



# Links Players

## Profile of a PGA Tour Player - Working at Golf and Life

*For it [the kingdom] will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. (Matthew 25:14-30, ESV)*

Most Americans are familiar with a “good work ethic.” Rightly attributed to our Puritan forebears, English Protestants who settled in America seeking to establish Christianity as a way of life, over and against empty ritualism.

Most of us are aware of Tiger’s work ethic in golf. Tiger’s commitment to getting better is legendary. He recently commented in an interview, “For me, I always felt like I wasn’t the most talented. So I felt like I had to work [...] because I was always younger than everyone else.”

One of the things that jumped out in our interview with Danny Edwards was his commitment to a consistent “work ethic.” He had a God-given talent to play golf, yet, in addition, he worked hard at being the best he could be.

Scripture has quite a bit to say about “work.” In a culture that has historically prized hard work, Christians frequently fall into two equal and opposite errors.

On the one hand, some so overemphasize justification—being “saved by grace alone”—that they inadvertently minimize or completely overlook “working out our salvation” in sanctification. On the other hand, some insist that our “works” (i.e., performance) gain our Maker’s acceptance. Both are wrong, and both are wrong for different reasons.

Jesus addresses the reality of work in today’s parable. Parables are miniature stories that are intended to be counterintuitive. They are designed to get past our mental defenses and surprise us, perhaps shock us. More simply, Jesus’ parables are designed to sabotage “common sense.”

In this parable of talents, Jesus is not suggesting that one is saved by performance; rather, he is making the case that anyone in the kingdom knows his Master and demonstrates that by working with the gift(s) received to produce more.

This becomes evident when we see the third recipient of the Master’s gifts. He had a wrong idea of who the Master was and buried his Master’s talents because

of fear. The other two recipients stewarded their talents wisely and doubled their Master’s investment. They were commended while the fearful one was condemned.

What should be obvious is that the two men who were commended received gifts and then, as a consequence of that received grace, went to work. The one who buried his talent because of fear did no work, no work at all.

God in love, through grace, and grace alone, saves sinners from God’s justice. In receipt of God’s love by grace alone, sinners go to work growing his kingdom. After all, as James instructs us, “faith without work is dead.” This begs the following question: Will Jesus get a good return on his investment of grace in our lives upon his return?

**Prayer: Jesus, empower us by grace to work for you in the growth of your reign!**

### READING - Matthew 25:14-30

#### OPENING QUESTIONS:

What are you working hard to improve in golf swing or game? Making progress?

1. Since parables are intended to surprise and “shock” us, what is most surprising about this parable?

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2. Since this is about Jesus’ kingdom (see previous parables for context), is Matthew suggesting that sinners can be “saved” by their good works and recognized as such at Christ’s return, or is Matthew teaching that those who are genuinely saved by grace will have produced good works to honor Christ at his return? Discuss.

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3. What are the “rewards” given to the two faithful men? There are at least three! They are not explicit; rather, they are woven into the parable.

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