

A MISSION IN LIFE 8: SUSTAINED COMMITMENT

[Paul] had discussions daily... for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. (Acts 19:9-10, NIV)

REGULAR FOURSOMES, STANDING GAMES, CLUB MEMBERSHIPS. These are the ways we golfers find our place in the game and stay there. It’s an intriguing combination of comfort and commitment.

Not long ago, a friend and I were paired with another twosome, and from the beginning it was something of an uncertain match. But when we got to the fifth tee and had a bit of waiting to do on this par-3, they broke out the music. I don’t have a problem with music on the course, as long as you’re not playing with me. While I could probably get used to it, for now I don’t like what it does to my swing tempo. There was room enough on the course, so we invited them to go ahead. It was amiable as far as breakups go, but I wonder if it was the right thing to do.

In life, it’s almost always easiest to move on. When a job or a church or even a golf foursome isn’t working out, we start looking for other options. Sadly, some people do this with marriages and other relationships. They are not—in opposition to what Bill Euler advocated earlier this week—persistent in their commitments.

There is a place in the kingdom of God for itinerant evangelists, those who move from town to town and preach the simple message of the good news of Jesus. Hearers respond in faith and sometimes turn repentantly to a whole new life. But that new living almost always happens under the discipling influence of someone who isn’t going anywhere, a local minister or friend who will meet you every Wednesday at 6 a.m., no matter the weather or his workload. This friend is, as we hear it said, “there for you.”

In golf, the player who makes nine birdies and nine bogeys records the same score as the player who makes 18 pars. Those birdies are so fun to watch, though, that we tend to gloss over the consistent player—until we’re looking for someone to remind us of the fundamentals of the game.

For eight Fridays now, we have been talking about our mission as men and women in Christ to share what we have with others. This starts with a fundamental story—that Jesus gave his life so we might live abundantly and eternally. But the work of this mission goes on, proven each time we come around again to sit with our friend and say, “Let me tell you what Jesus has for you this day.”

Opening questions With whom do you play golf most regularly? What are some of the constants about your game together? Where else are you committed to regular meetings with others?

READING Acts 18:1-11; Acts 20:17-31

Should I stay or should I go? (Acts 18)

What activities were involved in Paul’s ministry? How did he make decisions about where he should be ministering? How does knowing the Lord is with you help you in your own commitment to minister to others?

What our lives show (Acts 20)

How were Paul’s tasks in Ephesus consistent with his tasks in Corinth? What kind of examples did Paul set for the Ephesians through his life lived among them? How does verse 31 show the fullness of Paul’s engagement with the people in Ephesus?

In what ways has God gifted you to serve others? Where has God placed you at this point in your life? How do you know this is where he wants you to be? Do others know you are committed to them in Christ?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this Bible study is available here: <https://youtu.be/yTKX8GRKKGZw>.