



FROM THE GOLF COURSE TO THE GREAT COMMISSION

I do not play golf. My father-in-law is an avid golfer and has taken me golfing on several occasions. He did his best to teach me the basics of the game and I enjoyed the experience. However, my interest in golf never rose to the level of wanting to play regularly. Nonetheless, there were several lessons I learned during the few times I attempted to play that can be applied not only to the Great Commission generally but also to BIMI's 2024 theme specifically—*Total Consecration To Reach Every Nation*.

First, and maybe most important, was the lesson that I had to keep my eye on the ball—this was a lesson about **CONCENTRATION**. The temptation for me was to look up quickly after swinging to see where the ball was going. Sadly, there were several (actually many) times that I looked up only to find that my ball was still on the tee. Other times, my attention went elsewhere and the ball ended up going in the woods or in the water. Spiritually, this reminds me that we must keep our eye on the ball when it comes to missions. When Jesus told us to *look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest* (John 4:35), He was not speaking about a passing glance but rather an intense focus. It is easy to lose sight of what is truly important. There are many distractions and temptations that will take our eyes off the ripe harvest fields of this world. If we focus on ourselves or on the many distractions around us, we are not going to win the prize of *the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 3:14). It is important that we focus intently on what Jesus said to focus on so that we can someday hear His “*Well done.*” Perhaps it could be said this way: There must be total concentration to receive God's commendation.

A second lesson I quickly learned was that it took money to play golf—this was a lesson about **COST**. When my father-in-law was introducing me to the game, he was very generous and paid my way. However, it became apparent that if I were going to make golf a part of my life, I was going to



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need to budget money for that purpose. The game of golf is not cheap. Not only do golfers need to buy the proper equipment but also they must pay green fees before each round. There are many different courses to play and each course has its fee. The common denominator is that it will cost more than just a few dollars to play 18 holes. This is not to say that I think it cost too much to play golf—just that it costs too much for *me* to play golf. If I loved the game, I would make a way to pay for the game. Spiritually, if we love the Lord and if we are going to make worldwide missions a part of our lives, it is going to cost us something and we will budget for it. There are many different fields of the world and each field has a cost. The common denominator is that it is going to cost more than just a few dollars to *reach every nation*. When Paul wrote to the Corinthian church concerning Grace Giving, he made it clear that participating in the offering was not a command but that it did *prove the sincerity of their love* (2 Corinthians 8:8). There is much eternal truth in the well-known saying “You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving.” Jesus said it best when He said, “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Luke 12:34).

Finally, as I attempted to learn the game of golf, it became very apparent that a tremendous amount of dedication was required in order to play well—this was a lesson about **COMMITMENT**. Golf is not a game that can be perfected without being on the course regularly. To be sure, *Practice makes perfect*. To excel in golf, one cannot set it aside for a while and then pick it up again whenever it becomes convenient. Those who have mastered the game have made it a major part of their lives. Spiritually, if we are going to be successful in fulfilling the Great Commission, it will involve commitment—*total consecration*. We must be fully committed to the task of *reaching every nation*. This is not a job that can be accomplished by setting it aside for a while and then picking it up again whenever it is convenient. We must be laboring in the fields regularly. The only way we will excel in missions is by making it a significant part of our lives.

Although golf is not for me, there are many valuable lessons I learned while attempting to play. I am thankful for my father-in-law's patient teaching, but I am even more grateful for his persistent testimony of making missions a much higher priority than golf. Going to the golf course is something we choose to do—because we love the sport. However, going *into all the world* to fulfill the Great Commission is something we should be constrained to do—because we love the Savior. If we are going to win the prize, there must be an intense *concentration* on finishing the course God has given us—no matter the *cost*—with an unwavering *commitment* to live lives of *Total Consecration To Reach Every Nation*. 