THE WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP between Masters champion Jordan Spieth and his caddie Michael Greller has received more than a bit of attention this week. Greller met Spieth through a series of hand-me-down recommendations after the Washington math teacher had volunteered his services at a several local events, including the USGA Junior Amateur that Spieth won in 2011. Out of these rather humble beginnings, the partnership carrying the hottest hand in golf was born.

Partnerships, when they work as they are supposed to, truly can be one of the greatest blessings in our lives. Certainly those with happy marriages can attest to this, but so can those who have working and recreational friendships that are healthy and fruitful.

At Links Players, we have found a true partner in Israel College of the Bible. Their desire to create an unlikely unity in Jesus among supposed enemies—namely Jews, Arabs, and other Gentiles—reflects our own heart. We want Jesus to stand at the center in our time, just as he will in glorious eternity, when “there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Revelation 7:9). We want to see people from all places worshiping Jesus together now. So we have partnered with the leaders at ICB, linked by a heart’s desire.

Paul wrote of such a beautiful partnership when he opened his letter to the Philippians. In so many ways this is an encouraging letter, because it allows us to see what God can do in people who give their hearts to him. And one of those things is to forge energetic connections for the sake of the gospel.

We can turn to many Scriptures and find that rugged individualism—or even dainty individualism!—is not God’s design for ministry. Rather, Jesus’ disciples went out in twos and threes and fours, and Paul wrote of the necessity of Christ’s full body of believers in accomplishing the work of the kingdom.

In Christ, we are all ministers, with a gifting and a work, as we discussed just yesterday. What we need as well in that work are partners, whose hearts are joined in Christ with our own and who are as eager to do the work alongside us as we are to accomplish the work with them.

Opening questions What good partnerships have you had the pleasure of being involved in? • How would partners for the Gospel be more effective than those working alone?

READING 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Acts 20:17-38; Romans 12:3-21

Partnered with Christ
How does 1 Corinthians 1:9 speak of our relationship with Jesus? What benefits from the relationship are pointed out in the rest of this passage?

A heartfelt exchange
Looking at Acts 20, how would you describe the partnership between Paul and the Ephesian elders? What work did Paul entrust them with? How could he be sure they would remain faithful to Christ, to one another, and to the gospel?

The body at work
In verses 3-8, what do we see of the nature of Christ’s people? In verses 9-21, where do we see their loving ministry pointed and what does it include?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/03c53PbVU1U>