

THINGS WE LOVE: GOLF

There are...things that are too amazing for me... (Proverbs 30:18, NIV)

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, I wrote [an article](#) about how much I love birdies. I still do. I think every golfer does. You may not make them very often, but when that straight miss bounds its way along the fairway, skirts the bunker by a foot, angles its way toward the flag, and nestles a few feet from the cup, you can feel it. Nerves. Here's your chance to make a birdie!

Of course, maybe you're better than serendipity. This makes your birdies no less enjoyable. Rickie Fowler made seven birdies in a nine-hole stretch on Sunday at the Quicken Loans National. I don't think he brushed off any one of them. Even the guys who are *supposed* to make birdies can't dismiss them.

Birdies aren't the only thing that makes golf enjoyable, I know. There is the landscape and the company, the exercise and the feel of a drive coming off the club just as it should—pure and straight. But here's the question I can't stop asking. Is it right for me to love something of the earth this much? One of my favorite theologians is decidedly anti-golf; it's not a serious enough pursuit. To him, it's frivolous, a waste of good time. To me, it's the very last of those things: a good time. Oh, what to do?

Let me suggest that at least three biblical truths come into play here:

- “‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but I will not be mastered by anything” (1 Corinthians 6:12b). We recognize in Paul's words and their context that God offers us an open door for glorifying him in all things, even golf. But he also warns that we must keep a sensibility about what we enjoy; moderation, perspective, self-control—all of these must govern our participation in all we do.
- “They...worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25). We fall into sin when we glory in the things we are given rather than the one who gives them to us. Golf is not nearly as beautiful as the one who gives it to us. Not even close.
- And yet, there are the four wonders of Proverbs 30, where Agur gapes in awe at a soaring eagle, a sunning snake, a sea-carving ship, and a couple in love. These are things of the earth, but they point to God in heaven. If in the world, we see the hand of God, we are seeing both rightly and we can worship God for it all.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2017 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: https://youtu.be/J_Htpxjclw.

Opening questions What is the most birdies you have ever made in a round? Do you have a favorite birdie you can remember? • What are some other of earth's wonders you greatly appreciate and love?

READING Proverbs 30:18-19 & 24-31; John 2:1-11; Romans 1:20

Deep appreciation (Proverbs 30)
 What strikes you about the observations of Agur in this passage? What does their variety suggest to you?

God's calling card (John 2)
 In what way did Jesus show his excellence at the wedding? What did this lead to in terms of response from the banquet master and the disciples?

Wonder and worship (Romans 1)
 What does the creation point to? What is your typical response when you see something beautifully crafted (or are your attentions too often elsewhere)? Why do you think people reject God in spite of nature's wonder?
