



# Links Players

## Profile of a PGA Tour Player - Beginnings

*Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand. The seven lamps represent the eyes of the LORD that search all around the world. (Zechariah 4: 10, NLT)*

Placing a golf club into a kid's hands for the first time can be magical. Most of you remember the first time you "teed it up." If not, you probably recall the first set of clubs your parents gave you. If neither memory is readily available, you might remember that "sawed off" club your grandad placed in your smallish hands.

Somewhere in the archives of your memory bank, you have stored some outstanding and tragic moments from the earliest days of dragging that golf bag around eighteen holes of golf in the "dog days of summer." Some of us vividly remember our first birdie. Some are still trying to forget their first "quad."

Unless you were like PGA Tour Lifetime Member Danny Edwards, you probably didn't shoot 43 on your first nine holes. More than likely, you were somewhere north of that number. But, the thrill of swinging at that little white ball, advancing it down the fairway, and finally hearing it fall into the cup can still be remembered, even if only faintly.

When we began this golf adventure, rarely, if ever, did we know where the journey would take us. Never in a million years could we have anticipated the joys and disappointments, fulfillments and disillusionments that would follow.

Nevertheless, knowing what we know now and being given a chance to do it all over again, most of us would jump in with the same enthusiasm we had when we first began.

When we began this faith journey, we couldn't have imagined the highs or the lows that awaited us. For many, the naivete of our spiritual youth anticipated a never-ending rise to ever-greater joy. In our spiritual adolescence, we assumed that life would be all "kicks and giggles." As it turns out, the Father had a different plan.

While it is true that the spiritual life of following Christ is filled with inexpressible joy, we are quickly disabused of our fantasies that life is supposed to be one long joy ride. In his characteristic wisdom, C.S. Lewis captured it best when he writes, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Between the beginning and the end of our faith journey, we will encounter exhilarating highs and debilitating lows. Yet, we are comforted and strengthened by knowing his eyes search the world for those who are his. Or, as the song says, "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches over me."

**Prayer: Father, teach us to whistle in the dark.**

### READING - Mark 4:1-20

**OPENING QUESTIONS:** Discuss some of your "highs and lows" on and off the golf course. Mainly, discuss those times you knew the Father had his eyes on you through a difficult season.

1. In the parable of **Mark 4**, what is Jesus' essential message? This is an excellent opportunity for discussion and, perhaps, healthy debate. Remember to ground your thoughts in the text.

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2. What does the "seed" represent? What do the different soils teach us about the faith journey? What does this parable teach us about our enemy?

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3. Why does Jesus teach in parables?

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