



# Links Players

## Knowing God | The Lord is My Shepherd

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (Psalm 23:1-3, ESV)*

“Randy is a special man; he is like family to me,” said Scottie Scheffler about his swing coach, Randy Smith. As everyone knows, Scottie did not rise to the top of the world of golf alone.

Scottie has said that he can discuss things with Coach that he wouldn't necessarily talk about with others. But besides their personal bond, Randy Smith has fostered a love for the game, tweaked Scottie's swing a few times, and guided his young student through the challenges of amateur and professional golf.

For twenty-two years and countless hours on the range, Randy has trained a thoroughbred that wins and wins with class. Of course, Randy couldn't 'put in what God left out'—talent—but together they have forged a bond of trust that is bulletproof.

Trust is scarce these days. The list of trusted politicians is short. If we scratch our heads for a few minutes, we might produce a name or two. Dig around college and professional sports long enough, and more than likely, you will discover appalling corruption.

None of us is naïve enough to think all our corporate leaders are playing by the rules. If the Enron debacle taught us anything, it is that we should “trust but verify.”

All of this sounds dark, sinister, and cynical. But sugar-coating the reality of a culture filled with scandalous behavior won't help us change course. It's no wonder our institutional authorities are under suspicion when the moral boundaries we've followed for millennia are being rejected.

Trust is earned! And earning trust takes time and proven character. Losing trust happens in a nanosecond. Lie to your spouse, colleagues, constituents, or close friends, and it will take some time to restore credibility.

None of this is “breaking news.” With disillusionment caused by the moral failures of our political, ecclesial, business, and family leaders familiar to us, our hearts, if they haven't already, are dangerously close to shutting down completely.

Despite all the negativity about institutional corruption and compromised

cultural leadership, there is one person we can trust without fear of disappointment. Jesus Christ is the only one who could never let us down—that is utterly impossible!

You can trust the one who endured unimaginable persecution and sacrificed his life, rising again after defeating death. As the long-awaited Shepherd prophesied in the Old Testament, you can rely on him to guide, provide, and protect you on your journey through life's wasteland.

Of all the self-designations Christ used for himself, “I am the good Shepherd” is the one that has strengthened soldiers heading to war, encouraged business leaders during crises, supported parents when children go astray, comforted those dealing with anxiety and fears, and offered companionship to those in seasons of loneliness.

Our Great Shepherd can be trusted through thick and thin. In this life and the life to come, he will lead, provide, and protect us through all the darkness of a world gone wrong.

**Prayer: Great Shepherd! Take your rod and staff and guide our path! Lead us beside still waters and give us green pastures! All for your Name's sake!**

**READING:** Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:1-16; John 10:1-18.

1. Most of us have or had a Club Pro who nurtured our love for the game and coached us on our swings. Reminisce and enjoy some good memories of that relationship.

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2. After meditating on these texts, consider the different ways Jesus shepherds us.

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3. Application: Where might the Lord use his “rod and staff” in our lives to lead us to and keep us in green pastures and beside still waters?

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