



# Links Players

## ALL WE HAVE GAINED 3: BELIEF

...that all might believe through him. (John 1:7, ESV)

WHILE THE RECIPES FOR SUCCESS IN GOLF may be numerous and various, one sure recipe for disaster, it is preached, is this: stop believing in yourself. You have to trust your swing, rely on what you've practiced, and "make an aggressive swing to a conservative target." In other words, friend, without confidence, your golfing goose is cooked.

At the same time, we know that this belief—at least as an enduring belief—can be painfully elusive. One day we shoot 75 as a true 12-handicapper and feel like the sparkling rains of heaven have fallen on our head. We're exuberant, happy to water our foursome and maybe a few others in celebration. Then comes tomorrow, and the litany takes a woeful turn: wormburner, sh-sh-sh-shank, unplayable lie, fried egg, four-putt, mud ball, water ball, lost ball. Where's your anchor then, amigo?

It doesn't take long to recognize that the efficacy of our belief is only as good as its object. If I believe that my car will take me a thousand miles on one tank of gas, I'm likely going to find myself walking an empty road with gas can in hand. Believing all I want can't change my car's modest range. Just like believing that I'll birdie every hole today has no basis in my golfing reality. I can't be trusted!

Maybe I am more reliable in other aspects of life, but even as a daily writer I type the wrong letter and choose the wrong word with regularity. How about you? Where do you still make the most elementary mistakes in your most excellent areas?

Now let's level up one more time, to the matter of our faith. Here we speak of our sin and confess that counting on ourselves is folly. But where then do we go? Do we elevate our pastor or priest to a place of infallible trustworthiness? Not with the way so many fall or burn out each year. Do we go to the government to protect our religious freedoms? Elected leaders have to take all views into account; religion won't always win.

But here's the good news from the faith front: Jesus is wholly dependable. Indeed he came that we might believe, once and for all, every egg in. And on what shall we believe? On the One who formed the earth, who set the stars, who planned every tick and every tock of our lives. This is our God, glorious and wonderful and unwaveringly true! Through Christ, we have gained belief—and that belief leads us to the firmest ground of all.

**Opening questions** Which club in your bag do you trust most? At which shot do you think you're most dependable? Now what would you say is your true percentage of success with each of these?

**READING** Matthew 7:24-27; John 1:6-13; 1 Peter 1:20-21

### Sand and rock (Matthew 7)

What was Jesus' emphasis in this parable? How does it encourage you to place your trust in the most trustworthy things? Who in your life could benefit from hearing this parable at this time?

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### Meaningful roles (John 1)

What was John the Baptist's role described in this passage? What was Jesus' role? What is our role (v. 12)? And how might we add to our role by pointing others to belief?

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### Firm faith, fixed hope (1 Peter 1)

How does this passage fortify your knowledge of the One in whom you trust? And how does it point to belief being something we have gained rather than something we muster up? What difference does that make?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/CXo1sfocEAo>.