

REAL WORLD GOD 7: TIME WITH THE LORD

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, ...he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. (Exodus 34:29, NIV)

FOR SOME PEOPLE, golf is a religious experience. They go to the temple faithfully, pay their tithe, flagellate themselves on the range, humble themselves on the course, commune with their fellow congregants, and go home sullen.

For others, the game is a spiritual journey, where the walk in the open air enables them to see nature and hear themselves think. Their soul is soothed, and they leave “a better person.”

But few, I am guessing, are able to parlay from golf an authentic encounter with God. They are not driven to their knees like a terrified Martin Luther in the lightning-lit woods. They do not come to grips with their sin and fall in repentance. They do not persist in prayer, wrestling like Jacob until the blessing of God is given. They are not reading the Word of God, or reciting it as they go. And they do not hear from the Holy Spirit as he speaks to their questions and concerns.

There is a likely reason this is so. Golf is too much like life.

As we conclude our study of how God uses real world pictures to convey his revelation to us by way of metaphors, we do well to recognize—and admit—how poor we are at seeing these pictures with any great clarity. This is because for every towering pine and shimmering lake in the real world, there is an appointment to be kept and a paper to be filed. For every rocky crag that is home to some hearty and industrious creature, there is a sticky problem to be solved in the human home of the creature that is me. Whether the disturbances come from our work projects or our work relationships, whether the demands are made by a home repair or a home mortgage, whether these can be solved today or must wait until tomorrow, when it comes to the goodness of God, they all have the same effect—they do not allow us to see him as well as we might.

So what may be done? Namely this: *Stop!* Whatever it is you normally do, whatever plans you are sure you cannot change, whatever friends must be called to make arrangements, sometimes we must be severest with ourselves that we might make room for God. He wants our time and attention, and when he gets it, he does unmatchably well by us. He gives us the very best thing he can give us. He gives us himself.

Opening questions Is golf ever an escape for you, or has it become an intense endeavor of another kind? What is the best way you've found to get away from it all and focus on what's truly important in your life?

READING Matthew 13:22; Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Concerns and resolve (Matthew 13)

In Jesus' parable, what troubles keep the third type of seed from flourishing? What “worries of this life” keep you from Jesus? How can you counter this?

Shining faces (Exodus 34)

As far as we know, Moses' shining face was unique in history. Still, there are positive effects of meeting intentionally with the Lord. What are they?

Glory come our way (2 Corinthians 3)

What does the Spirit of God provide to us? How are we being transformed? In what ways does this transformation and the hope we are given make us bold?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. This study is accompanied by a 7-minute video here: <https://youtu.be/tHa83nCA97A>.