



# Links Players

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## What Might Have Been

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)*

I don't know if you caught it, but Gary Player recently shared his feelings regarding the multiple swing coaches that Tiger Woods has employed over his career. Player set the stage with this comment: "Tiger won the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach by 14 shots. The next week, he's having a lesson from a man who couldn't break 80 if he played in the Masters."

Gary was just getting started: "Then he goes to another guy who couldn't break 85 in the Masters, and he's having lessons from him. Why did Tiger do that? If he went along and never changed, he would have won a minimum of 22 majors, maybe more. He would have gone down as the greatest athlete the world has ever seen, man or woman on the planet, but he made the wrong decision."

Wow! I'm not sure what prompted that criticism to come out now, decades after Tiger made the first of those changes Player refers to. But what went through my mind was the thought of "what might have been."

Over the years, Tiger has been very clear his main goal was to catch and pass the 18 majors achieved by his idol, Jack Nicklaus. Did he miss the opportunity to achieve that goal by constantly changing coaches? Now, that question could be debated for a long time.

There's a story in Mark 10:17-26 that also prompts me to think about "what might have been." A rich young man approached Jesus, and in a show of reverence and respect, he fell on his knees and asked, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered by telling him to follow the commandments, listing a few of them specifically. The man apparently had anticipated this and gave an immediate response: "Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy."

So far, so good. But then, Jesus puts him to the test: "One thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Unfortunately, it was too much to ask because the man was very wealthy. His face fell, and he walked away depressed. It is a classic example of Christ's statement in Matthew 6:24: "You cannot serve both God and money."

The opportunity was certainly there. The man had been eager to find Jesus; he'd kept the commandments and was very wealthy. Verse 21 says, "Jesus looked at him and loved him." It seems he had great potential, But "what might have been" didn't happen. Why?

Well, by most standards, the man was very successful. However, the story is a reminder that our primary calling is not to be successful; it's to be obedient to the one who died as our Savior and lives as our Lord.

**Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to remember and live by your words from Luke 11:28: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."**

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John Bown

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