

December 2011

Dear Links Player,

Surprise! December is here!


Actually, I'm guessing this month did anything but sneak up on you, not with the way retailers jumpstart us toward Christmas so early these days. I'm not really a grump about those premature decorations the way some of my friends are, but then again I don't hang out in stores very often. Like you, I'd usually rather be outside. And if it can be on a golf course, all the better!

All the same, it's easy to get hung up on incidental matters these days. I have other friends, for instance, who insist that the first Christmas didn't happen in December—not if you look at the ancient calendars and do the math. I probably agree with them. But I'm not sure it makes much difference now. The celebration of the first coming of Jesus isn't a biblical mandate, so getting caught up in arguments about the precise landing spot for this day seems about as distracting to me as getting caught up in the sales and the Santas.

By *distracting*, of course I mean that our attention is removed from the One to whom the season and the day should really point. It is true that on a potent night roughly two millennia ago, God incarnated the baby Jesus and indwelt that boy-then-man from the manger to the cross. Along the way, He made stops at all those places that have become familiar to us: the Temple with the elders, the wedding in Cana, the well in Samaria, the surface of the water on the Sea of Galilee, and eventually the upper room. In other words, Jesus lived in many ways like you and I do. He moved from place to place, talking to this person and that, interacting in the near-term but keeping His eyes out in front of Him, toward the calling God had for Him.

We are prone, though, especially in crazy times like holiday seasons, to lose track of that calling—which for us is to live our lives as believing and serving children of the King of all creation, for the sake of His glory and our souls. That is something I *am* worried about! I never want to lose track of the things God wants me to do. That's why the Christmas and New Year holidays actually provide a great combination, urging me first to concentrate my affections on the Lord who lived among us and who yet lives within us, then to make a fresh commitment in my life. And what better fresh commitment than the resolve to listen to and follow Jesus' call on my life?

Thank you for supporting us at Links Players where we want everyone we meet to know Jesus and hear His call, loving and serving Him with ever-renewing commitment.



Jeff Hopper

Jeff Hopper
Chief Organizational Officer

LINKS PLAYERS INTERNATIONAL

755 N. PEACH AVENUE, SUITE E11, CLOVIS CA 93611 • 800-90-LINKS • WWW.LINKSPLAYERS.COM

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