



# Links Players

## On and Off the Course with Larry Mize Perseverance And Preservation!

*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 24-25, ESV)*

How many of us played high school golf, dreaming of making it to “The Tour?” I suspect there are more than a few. A smaller number went on to play at the collegiate level, only to discover we weren’t nearly as good as we thought! Reality can sting like that!

A smaller number from the collegiate ranks go on to realize the dream of making it to the Top 125. Of course, many who could play at the highest level never punched that ticket for one reason or another.

When I asked Larry about his high school and college days, I was surprised to learn that he wasn’t heavily recruited out of high school, didn’t receive a “full ride” to college, failed his first two attempts to secure his card, and ended up picking the range at Fort Benning.

Though Larry was never named All-America and never won a single collegiate tournament, he remained resolute in his determination.

The setbacks were real! Early disappointments stung! The ole “heave-ho” fell short on more than a few occasions. But through it all, by the grace of God, he found the resolve to keep plowing ahead.

But there is another lens through which we should view our ability to “keep on keeping on” when life throws everything at us, including the kitchen sink: God’s preservation of his sons and daughters.

It may seem contradictory, but God’s preserving power and our perseverance are not incompatible. Similar to God’s sovereignty and human responsibility, this is a delightful mystery. Baffling? At times, yes! But for those who know Jesus, we trust that he guides us to our appointed destiny!

We are often dumbfounded by the twists and turns of this great adventure we call Life. However, to persevere, we must have a highly developed sense of God’s Providence (God truly is in charge), even during crushing defeats.

Our resolve to persevere through faith in Christ in the middle of the dark chapters of life, including our self-inflicted moral failures, is not at odds with the reality of the all-powerful, caring preservation of our Heavenly Father to bring us safely through the gauntlet of life.

Failure to rest in God’s Providence through the ebb and flow of life will, among other things, leave us licking the wounds of far too many regrets. Forgetting the past and pressing on to what God apprehended us for doesn’t leave room for fixating on hypotheticals— the “what ifs” of our past failures.

Let’s pursue with renewed vigor the high calling of God’s mission for a broken world estranged from its Maker. Larry reminded me of many truths, but none is more important than wanting others to look through us to see the object of our faith, Jesus—the Savior who never lets us down!

**Prayer: Jesus! We trust you are the Great Shepherd who is leading us home.**

**READING:** Jude 1:24-25; Psalm 121:1-8; Isaiah 41:8-10; Romans 5:1-11.

1. Around the table, discuss persevering through a string of bad holes. What are some tools in the toolbox to persevere through a “bad bounce,” a shanked wedge, or rinsing one in that lake you were convinced you could clear?

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2. After reading the texts, reflect, discuss, and thank God for preserving your life! Even if it leads to a “Charley Horse” in your brain, discuss whether God’s preserving power and the human responsibility to persevere are incompatible.

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3. Application: Ponder anew God’s gracious “keeping power” and give thanks!

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