

BACKWARD THINKING, PART 8

“Apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5b, NIV)

WITH THE RELENTLESS ADVANCEMENT OF GOLF TECHNOLOGY, it’s a comment you don’t hear so much anymore. It arises in on-course conversation when a playing companion hits a shot up onto the green near the hole.

You call out, “Nice shot!”

And here’s the noted response: “My trusty old 4-iron comes through again!”

Given the forward march of equipment, with innovations in materials and design, avid golfers simply don’t hang on to trusty old clubs anymore. They would give up too much ground to their buddies. But for the sake of some (approved) nostalgia, think back for a moment to when you had a club you thought you could never give up. Why? *Because you simply wouldn’t have been the same golfer without it!*

Now that we’ve had our bit of fun at our own expense, laughing at our crazy lack of foresight, let’s take a serious turn, because there is every reason to recognize that when it comes to getting the spiritual job done, so to speak, it’s not going to happen without Jesus. This whole series has been focused on how we lose track of that critical fact, forsaking what’s promised for the allure of what’s past.

When we are willing to step out in faith and into our calling, we are making a move into the unseen realm. That is, we don’t know for sure where God will take us. But what we do know is who will accompany us as we go: Christ the Lord.

This leaves us with a choice. We can cling to familiarity in terms of conditions and circumstances and essentially go nowhere. Or we can cling to the One who openly taught his disciples that there was no point in going at all—indeed, they would accomplish nothing—unless they went with Jesus. We may look at an endeavor and call it daring; he looks at us and says, “Do you not see that I am unfaltering? I’ve got this. Now come with me!”

The remedy for nostalgia is forward motion in the pursuit of our heavenly calling. And the formula for that pursuit is simple. Don’t go it alone. Don’t go it in a Christless mass. Go it only if Jesus is by your side. He is the one who will turn your work fruitful a hundred times over.

Opening questions What is your favorite club in your bag? How would your game be affected if you had to give it up? • How do you know by experience the value of having Jesus in your life?

READING Exodus 33:12-17; John 15:5-8; Mark 4:13-20

God’s coveted presence (Exodus 33)

How strongly did Moses desire God’s presence? Why do you think he considered it to be so valuable?

Remaining in Christ (John 15)

What is the value of remaining in Christ? What did Jesus say was to God’s glory? What kind of fruit do you think he was speaking of?

A hundredfold crop (Mark 4)

In the parable of the sower, Jesus closed by defining degrees of success. What does it take to produce a hundredfold crop? What would motivate you to pursue your heavenly calling this aggressively?
