

## THINK LIKE A PRO, PART 2

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15, NASB)*

**Y**OU WILL OFTEN HEAR, when discussion turns to some of the heroes of golf, from Bobby Jones to Nancy Lopez, that we revere these people because they revered the game itself. They upheld its spirit and its traditions. It really is the highest honor we can pay in the sport when we speak of someone this way.

This does not mean, of course, that our observations of such excellence must be locked in the past. There are players on tour and in our clubs who have emulated the longstanding respected characteristics of the game’s greats, and these golfers are a pleasure to watch and, if we are fortunate, to play with.

Sometimes we review the “greats” of faith, such as Abraham, Ruth, David, Daniel, Mary, John, Priscilla and Aquila—and yes, the list could go on and on. But notice that this list is bound by the pages of Scripture. It is set in the past alone, as though God’s best work was done only in men and women “back then.” We may allow ourselves more than that, and look to those like Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Amy Carmichael, Jim Elliot, or Billy and Ruth Graham. You might even consider the leaders of your local church, and say to yourself, “The Spirit is at work in them.” But just as Jordan Spieth or Lydia Ko could not make it by thinking that only “the real pros” have what it takes, we must not get stuck in a mindset that sees the best work of God only in others. We sell God short if we do not believe he can do the same in us.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he was writing to a younger man, one who was still in the process of developing his leadership and evangelistic abilities. Certainly this cannot happen without the work of the Holy Spirit inside of you, but there is a part we must play as well, a commitment we must make. And so Paul urged Timothy to “be diligent” and to “present yourself approved.”

What does it take for you and me to engage in such a diligence, as those who believe God can do wonderful work in and through us, too? It takes the day-by-day dedication we spoke of last week and to which Jeffrey Cranford refers in today’s accompanying video, telling the story of Bernhard Langer faithfully practicing a habit we might easily brush off as too elementary. No purposeful practice is incidental; many little bits can add up to quite a lot! So be encouraged to take up the effort today, letting God mature you in the midst of your practice.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2016 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/gc3vVBKkps0>

**Opening questions** Which one or two golfing greats have most captured your attention and respect through the years? • How do you think your faith stacks up against the “real giants” of Christianity?

## READING 2 Timothy 2:1-19

### Examples of dedication (verses 1-6)

What three kinds of workers did Paul use as examples of dedication? Consider each of these with little details about how they function. Can you apply one of these examples to your particular practice of faith?

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### Jesus, our charge (verses 8-13)

How did the life and character of Jesus ignite Paul’s own dedication? What does Jesus’ love and faithfulness inspire in you?

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### Weakness and power (verses 7, 14-19)

What part does the Lord play in our spiritual growth? What must we do in responding to his lead? How key is it to stay on track?

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