



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR MAY 25, 2012

BEFORE WITNESSES

... we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us... (Hebrews 12:1, NASB)

Hank Haney, in his book *The Big Miss*, makes the case for writing about his former protégé Tiger Woods. Haney reasons that he was able to closely witness greatness during his lifetime. And yes, the skill and talent of his student cannot be disputed. Only one golfer has ever won more major championships.

Some time ago, my wife and I were invited to attend the weekly Bible study on the Champions Tour. On this occasion, it was not the actual study. Rather, chaplain Tom Randall had arranged for a special preview showing of the movie *Seven Days in Utopia*. We felt privileged to be included.

When we arrived, tour players and their families were already filling the theater. Their chatter and camaraderie were engaging, and it was evident that these folks had a long history with one another. They even poked fun at me about the glare my balding head would cause when the movie got rolling!

At the same time, I could not help but think that these were the players I had grown up watching for the most of my golf life. Here they were, seated all around us. In a sense, we could feel the greatness represented collectively by these players. Tour winners and international champions had gathered in this rather plain theater to view the story of a transformed life.

The writer of Hebrews was fascinated with heroes of faith. The long list of men and women in the eleventh chapter portrays lives spent extending the kingdom of God in their lifetime. Wow, are these people ever examples for us to finish our assignment on earth!

Hebrews 12 opens with these words: “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith...”

The eyes of those who have already gained eternal life are open in our direction. What an encouragement and a challenge for us to live with strong faith in the promises of God—especially the promise of salvation in Jesus—just as they did!

Faith and you

Read Hebrews 11:6. According to this verse, why is it imperative that we live by faith? What result is promised for those who do live by faith?

Read Hebrews 11:7-12 and 11:17-26. Which example among these is especially meaningful to with the events or decisions going on in your life right now?

In what ways is it both an encouragement and a challenge to know that others who have lived in faith are watching your life?

Read Hebrews 11:39-40. In the eyes of those who lived before Jesus, how important is the promise of God in Christ delivered to us?
