

A  
LOOK AT LIFE  
FROM THE  
FAIRWAY

A DEVOTIONAL

STEVE CHAPMAN



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HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

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### **A Look at Life from the Fairway**

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

[www.harvesthousepublishers.com](http://www.harvesthousepublishers.com)

ISBN 978-0-7369-8754-7 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-0-7369-8755-4 (eBook)

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**Printed in China**

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 / RDS / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*This book is dedicated to  
Luther Weathers and Bob Harris  
and my fellow golfers  
with Golf Outing Fellowship*



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## INTRODUCTION

I sat down on the passenger seat of our golf cart, and as my friend drove us away from the clubhouse toward the first tee, he asked, “Why do we like to play this crazy game?” I had an answer I was confident he’d appreciate as he too was a man of faith.

“I think it’s a divine design by our amazing Creator. He wired us to be drawn to a particular interest, and He does it for at least two reasons. For our enjoyment because He is a kind and loving Creator, but more importantly, He can use our love of this game as a way to shed light on some life-changing truths that are contained in His written Word.”

My answer was based on having had another interest that God used through the years to reveal spiritual insights to me. I discovered in my early

teens that engaging in a battle of wits with woods-wise animals like deer and turkey rings the bell of my soul. It's a challenge that has sent me deep into many hallowed hollows to learn how to outsmart wild game, but along the way, as a hunter, I discovered more than food for my body. I found sustenance for my spirit.

These “harvests of truths,” as I like to call them, are gleaned when I see something in the outdoors that illustrates a character-building concept in the Word. At other times, I've seen truths in Scripture that were illustrated in the outdoors. It's been a joy beyond measure to experience these links because the yield has been wisdom and guidance I need to help me know my Creator better.

Several years ago, I started compiling into books the helpful and inspiring spiritual insights that have come from my enthusiasm for hunting. The first title was *A Look at Life from a Deer Stand*. Several books followed, and because I was so immersed in writing about the “fair chase,” I never considered addressing another topic—that is, until I found that I greatly enjoyed golfing. As I like to say—golf is a lot like hunting because in both you go to the

woods and look for something. At least it's true for me.

I suspect anyone who fervently enjoys time on a golf course will agree with that statement. Though it's a formidable challenge to play well, I'm admittedly enamored with chasing and "shooting" that little white sphere around acres and acres of fields and woods. It's a kind of hunting that is just as enjoyable to me as the pursuit of critters—the difference with golf being, of course, I don't have to gut and clean anything when the hunt is over except the bottom of my golf shoes and some clubs.

But just as God used hunting as a classroom where I could learn and better understand His ways, He has used golf to do the same. Of course, in order to enjoy the benefit of the spiritual insights that the game offers, I have to be looking and listening for them, and I gladly and regularly do so with a group of players in Nashville, Tennessee, known as Golf Outing Fellowship (GOF).

With the goal of providing my fellow players with the faith/fairway connections I was seeing, I got the idea to offer bimonthly devotional readings to be sent with the email blasts to the group

announcing tee times. Bob Harris, the coordinator of GOF, graciously opened that door, and as a result, this book, *A Look at Life from the Fairway*, was birthed.

If you enjoy the game of golf, my hope is that you will benefit from this collection of quick and easy-to-read entries that feature a key Scripture verse, a short golfing story or scenario that highlights the truth in the passage, and a personalized prayer for your benefit.

Blessings on all your rounds!  
Steve Chapman

## JUST GET CLOSE

*As for me, the nearness of God is good for me;  
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,  
So that I may tell of all Your works.*

PSALM 73:28

Most of us have stood within short iron distance from the green, and while checking the pin placement, slope of the putting surface, and then addressing the ball, we whispered desperately, “Just get close.” Maybe the scorecard to that point is showing a potential sub-80 round and the longing for that accomplishment is intense, or we’re trying just to salvage a round that’s gone to the golf dogs...but for whatever reason, the need to hit it well and snuggle the ball up near the hole presses on our nerves.

While these moments in our favored game are

admittedly not critical in terms of life, death, or eternity, they can help us understand just a little better the strong feelings that were coursing through a few notable people who stood at a distance from Jesus and felt a great need to get close to Him.

For example, in Luke 8 there was Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue whose daughter was dying. He felt compelled to get close to the One he believed could heal his little girl. And the woman with the issue of blood who had heard that Jesus could heal her infirmity was surely thinking as she pressed through the crowd toward the Lord, *Just get close!*

Along with these two desperate seekers, Luke 19:3 says of the popular-but-sorely-unliked tax collector named Zacchaeus that he “wanted to see who Jesus was” (NIV). Famously, his small stature and big curiosity drove him into a tree in order to get close enough to see Jesus. His was not a physical life-or-death matter but ultimately a spiritual health concern.

The outcome for all three of these players in the field of biblical history was better than par. Each of them was rewarded with a circle around their story

for making their best effort to get close to Jesus. Jairus's daughter was healed, the woman's issue of blood was stopped, and Zacchaeus ended up with Jesus graciously going into his home.

So...the next time that 75-yard approach shot brings up the "just get close" whisper, and no doubt it will, let it be a reminder of the eternal importance of wanting to get close to Christ our Savior. To do so will be the greatest of all accomplishments on or off the course.



*Thank You, heavenly Father, for the promise that says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8 KJV). I want to get close to You because I know in my heart of hearts that You alone can heal and sustain body, soul, and spirit. In the name of Your Son I ask You to help me to just get close. Amen.*





## THE GREATER BLESSING

*Remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said:  
“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

ACTS 20:35 NIV

A gift every golfer loves to receive during a round comes in the form of “That’s a gimme!” This gift of kindness is said in reference to a player’s ball that has landed or rolled near enough to the hole that it is deemed unmissable by a fellow player and their putt is not required. With this unearned blessing, the pressure of completing a par, or maybe a birdie or better, or salvaging a hard-earned bogie is immediately lifted off the golfer’s shoulders.

While these welcome words are indeed music to the ears when heard, saying them to a fellow player is just as sweet, if not sweeter. For one thing, it’s a

chance to be on the giving side of Jesus's words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Most of us would agree that as we walk to a fellow player's ball resting near the hole, there's a pure sense of joy that comes with tapping it with our putter across the green in their direction. The thrill of giving in that moment is truly the greater blessing.

Being the giver of a gimme is a wonderful thing for another reason. We get to be an earthly picture of heaven's greatest gimme revealed in the well-known words of John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV).

What a humbling thought that God, our Creator, would love us so much that He would give us the marvelous gift of unearned grace, and with it relieve us of all the worry about whether or not we'll score well in the game of life. This divine gimme is immeasurable in its value and deserves our sincerest gratitude that can be expressed with the same words we say to a friend who blesses us on the green with a gimme. "Thank You!"



*Father in heaven, how grateful I am for the gift of saving grace You have given to me. I know I didn't deserve it, yet You saw my need and You met it through Jesus. I want to say thank You by faithfully following You and carrying the light of Your love to others who need to hear about the gift of Your Son that You long to give them. In His name I pray. Amen.*