



# Links Players

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## Saved for a Purpose

*Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord: 'Please, Lord, save me!' How kind the Lord is! How good He is. So merciful, this God of ours!" (Psalm 116:3-5).*

Bruce Simpson was a star junior golfer when we met as teenagers in 1965. I wanted to play like Bruce. He was trying to break par when I was hoping to break 90.

However, Bruce's low scores came with baggage. The pressure of the game itself was killing him. Golf was a "performance" sport for Bruce. If he played well, he felt good about himself. But when he played bad, he hated himself.

In his mind, Bruce didn't just play bad. He was bad. Or so he thought. Low self-esteem took over. By age 17, he was done with golf.

Fast forward fifteen years. Bruce survived his childhood issues and became a lawyer. We were law partners for many years. Law became his "performance" sport. He was a great lawyer. In golf terms, Bruce was a "scratch lawyer" who built a wonderful reputation as a top-notch zoning lawyer. He was President of the local bar and more. His self-esteem was solid as long as his career was successful. However, the nightmare of junior "performance" golf re-surfaced for Bruce at age 72.

Bruce opened an envelope last January to discover the devastating news that he had lost an appeal of a case he had won at trial. Somehow, this highly competent and proud attorney had forgotten to file the necessary paperwork for an important client.

This was the ultimate loss- not just of one case- but of his identity as a good lawyer. The same self-loathing that infected a young golfer re-entered the mind of this experienced lawyer. An evil voice whispered into his ear- "You are a loser... you have failed... you should be embarrassed..." And on and on. The negative voices from age fourteen returned to a 72-year-old man.

Bruce did not hesitate. He wrote a suicide note to his wife. He went to a gun store to purchase a deadly weapon. He went to a cemetery. He made an anonymous call to the police that he had found a body, not mentioning it was his own body. He tested the gun, which fired properly into the ground. He then pulled the trigger with a second bullet to end his life.

The gun went “click”. The hammer of the gun hit the bullet but did not fire. A miracle! Police arrived to interrupt any further attempts.

Listen to Bruce explain the Voice of God, which he heard a few hours later as he prepared to try one last time to pull the trigger with a third bullet.

“When I pulled that gun out for the final time, I heard this message inside my head, in a comforting tone, ‘Bruce, you are not going to kill yourself. You are going to be OK, and you will be equipped to handle the aftermath of your suicide attempt.’ I have hesitated to tell the “rest of my story.” But I heard what I heard! I have to be truthful and tell the rest of it. God does exist. The Holy Spirit exists. You have to invite Jesus into your life. Then, listen and be obedient to what God shares with you. Only God could have saved me and inspired a path towards mental health treatment and recovery.”

God saved him when the gun went ‘click,’ but He also saved Bruce by leading him to competent mental health professionals who have nurtured him back to health. God had saved him for a purpose. Suicide is an epidemic among lawyers. And my friend Bruce is now saving lives by telling his story.

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for your Voice which spoke love and mercy to Bruce. Thank you for saving Bruce. Now, save others, we pray. Amen.

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Tim Philpot

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