

Thy Club and Thy Staff: Twenty-One Daily Devotionals for Golfers

Meredith Wright Kirk

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A collection of twenty-one daily Christian devotionals for women golfers, *Thy Club and Thy Staff* is comforting and benign, like chicken soup on a frigid day.

With a USGTF (United States Golf Teachers Federation) Level III certification in golf instruction—as well as a degree in biblical counseling from Trinity Bible College and a BA from Coastal Carolina University in public relations—Meredith Wright Kirk has the credentials to help women golfers make a stronger connection to God, even while they bounce around in golf carts and perfect their skills on the putting green. In this slim volume, Kirk effortlessly explains the difference between centripetal and centrifugal force in a golf swing, while at the same time she gently exhorts readers to examine their faith to see where their lives as practicing Christians might come up short.

Kirk displays a steady, evenhanded writing style. She also has a keen eye for the smallest detail—it can be the tilt of the left shoulder in a golf swing or one of the countless, minor distractions of daily life. The latter, she says, must be set down at the foot of the cross in order to experience an abundant Christian life.

In golf and in life, Kirk comes across as a trustworthy and accessible guide. Despite her accomplishments and a seemingly charmed existence, Kirk has walked in her readers' shoes. She has been struck down by serious illness and she has questioned her faith. She is a disciplined athlete and a steadfast believer in a loving God. These qualities of strength and quiet faith form the foundation of this modest book.

There will be, however, some readers for whom Kirk's particular brand of writing will not be satisfying. Kirk's writing skill is competent, but her language lacks elegance and originality. Misspelled words pop up occasionally, and sometimes words are simply missing. Some readers will find it painful to read Kirk's awkward paraphrasing of clichés in her daily devotions, and there are moments where the analogy between golf and God is stretched quite thin.

In the devotion for day nine, for example, it is never made clear how Ben Hogan returned to golf—after a car accident—by staying “under the umbrella of God.” And it's doubtful that even the most die-hard golfer would stand on the eighteenth hole and thank God “for his centrifugal force.”

At her best, though, Kirk grounds her devotionals in tangible incidents that golfers experience on the links. It is entirely plausible that when a golfer fills in a divot, she might recall Kirk's exhortation to repair the broken relationships in her life. And, she just might attempt to recreate the quiet, meditative state of the putter as she approaches God in prayer. In these small moments, Kirk's instruction is at its most memorable.

A reminder that God is everywhere, Kirk's book is a plain and forthright devotional for the dedicated golfer.

DIANE TAYLOR (February 20, 2012)

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