



# Links Players

## RESCUED FROM DEATH 9: A GOOD FINISH

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7, NIV)*

IN THE MANY YEARS THAT I COACHED HIGH SCHOOL GOLF, my little team always had two kinds of players: those who knew and loved the game before they ever came my way and those who were just getting started. Any number of differences separated these two levels of players, but there was one that often made me laugh. For energetic young players who love golf, nine holes is never enough. And for new players for whom pars are still an extreme pleasure, going 18 is a feat only slightly below climbing Mt. Everest. When a player could flip the switch and enjoy a full round, I knew golf had entered his veins.

For most people you know, life is a full round—a championship course, we might say. You may even know some who are playing a “bonus nine,” either having outlasted all their friends or overcome a major health scare. But greater than the consideration of the quantity of our days is the question of their quality. Are we living this life well? Are we honoring God right through to the end?

You may wonder how big a deal this really is. If we’re forgiven people carried by a loving God, why fret about whether we’re doing things right? We’re old. We’ve been serving him for a lot of years. Certainly God’s making leeway for us.

Well, let’s consider two truths in light of this thinking. First, whether young or old in the faith, we are indeed forgiven much. For those young in the faith, the recency of their pre-Jesus life means their familiar sins are still knocking on the door. For older saints, each day the depth and subtlety of sin is revealed in the increasing light of Christ in our lives. So we are *all* grateful for Christ’s forgiveness; without it, we would still be dead in our sins.

Second, neither the embeddedness of our sins nor the relief of forgiveness permits us to relax. Just last week, we saw that Paul exhorted Timothy to persevere. Now we see that Paul himself stayed devoted to the end. The apostle was surely aware of the kings of Israel who had drifted into casual faith in their later years, always bringing disgrace upon the Lord.

Paul’s determined obedience anticipated the eternal future that had been granted him in Christ. It’s an anticipation that should ignite our actions, too, so that we fight the fight and keep the faith.

**Opening questions** When did you know you were hooked on golf?  
• How would you define the stage of life you’re in right now? What do you enjoy about it? What makes it particularly challenging?

**READING 2** Chronicles 32:24-33; 2 Timothy 4:6-8; Revelation 3:1-6

### The example of Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32)

What were some of the hallmarks of Hezekiah’s life? Was he a “finisher,” one who showed faith to the end?

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### Paul’s confidence (2 Timothy 4)

Where do you think Paul got the confidence that he was finishing well? What promise was he clinging to (a promise he passed on to us)?

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### Overcomers (Revelation 3)

What sharpening of their faith did the people of Sardis need to do? Are there echoes here of your own need to “strengthen what remains”? What great gift will be given to those who overcome?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available at <https://youtu.be/pFyeIxebTf4>.