

## REAL WORLD GOD: INTRODUCTION

*For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and through him. (Colossians 1:16, NIV)*

**T**HE MOST COMMON QUESTION ASKED AMONG GOLFERS MAY BE THIS ONE: What is your favorite course you have ever played?

The answers can come from a number of different perspectives. A player’s favorite course may be his home club, because he carries so many memories of good shots and great friendships there. Or it may be the course where she shot the best score of her life, punctuated by a hole-in-one. But what is most common is that a golfer loves a particular course because of its surrounding beauty and the creativity of the architect in assembling holes amidst the wonder. This can be true whether it is a mountain course, a desert course, an ocean course, or a classic parkland layout. All possess characteristic glory.

As we embark on our new Friday series, “Real World God,” we want to spend the weeks emphasizing that the God of the Bible is not an ivory tower, line-item bureaucrat and Scripture itself is not a collection of tenets to be followed like marching orders. Rather, the Word of God is the revelation of God, whereby he shows us himself, in nature and in action. Among all this are commandments (more literally, “words”) to be followed, but even those show up amidst earthly settings or are conveyed through real life scenes and stories.

In writing to the Colossians, Paul did not hold back in giving credit for creation. First, he credited the work of creation to the Son, Jesus. It is statements like this that allow us to recognize the trinitarian nature of God. But beyond that, the apostle noted that anything and everything was created by God. There are no boundaries to this work.

Perhaps this was easier to grasp in the ancient age, before the whirlwind of invention and manufacturing that enveloped Western civilization in the 19th Century. But the Egyptians had their pyramids and the Romans had their aqueducts; there has always been opportunity for man in his hubris to overlook the work of God.

Our intention going forward is to do just the opposite—we want to give God all credit, showing that neither his words nor his work are distant matters. He has brought them to where we live, unveiling lessons we can understand and follow.

**Opening questions** What is one of your favorite golf courses? What makes it so? • What is an example you can think of from Scripture where real world images are employed to teach us about God?

**READING** Colossians 1:13-20; Romans 8:18-25; John 9:1-7

### God, the creator (Colossians 1)

List the specific works the Son is credited with in this passage. This passage closes in verse 20 with reference to Christ’s death; what real world components do you find in that work?

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### The groaning of creation (Romans 8)

Why is the creation waiting, and what is it waiting for? How are we like creation in our groaning? What characteristic should mark our hopeful waiting?

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### Mud in your eye (John 9)

What makes this account “down to earth”? Why do you suppose Jesus didn’t just say a few words, wave his hand, and let the healing be done?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. This study is accompanied by a 5-minute video here: <https://youtu.be/-bLq1x0wsh8>.