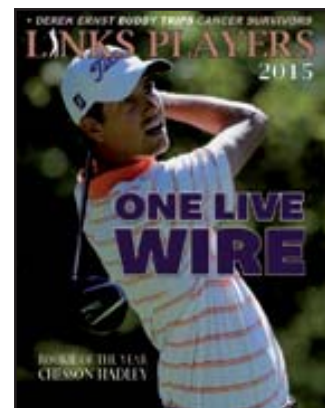


## **2015 LINKS PLAYERS MAG BIBLE STUDY**

Produced by Links Players International • Written by Links Players Editor Jeff Hopper



This study is designed to accompany the 2015 Links Players magazine. To obtain copies of the magazine at no cost other than shipping, please call us at 559-323-4256. We will gladly furnish them as long as supplies last.

# Lesson 1: A mature outlook

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*Begin by reading “All in (Serious) Fun,” featuring 2014 PGA Tour Rookie of the Year Chesson Hadley.*

Are you a fan who welcomes the younger generation in golf, or do you prefer to see the old champions keep competing for trophies?

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Chesson Hadley says that “one of the things all professional golfers struggle with is self-doubt and outlook on the course.” Why do you think these doubts arise? How effect do doubts have in the work you do?

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Hadley shared, “I have the ability to influence a lot of people and to reach a lot of people with my faith, and I need to take that seriously.” What is involved in taking one’s faith seriously? What is the biggest challenge for you in following this course of action?

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*Read 1 Peter 3:15-16*, where the apostle wrote of what it means to give a reason for your hope in Christ. How does this passage apply to having a serious faith? What should be recognizable in your faith to outsiders?

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*Read Job 1:1-22*. How do Job’s closing words in Job 1—after all that happened to him—align with Hadley’s closing lines in the article? Where have you recognized God to be faithful in both good times and bad?

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## Lesson 2: Beyond the obvious

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Begin by reading “Hey, Buddy,” a look at golf buddy trips that go beyond the game.

If you planned a dream golf trip, where would you go and who would join you?

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Read Hebrews 10:25. This passage is often used as an exhortation to get to church. In what ways would it apply to any gathering of believers, including golf trips?

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Read Acts 2:42-47. This description of the gatherings of the earliest followers of Jesus includes several key activities. How could these be incorporated into a buddy trip and what impact would they have?

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Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10. How could verse 10 be held as a motto for those committed to sharing regular golf trips together?

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Both the article and Tim Philpot’s sidebar, “Lessons from the Master,” encourage the blending of believers and non-believers on purposeful golf trips. What do you see as valuable in such a mixed gathering?

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# Lesson 3: Hopeful outlook

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*Begin by reading "A Clear Vision," with 2013 Wells Fargo Championship winner Derek Ernst.*

Generally speaking, Derek Ernst's PGA Tour career has been unsuccessful. What has helped him maintain hope for his competitive ability, and what part does God play in that hope?

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*Read James 1:2-4.* How do testing and perseverance fit into the context of Ernst's borrowed idea of improving one percent each day? Do you see growth in your life at a steady pace or does it come in fits and spurts?

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How does consistent discipline assist in steady growth, be it in golf or in other endeavors? What kinds of discipline contribute to a maturing walk with Christ?

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Have you benefitted from the presence of a mentor in your life? If so, in what ways has this provided an example for you in your own life and in becoming a mentor for others?

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*Read Titus 2:1-10.* What principles of mentoring, including encouragement and exhortation, do you find here?

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# Lesson 4: Finally trusting Jesus

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*Begin by reading "When a Talking Head Makes a Change of Heart," with Dave Marr III.*

What barriers kept Dave Marr from being drawn to Christ? What barriers stood in the way of your trusting Jesus?

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Marr speaks of searching out many philosophies and religious paths before coming to Jesus. What do you recognize as the distinctives of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How do these conflict with other major religious ideas?

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*Read John 8:12-47.* What stark lines did Jesus draw in his exchange with the Jewish leaders of his time? On what basis did Jesus claim relationship with the Father (God in heaven) and authority from the Father?

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*Read Acts 17:16-34.* How did Paul engage those of different faiths? What did he emphasize in his presentation of who God is? What response did he receive to his message?

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In the final paragraph of the article, Marr talks about the qualities he sees in believers, even in tough times. What does this say about how our own witness is advanced by our attitude as well as our words?

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# Lesson 5: An integrated faith

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*Begin by reading the full interview with John Kruger, "Substance Behind the Style," online at [linksplayers.com/articles](http://linksplayers.com/articles). (The magazine includes only an excerpt of this interview.)*

What is inspired in you by reading about the startup and success of Travis Mathew? How does success in the world have potential for both encouraging and challenging our faith?

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*Read Hebrews 11:1.* How does this verse match up with Kruger's assertion that "faith is a willful decision based on reasonable data"? How much knowledge must be attained before faith kicks in? How would you assess your own level of faith?

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Kruger's conversion was not just a matter of the head. He made big changes in his work and in his home right away. What difference has Jesus made in the different arenas of your life?

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*Read Matthew 6:25-34.* What measure of faith is described in this passage? How does seeking God first help us align the other aspects of our life?

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*Read Psalm 121.* What promises delivered here strengthen your faith in God?

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# Lesson 6: When trouble comes

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*Begin by reading the articles with Clarissa Childs and Don Pooley about their battles with cancer.*

When has a bad diagnosis or other great difficulty forced you to wrestle with God? What have you been taught in such times?

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Clarissa Childs speaks of how trouble can cause us to ask whether God is using tough times to make us stronger or to push us in a new direction. How do we find the answers to such questions? How helpful is to know the truth of Exodus 34:6, that God is “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”?

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If Don Pooley were sitting with you in a golf cart and asked you if you’ve ever come to grips with the things that matter, how would you respond? What are the things that matter for eternity?

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*Read Philippians 1:21-23.* To what degree do you share Paul’s preference for eternity?

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*Read 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.* How does an awareness of the power of Christ’s resurrection power prepare us to die?

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