



# Links Players

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## Living With Purpose

*When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (John 19: 30, NIV)*

Today's PGA Tour professional needs to have a tremendous focus to be successful. The list is endless: hours of practice, mental preparation, strength training, and attention to equipment details. But in the long history of professional golf, Ben Hogan stands above all others. His focus on all things related to golf, even to the smallest detail, was legendary.

In the 1940s, Ben and Byron Nelson had their clubs licensed through MacGregor. The contract required them to visit the factory annually and review their new models. Byron's visit consisted of a quick review, approval, then departure. Ben's visit would last for days, as he would examine the most minute details with the club fitters, who were thrilled when Ben finally departed.

Ben's focus on the practice range was the stuff of legend, hitting balls until his hands bled. In 1948, a controversy developed about the depth of grooves on irons, and reporters asked Ben if the new tracks would improve how golf could be played. Ben responded: "Rules and equipment are fine. The only thing golfers need is more daylight. There's not enough time to practice and play." Reporters who initially thought he was joking soon discovered he was dead serious.

In 1949, Ben's car collided with a Greyhound bus on a Texas highway. Early reports indicated he was killed but survived with a broken back and other severe injuries. When help arrived to pull him from his car, Ben's first comment reportedly was a request to open the trunk and to make sure his golf clubs were ok.

We also have some great examples of focus and purpose from the Bible. Noah spent decades focused on building a giant ark to fulfill God's purpose, even as friends and neighbors ridiculed him. Abraham obediently followed God's commands, even preparing to sacrifice his son until an angel intervened at last.

And, of course, the apostle Paul was an excellent example of purposeful living. Despite being beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and imprisoned, Paul focused on preaching that Christ was crucified. As he summed it up in Philippians 1:21, "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." But when it comes to focus and purpose, nothing tops the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Before time began, His goal was marked out and determined. Before Adam was created, the Fall was anticipated. Jesus was the only one who could pay the price of sin to reconcile God and humanity. And so, 2000 years ago, God sent His Son into the world to live the life we couldn't live, to die the death we deserved, and to conquer that death through His resurrection.

Jesus lived his whole life focused on His purpose—He was born to die. And that's what makes his last words on the Calvary so significant. When Jesus uttered, "It is finished," His time had finally come, and God's plan of salvation was completed. Christ died for our sins on the Cross, and now He offers us His perfect record in return – The Great Exchange. This is the gospel message, the good news we are called to share with others.

**Prayer- Jesus, empower me to live with purpose.**

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John Bown

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