



June 2008

Dear Links Player,

Here comes the heat. As I write, much of the Eastern seaboard is baking. I found this out first by listening to my beloved baseball Giants, as their game from Washington was being broadcast back here to California. Forgive me for being so sports-minded. I think that in the same way God gives us born-in talents, He gives us honed interests as well. Mine happens to be sports.

Actually, sports have been very helpful in recent years when people ask me what I do. I tell them, primarily to gauge the depth of their knowledge of Christ and the Church, that I am involved with a sports ministry. Sometimes I'll tack on, "like FCA," because so many people know our friends at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and what they are about. If my conversant shows an interest, then I'll specify the golf side of what we do at Links Players. Like me, you have probably noticed that any reference to golf can elicit an "oh, one of those" reaction. But sports in general almost never does this, so I start broad, trying to plant some legitimacy in the hearer's mind.

That, in essence, is what we are active in doing at Links Players. We want to plant the legitimacy of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom in people's minds.

For "the uninitiated," this may be the simplest of introductions. We encourage them to think about their need for forgiveness. Often metaphors are helpful. Just the other day I shared with an assembled group of golfers, both believers and seekers, some of the major themes of our Course of Life scorecard (which I have enclosed), beginning with the plain fact that none of us will be able to turn in an unblemished scorecard on the day of judgment. We will need something far better than that when we stand before the holy God.

But this teaching is an ongoing work. For those who have assented to their need for Christ and pledged their life to Him, there is still much work to be done (can I get a witness?). As Christ grows in His legitimacy in our spirits, then so does His work through us; we are charged to render mercy, proclaim the Gospel, bestow generosity, pray for one another, raise our children in the Lord—oh, how long this list could be!

At Links Players, we remain in our lane: golf and God. God is preeminent, but He has provided us with insider status in the arena of golf, and we use that place to the glory and, we pray, the advancement, of His Kingdom. Thanks for standing with us as we do this!

Jeff Hopper
COO, Links Players