



# Links Players

## Immortality - The Final Horizon

*But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus...our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body...  
(Philippians 3:12-14; 20-21, ESV)*

Of all the things required to play golf at our best, focusing on the matters at hand is a 'non-negotiable.' Concentrating is essential if we are to play at our peak.

As one article claims, "It [golf] demands a significant amount of mental focus, concentration, and confidence. A golfer's ability to stay mentally strong and focused can make all the difference in their performance on the course."

At the riveting PGA Championship this past week, one commentator quoted Sahith Theegala's college coach as saying, "Sahith sometimes goes away in the middle of the round and then returns." This is a euphemistic way of saying, "He gets easily distracted."

Eliminating distractions is easier said than done. And, of course, distractions come in all shapes and sizes. Some are external, and others are internal.

Most will remember how Johnny Miller, Nick Faldo, or David Feherty would marvel at Tiger's ability to abruptly stop mid-swing because of some distraction; it might have been the clicking of a camera shutter, a baby crying, or the unexpected movement by someone in the crowd. Tiger's ability to focus is legendary.

Internal distractions can be the worst. Our minds wandering toward a strained marriage, a pressing business decision, a wayward child or grandchild, a lost friendship, or an unresolved moral issue will inevitably lead to a distracted mind.

The Apostle Paul's life is extraordinary by anyone's definition. His dramatic conversion to Christ, perseverance through unparalleled trials, and unflagging resolve to communicate the gospel in the face of severe hostilities are examples we should all aspire to. His ability to stay focused deserves our attention.

How can any man endure all these issues: shipwrecked, multiple imprisonments, snake bit, countless beatings, stoned, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, not to mention his "thorn in the flesh—a messenger sent from Satan?" (2 Corinthians 11:16-29)

Like his Savior (Hebrews 12:1-2), he saw something set before him that was so glorious that it motivated him to "keep pressing on." What was that? He saw a future redemption, the redemption of his body (Romans 8:23-25).

In all his letters, he repeatedly revisits the future hope of all those "in Christ:" the perfect redemption of our physical bodies and a final renovation of the Cosmos. Once you see it, you will see it everywhere in his writings. Once your eyes are opened to the reality of immortality for yourself, your life will never be the same.

If you find yourself wavering in timidity and fear, with wobbly knees, half-heartedness, cowardice, double-mindedness, and distracted by the passing enticements of worldliness, the solution to all these and more is seeing what Paul saw—The Future Horizon, Immortality! Focus on that!

**Prayer: Father, as Paul prayed, would you "...give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of our hearts enlightened, that we may know what is the hope to which he has called us.... (Ephesians 1:16-23).**

### READING: Philippians 3: 7-21; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

1. What are some things that easily distract you? Discuss how an internal or external distraction cost you in a round or important match.

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2. In Philippians 3 and 2 Corinthians 5, Paul is riveted on the future resurrection. Marinate in these texts and observe what Paul is stressing and why he is doing it.

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3. Application: do a round-the-table discussion about overcoming distractions in golf and life.

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