



Links Players

EIGHT GREAT TRAITS 1: FAITH

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1, NIV)

ABUSY FALL MEANT FAR LESS GOLF FOR ME than I'd normally like to play during this mild season here in Central California (hint from a local: if you want to make that dream trip to the Monterey Peninsula, October and early November are normally spectacular). When I finally pulled out my clubs after a month away, I was counting on my swing being there for me. It was an act of faith, for sure: being assured of things unseen. Except I wasn't sure. We all know there's no such thing in golf, even if we pured it only yesterday. But every good player also knows that when it comes to golf if you have no faith, you haven't got a prayer.

But what about in our walk with Jesus? How central is faith to that relationship?

In 2 Peter 1, the apostle wrote to those who had received a precious faith "through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." Then, in verse 5, he began a progression through a list of traits that he said should be added to this faith. It is this list of eight great traits upon which we will set our course in the coming weeks of Friday devotions and studies.

So we begin with faith. Most of us are familiar with the idea that faith does not have to be big to accomplish great things. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

That's all? Only a tiny seed? It is true that the picture reveals a bit of matter not much bigger than the period at the end of this sentence. But the context of Jesus' statement is telling. His disciples were asking him why they had not been able to cast the demon from a possessed boy. Jesus told them it was because they had so little faith. Little, as in smaller than a mustard seed.

I do not know how to measure faith. Some of what I've seen pass for faith is bluster—the proud words of proud men. Meanwhile, I have seen the humble prayers of weakened saints bring wonderful answers.

Here's all I know: Get faith. As much of it as you can. And be sure the faith you have is based on the righteousness of the one who has saved you. Around Jesus, your faith is sure to grow.

Opening questions How can you regain lost trust in your golf swing or your putting stroke? • In what things do you implicitly trust every day? How is this similar to or different than placing your faith in God?

READING Mark 5:24-34; Hebrews 11:1-6 & 11:13-16

The healed woman (Mark 5)

What might we say about the importance of faith after reading this woman's story (note especially verse 34)? Where did she place her faith and why was this significant?

Faith and pleasing God (Hebrews 11:1-6)

What lines in this passage catch your attention when it comes to understanding faith? What must we believe if we are to come to God?

Faith and eternity (Hebrews 11:13-16)

How are people who have faith in God different in the way they live here on earth? How are they different in the way they view eternity?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2018 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study with Jeff Hopper and Tracy Hanson is available at <https://youtu.be/NvaeXp-Y1jU>