



Links Players

Bookends

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20)

When you review the careers of the three golfers who won the most PGA Tour events, it's interesting to look at their bookends—their first and last titles and the time span between them. At the top of the list are Tiger Woods and Sam Snead, both with 82 career wins, followed by Jack Nicklaus with 73.

Sam's first PGA Tour title was the 1937 Oakland Open; his last came 28 years later, when he was 52 years old, at the 1965 Greensboro Open. Tiger's initial win was the 1996 Las Vegas Invitational (now the Shriners Children's Open), and his last win was at the 2020 Zozo Championship in Japan. That's a 23-year span, and who knows—maybe Tiger's not done yet?

When we review the career of the Golden Bear, he raises the standard to another level, considering that his bookends came in pressure-packed majors. Jack's first PGA Tour win was his playoff victory over Arnold Palmer at the 1962 U.S. Open at Oakmont.

Nicklaus did it in front of a vocal and hostile crowd that was cheering for Arnie, who hailed from nearby Latrobe. Fast-forward 24 years to the 1986 Masters, when Jack—46 years old and considered long past his prime—shot a remarkable 30 on the back nine on Sunday at Augusta. That gave the Bear his sixth green jacket and his final PGA Tour title. It's hard to top bookends like that.

It's also instructive to look at the initial and final guidance that Jesus gave to his disciples, as outlined in the Gospel of Matthew.

In Chapter 4, following his dramatic confrontation with Satan in the wilderness, Jesus began his ministry near the Sea of Galilee. When he spotted Peter and Andrew fishing, he extended this invitation in Matthew 4:19: "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." They immediately left their nets, and Jesus had his first two followers.

Shortly afterward, Jesus recruited another ten disciples and then invested three years patiently teaching, encouraging, and preparing them to carry out his mission.

When we come to the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives his final instructions—the verses we have come to know as the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew’s bookends have a consistent theme, but what does that mean specifically for us? Quite simply, we are called to share the good news of the gospel with others.

I like how Rick Warren sums it up in *The Purpose Driven Life*: “The Great Commission was given to every follower of Jesus.... Your mission is a continuation of His mission.” Remember—friends of Jesus tell their friends about Jesus.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to be obedient to your calling. Help us boldly share the good news of the gospel with those we meet today and every day.

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