



# Links Players

## On and Off the Course with Larry Mize Laser-Focused

*One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple... (Psalm 27:4, ESV)*

For golfers, tour players, and amateurs alike, consistently performing at our best demands maintaining laser focus. As the English say, “being of two minds” wreaks havoc in or outside the ropes.

Interviewing someone like Larry Mize, who, among other achievements, won the 1987 Masters Championship, comes with some surprises. As you already know, he made one of the most iconic shots in golf—a pitch from the right side of #11 at Augusta National to win the Green Jacket in a playoff against the Shark, with millions watching.

When asked about that pitch and whether he was considering anything beyond that shot, he humbly replied, “No.” Take a moment to reflect on that! How might you have reacted in that situation?

Imagine thousands of fans surrounding him—the most knowledgeable and well-mannered patrons in golf. He was competing against the world’s number one player, Greg Norman, and confronting a heart-thumping chance to win The Masters, with the entire world watching via CBS. Not to mention the level of difficulty and precision this particular shot required. Yet, he remained single-minded.

He was so laser-focused that nothing else entered his mind. This isn’t to say those other things didn’t matter. His family was within earshot; his friends were cheering for him; his future loomed large; his past efforts to reach this point in his career pressed for attention, and all the many “what ifs” could have distracted him. Yet, in that moment, he remained singularly focused on the task before him.

But beneath all of it—golf, family, friends, fame, fortune, and so-called “golf immortality”—infinitely more important, Larry was right with God because of what the Holy Spirit had made so very real in his life—Christ’s death and resurrection for him; for us. Just the night before, he didn’t presume he would win, yet an extraordinary “peace had come over his soul.”

When we consider the truth presented above, the idea is not that we should only think about Jesus, as if we are to cloister ourselves away from the “real world” of family, friends, business, golf, institutional reforms, and cultural engagements.

Rather, Christ Jesus insists he has first place in our hearts and minds. When we yield our lives to him with passionate, single-minded devotion, allowing him to shape and flavor all we do, including being laser-focused over a pitch shot, everything else comes into focus!

Recognizing the magnitude of such “a great salvation,” the only acceptable response is an undiluted dedication to our King and Redeemer, who paid our debt out of his own assets—his perfect life and wrath-assuaging love manifested on that day when the sun refused to shine as our Savior hung on an old rugged cross bearing our sin and shame.

**Prayer: Lord, empower us by your Spirit to see, seek, and enter the kingdom of God!**

### READING: Psalm 27:4; Matthew 6:19-34

1. Over any critically important shot, how many thoughts do you have to bat away: negative outcomes, what others might think, indecisiveness, etc.?

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2. After these recommended texts, consider discussing and debating the difference between “seeking first the kingdom” and seeking only the kingdom.”

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3. Application: If God is prepared to give us all the things that Gentiles (unbelievers seek), like money, then how can wealth or other pursuits become wrong?

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