



Links Players

On and Off the Course with Larry Mize A Faith Journey

...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. (Philippians 3:12-14, ESV)

The incomparable Bobby Jones once observed, “Golf is the closest game to the game we call life. You get bad breaks from good shots; you get good breaks from bad shots, but you have to play the ball where it lies.”

Through the ups and downs, the lengthy slog through frustrating slumps, and the unintended consequences of attempting to fix your swing, golf can be a “love-hate” relationship. Sometimes, we hate it, sometimes we love it, and sometimes we hate that we love it so much!

In today’s conversation with Larry Mize, we gain insight into the man and his 40-year journey at the highest levels of golf—the good, the bad, the highs and lows, and the drive that propelled him forward.

When David, their firstborn, entered the world in 1986, Larry rearranged his priorities. However, Larry acknowledges that his value system slipped in 1987 after he won the coveted Green Jacket on the first playoff hole at Amen Corner. He began to derive too much significance from being recognized worldwide as the “Masters’ Champion.”

After speaking with Larry Moody, the PGA Tour Chaplain, he realized the importance of putting “first things first.” Discovering afresh what we all wrestle with at various stages in our faith walk, Larry Mize remembered that nothing eclipses the value of walking with Christ.

As significant as winning the Masters is, it cannot compare to knowing and loving Jesus Christ. Things changed once he got that sequence right—love of Christ, love of family, and love of golf.

After a poor round, he admits, “It might take 20 minutes, but after that, I press on; after all, it’s not life or death.” Another one of his many noteworthy comments stands out: his willingness to recognize that “Golf is a platform for the gospel.”

Learning to leverage our vocations, hobbies, philanthropic endeavors, relationships, and public engagements for Christ is the “secret sauce” to living a well-rounded and deeply satisfying life.

After all, “there is not one square inch that doesn’t belong to our Maker and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.” Learning to abandon the false dichotomy of a “secular and sacred” divide is key—all of life belongs to Jesus!

All we do in every dimension of our lives should be to glorify God, including landing the big deal, striping it down the middle, or making a three-footer.

We all have a story playing in the background of our minds. Learning to discern and live in the story presented in Scripture, over and against the many conflicting stories in our current cultural atmosphere, is key to making sense of life.

If we neglect to immerse ourselves in the biblical narrative, we risk living in a false narrative passed down to us from those who are blind to the reality of God’s creation order and redemptive purposes.

Let’s learn to live “Coram Deo”—before God’s face—and in the true story of the world.

Prayer: Holy Spirit! Come and re-arrange our value systems.

READING: Philippians 3:7-16; Hebrews 12:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:1-7

1. How do you handle those moments in a round when the “wheels are coming off?” Panic? Give up? Anger? Press on?

2. In each reading for today, an analogy between running a race and the Christian life is alluded to. Discuss how this relates to golf and life.

3. Application: discuss how we handle mishits, poor runs, and disappointments during a round as a reflection of our behavior outside the ropes.
