

THINK LIKE A PRO, PART 4

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20a, NASB)

TODAY'S PASSAGE HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF LINKS PLAYERS for many years. When one of our founders, Jim Hiskey, set out to build an acrostic from the letters LINKS, he closed with the Great Commission: "Share the Good News of Christ through the great game of golf." With that statement, he paired today's verse.

In his years of ministry, Jim has been engaged not only with golfers but with leaders of all kinds from around the world. This is made possible by living in the Capital region, as Jim does, and by his long affiliation with some people in ministry who set out to influence the influencers. Often, because of their political positions, all of these people—both those ministering and those to whom they minister—fully understand what it means to be an ambassador. They do not represent themselves alone, and in fact they may sometimes not represent themselves at all!

It should also be recognized that ambassadors, because they represent someone greater than themselves, are not chosen well when they are chosen lightly. They should be selected on the basis of experience and character. That is, they merit ambassadorship by their maturity.

In Paul's notes to Timothy about selecting leaders (elders or overseers) for the local church, he included this: "He must be... not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil." The immature, even in Christ, are simply not as ready for service as the mature.

This current series on thinking like a pro has joined the idea of building a solid golf game with establishing a firm commitment to Jesus, our King. We cannot be nominal Christians or casual churchgoers and expect the Lord to say, "I have meaningful work for you to do in my kingdom. Here it is." Don't mistake me. God is indeed trying to tell you that he has meaningful work for you to do. But he will not hand that work to you if your walk with him is haphazard and occasional.

Consider Anna, the prophetess who saw the infant Jesus in the temple in the sunset of her own life. Luke reported of her that "she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers" (Luke 2:37). There is a picture of maturity: regular, steady, enduring. When we approach life this way, we too may see Jesus as only the most faithful do. He may call us for a special purpose.

Opening questions When you think of an ambassador, what traits come to mind? • What hesitations keep you from stepping up to the next level, be it in work or in relationships or in your faith?

READING 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Luke 2:25-38, Hebrews 13:7

Evidence of maturity (1 Timothy 3)

Among the list of traits for elders (overseers) and deacons, which surprise you and which cause you to say, "Of course!"? Where would you set yourself on the spectrum of maturity with this list in mind?

Simeon and Anna (Luke 2)

How do the stories of Simeon and Anna inspire you? What great reward did they receive for their faithfulness?

Your own leaders (Hebrews 13)

Who do you know in your own life whose walk of faith challenges you to the next level? How might you imitate them?
