



# Links Players

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## The Biggest Loser

*He must increase, and I must decrease. — John the Baptist*

*Prompted by her mother, she said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” (Matthew 14:8)*

Nobody likes losing. Golf history is filled with unforgettable collapses and unfulfilled promise—players who carried a lead into Sunday only to watch it slip away, or extraordinary talents who never quite lived up to expectations. A few names likely come to mind.

What’s striking is how quickly those names become synonymous with failure. No one wants to be remembered as the one who couldn’t close, who faltered under pressure, who didn’t measure up when it mattered most. We all want to be remembered as winners—on the course and in life.

And yet, there is a story in Scripture that has always unsettled me—John the Baptist, the forerunner to Jesus and His cousin.

John the Baptist entered the world with extraordinary promise. Before his birth, he was declared “great before the Lord,” filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, and chosen to prepare the way for the Messiah. Even in utero, he leapt at the presence of Christ.

By every measure, John was destined for significance.

But when Jesus stepped onto the scene, John did something unexpected—something almost unthinkable in our culture.

He stepped aside.

He made it clear he was not the Christ. Instead, he pointed to Jesus: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” And when his own followers began leaving him to follow Jesus, John didn’t resist or reposition. He embraced it:

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

From that point forward, John’s life fades from the spotlight. Soon after, he is imprisoned for confronting sin—and eventually executed. No platform. No comeback. No earthly reward.

Not exactly the ending we would expect for someone with so much promise.

Teresa of Ávila once said, “Lord, if this is how You treat Your friends, no wonder You have so few.” We can appreciate the honesty of that sentiment from a human perspective—suffering often feels confusing, even unfair. Yet our trials, as real as they are, cannot compare to what Christ willingly endured on our behalf.

And yet, Jesus' final word on John was this: "Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater."

Which means this: John didn't lose.

He fulfilled his calling perfectly.

The life of faith often appears, by worldly standards, as a kind of losing, while Jesus alone secures the true victory on behalf of the world. And yet, our deepest hope is not found in recognition, success, or applause, but in the day we hear His voice say, "Well done."

We live for an audience of One.

If we live it rightly, Jesus receives the glory for His unfathomable love—not us. Our lives grow dim as His light burns ever brighter, and His affirmation becomes the only thing that truly matters.

Less of us. More of Him.

**Prayer: Jesus, may my life be a prayer offered to You, my Savior.**

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Boo Arnold

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