



# Links Players

## On Mission - The Vertical Call

*Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit... (Jeremiah 2: 11-13, ESV)*

If you have watched the Netflix series, Full Swing, you've gotten a small window into the lives of some of the greatest golfers in the world.

In all my conversations, the one episode that got the most attention was the second episode which took a peek into the lives of Scottie Scheffler and Brooks Koepka. For many viewers, it was unavoidable to notice the vast differences in their outlooks on golf and life.

More than likely, the director caught Brooks in a season of perplexity and deep disappointment—his injuries were still plaguing him, and he had just missed the cut at the 2022 Masters.

By contrast, Scottie was at the top of his game. He had multiple wins, including the Masters, and all of that in a short period. Like many, though, I couldn't help but wonder if there wasn't something deeper going on.

So, while it would be inappropriate to make final judgments about where Brooks is or is not in a relationship with the Christ of Christianity (i.e., ultimately, only Christ knows the heart), it is clear that Scottie is not ashamed to speak out about his love for Christ Jesus.

However, we can say with absolute confidence this: If we attempt to build our ultimate identity around anything other than a relationship with our Creator and Redeemer, we will never find lasting joy, contentment, meaning, purpose, and satisfaction.

Any good gift that is given from above — including our families, our vocations, our relationships, our hobbies (e.g., golf), and our possessions — if we prioritize them over our Maker, we will dishonor God, fail to find what we are looking for, and in the end, be utterly disappointed.

When we take “the good” and attempt to make it “the best,” we are guilty of exchanging our Creator for that which is created. Biblically defined, that is “idolatry.”

Of course, these “gods” are not real. Israel had taken some aspect of God's good creation (e.g., fertility) and elevated it to a place never intended by its

Creator. Consequently, rather than enjoying soul-satisfying “living water”(i.e., God), they are drinking from “broken cisterns” (i.e., idols that never satisfy).

Sadly, one writer from the Reformation gets it right when he says, “The human heart is a perpetual idol factory.” We, like Israel, do this every time we elevate one of God's good gifts to the place of our ultimate loyalty; the recipient of our deepest affection.

Ironically, what God intended for joy through his many gifts of family, careers, golf, and relationships end up becoming enormous disappointments when we choose to make them the most important things in our lives.

Yet, like Brett Gorney in today's video, God will use each of these deep disappointments to lead us to himself.

**Prayer: Jesus, may we again drink deeply from the fountain of living waters as we prioritize you over every other gift you have given, including our love for golf.**

## READING - Jeremiah 2: 11-13; Deuteronomy 8:11-20

### OPENING QUESTIONS:

Have you ever experienced nagging dissatisfaction even after a great round?

**1.** The entire book of Jeremiah finds the prophet contending with Israel. Jeremiah 2:11-13 gets to the heart of the problem. What is that problem? Discuss how this situation confronts us all.

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**2.** In Deuteronomy 8, especially verses 11-20, God warns Israel. What are those warnings? How might these warnings apply to us individually and nationally?

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