

GOLF & LIFE FUNDAMENTALS 2: THE GRIP

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV)

AS COMFORTABLE AS THIS ONE OR THAT MAY SEEM, we cannot say that any grip will do when it comes to your golf swing. A bad grip leads to a compensating swing, and a compensating swing—especially under pressure—leads to unwanted consequences.

If you're going to be a good golfer, even simply recreationally, you'll want to be sure your fundamentals are solid and consistent. As we saw last week, good alignment is critical, and so is a proper grip. If you're not sure you have these in place, it might be time for a tune-up from your local professional.

But what if your faith is young or has suffered compromise? Where do you go then? Well, again you want to be sure you have a good grip, which this time means a correct handle on the word of truth.

When you were a new believer, you likely heard more than a few encouragements to "get into the Word"—that is, to read your Bible. And even as you mature through the years, friends who help you maintain accountability probably start with this question: *Are you spending time in the Word?*

Spending time in the Word, reading it in big gulps and small, thoughtful doses, is indeed a foundational practice. To know God well, you will want to know the Word well. After all, it is *his* Word—or maybe more accurately, his *words*. The Scriptures contain the inspired words of God ("breathed out by him," as it is rendered in the Greek). These words have great worth for us as disciples, for teaching, rebuke, correction, and training us in righteousness. Through them we are equipped for the work God gives us (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

What this all means, however, is that *reading* the Bible is only the beginning. We must approach the Word with the intention of following it and teaching it to others. This means we must be diligent, so that our dividing of the Word is right. No, every reader of the Bible is not a theologian, any more than every golfer is a tour professional. But we all aspire to improve at golf, and we can all aspire to lay hold of the Word of God in a way that makes us effective wielders of this sword of the Spirit in the arena where we live.

Opening questions Where did you learn to hold a golf club? How often do you think about your grip now? • What parts of Scripture are most meaningful to you? What helps you put these into practice?

READING Luke 4:1-21; Ephesians 6:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Christ and the Scriptures (Luke 4)

How did Jesus combat the devil in the wilderness? How did he initiate his ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth? How else do we know that the Scriptures were an integral part of Jesus' life?

The Spirit, the Word, and prayer (Ephesians 6)

The Holy Spirit is resident in the Word, as well as in our prayers. How do the practices of Scripture reading and prayer support one another, and how can they bring greater maturity in your own walk with Christ?

The purpose of the Word (2 Timothy 3)

Consider the four listed aspects of Scripture's value to us. What does each one produce in us? How have you seen a truth of Scripture take hold of your heart and prepare you for righteousness?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2017 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available at <https://youtu.be/n3lPmH8wRkU>.