



Links Players

ON LOCATION 9: LIFELONG LEARNING

I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. (Proverbs 4:2, NIV)

ON THE SHELF IN MY OFFICE, I keep a number of golf books. Among them is a 1974 printing of Jack Nicklaus' *Golf My Way*. The price is listed right on the front cover: \$5.95.

That little bit of cash is all the more amazing when you consider that many of the pages included color (gold, of course) and that, to me, the book was priceless. It was my Konica Minolta Swing Vision camera and YouTube lesson resource long before we knew what was possible in golf instruction. Books like *Golf My Way* and Hogan's *Five Lessons* got layered on top of whatever we were learning from our local teaching professional. Whatever it took, you know. Not much has changed!

You cannot be a golfer without being a learner, and neither can you be a disciple of Jesus. In human terms, he was a rabbi, and his earliest followers did what all disciples were meant to do: watched and learned.

At times I have been given opportunity to speak to parents of young children about bringing up their children. In these discussions, I have asked the question, "When does your child start becoming an adult?" My own answer to this question is this: "The day you teach them they cannot throw their food on the floor."

There is no such thing as too early to learn. If we say that we must grow up before we can learn, we miss the obvious. Growing up is learning; learning is growing up.

We make a second mistake if we think that all learning is about cognitive input: facts, figures, principles, morals. Our learning comes from engagement at least as much as list-building. For this reason, you will learn something sitting in a pew and listening to a well-preached sermon, but you will secure that learning when you begin to walk out the instruction in your everyday activities. Similarly, if your pastor tells you that lying is a sin, he is only giving you the basis for what you almost surely already know by way of consequences you have faced when you have lied.

So make a commitment to both sides of learning: the input and the practice. If all I ever did as a young golfer was read books or watch the sport on TV, I'd have a head full of knowledge and little ability. And so with Christ, it is not enough to know his words. I must learn to live them.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2019 Links Players International. An accompanying introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/fSNII5n4m80>.

Opening questions Where have you gathered the most helpful input in learning golf? How often do you draw on these resources? • What is the most recent "big lesson" you've learned in life?

READING Psalm 119:9-16; John 6:66-69; Acts 17:10-12

The blessed words of God (Psalm 119)

What value does the psalmist place in the words and instructions of God? What practices are implicit in the statements of these verses?

No other source (John 6)

What did Peter say Jesus offered the disciples? What response did his words produce from them? How does this passage provide a connection to the Old Testament in terms of the nature of Scripture? Do you think Jesus' words are more or less important than other words in Scripture?

A closer look (Acts 17)

What do you think is involved in "examining the Scriptures"? What is the value in making this a daily practice? What do you most hope to gain when you read the Scriptures?
