

Foreword by Adam Wainwright – pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals

LIFE IN THE FAIRWAY

what golf teaches us about integrity

CHAD BONHAM

Featuring stories & commentary
from PGA Golfers





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Of course, my first earthly thanks go to my wife, Amy, and my incredible boys Lance, Cole, and Quinn. I am nothing without them, and my purpose in life is to first and foremost glorify God through my role as a husband and father. I've learned a lot about myself while writing this book that I know has challenged me to a higher level of integrity.

My mother, Betty Bonham, is an angel, a saint, and a warrior all rolled up into one amazing human being. She's a huge reason behind why I do what I do. She and my father, Stan (who is currently having a pretty sweet time in heaven), provided me a spiritual, emotional, and creative foundation upon which I safely stand. And I always have to thank my sister Rhonda Dilldine and her husband, Dusty, and their daughters, Elizabeth and Madison, as well as my sister Karla Partridge and her husband, Denton, for the years of unconditional love and unfettered support.

Thanks to Tim Dudley who allowed me to sit with him and his team back in November of 2010 and talk about an array of ideas. When he said the words, "You know, there hasn't been a good golf book out there in while," who knew it would result in this incredibly satisfying project. I also want to thank Laura Welch, Craig Froman, and the rest of the New Leaf Publishing editorial, design, and marketing team for getting behind the book, making it better, and pushing it to the biggest audience possible.

It's quite obvious that this book is only worth reading largely due to the contributions and support of the athletes who so generously lent their insights and their name recognition: Jonathan Byrd, Stewart Cink, Ben Crane, Webb Simpson, Adam Wainwright, Aaron Baddeley, D.J. Brigman, Bernhard Langer, Justin Leonard, and Kevin Streelman. It was an honor to tell your stories and to get to know you a little better in the process.

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My prayer is that you will all be pleased with the end result and encouraged to know that, thanks to this collaborative effort, many who skim these pages will be challenged to pursue a greater level of Christ-centered integrity in their lives.

— Chad Bonham

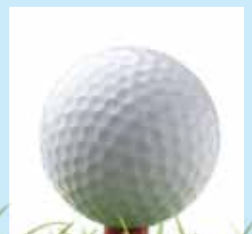


"Integrity is doing what's right even though no one is around. You might be all alone at home, in a hotel, or wherever. It's the choices you make then that determine whether or not you're going to live a life of integrity. When I travel without the family, it's the choices I make of what to watch on TV, what to read and what my eyes see. It's when I'm on the golf course and the ball moves and no one sees it except for me and I call the penalty on myself. It's not just a single choice, but it's one choice after another that leads to a life of integrity."

– Aaron Baddeley

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↑
Adam Wainwright (right) and his brother Trey Wainwright (left) at the 2011 Adam Wainwright Golf Classic.

ing the signs of other coaches from the dugouts and down the baselines. Players who reach base often tell the hitter in the batter's box what pitch is coming after watching what number the catcher puts down.

As pitchers, we are supposed to throw clean, unscratched baseballs every pitch. A bounced ball can sometimes land a deep scuff that the umpire is supposed to check and throw away. A big league pitcher can do some pretty cool things with a scuffed baseball. A scuff on the right side of the ball will dive hard to the left, and a scuff on the left side will cause the ball to dive hard to the right.

So when we get a ball that has been bounced a few times we throw it back, right? Not in a million years. We know that the hitter is trying to beat us. We know that his manager is trying to steal our signs. We know that the runner on second base is trying to relay what pitch we're throwing. We know that the ball with the little scuff on the side is going to be much harder for the hitter to hit. And we know that by gaining that little edge over the hitter, we may have a greater opportunity to win the game, and by having a greater chance to win we know that we, potentially, have a chance to make more money.

And owners, managers, and players like money.

So we take that ball with the three-inch scratch and we throw it.

Now, most of those things are just traditions that are part of the great game of baseball. But, it makes you ask yourself, "Where do you draw the line?" That is what is so great about golf. The line is drawn right before you step onto the first tee box. While other sports all have referees watching your every move to ensure a fair game is played on both sides, the game of golf requires only one referee — yourself.

"Show me the money!"

If you've seen the movie Jerry Maguire then you know what I'm talking about. I can see Cuba Gooding Jr. in my mind shouting that famous phrase while dancing in his kitchen.

In today's world of sports, money is the name of the game. Owners, managers, and players alike want you to "show them the money." Anything you can do as an athlete to get an advantage over your opponent is thought to be fair game — as long as you don't get caught.

Managers spend their entire careers steal-

FOREWORD

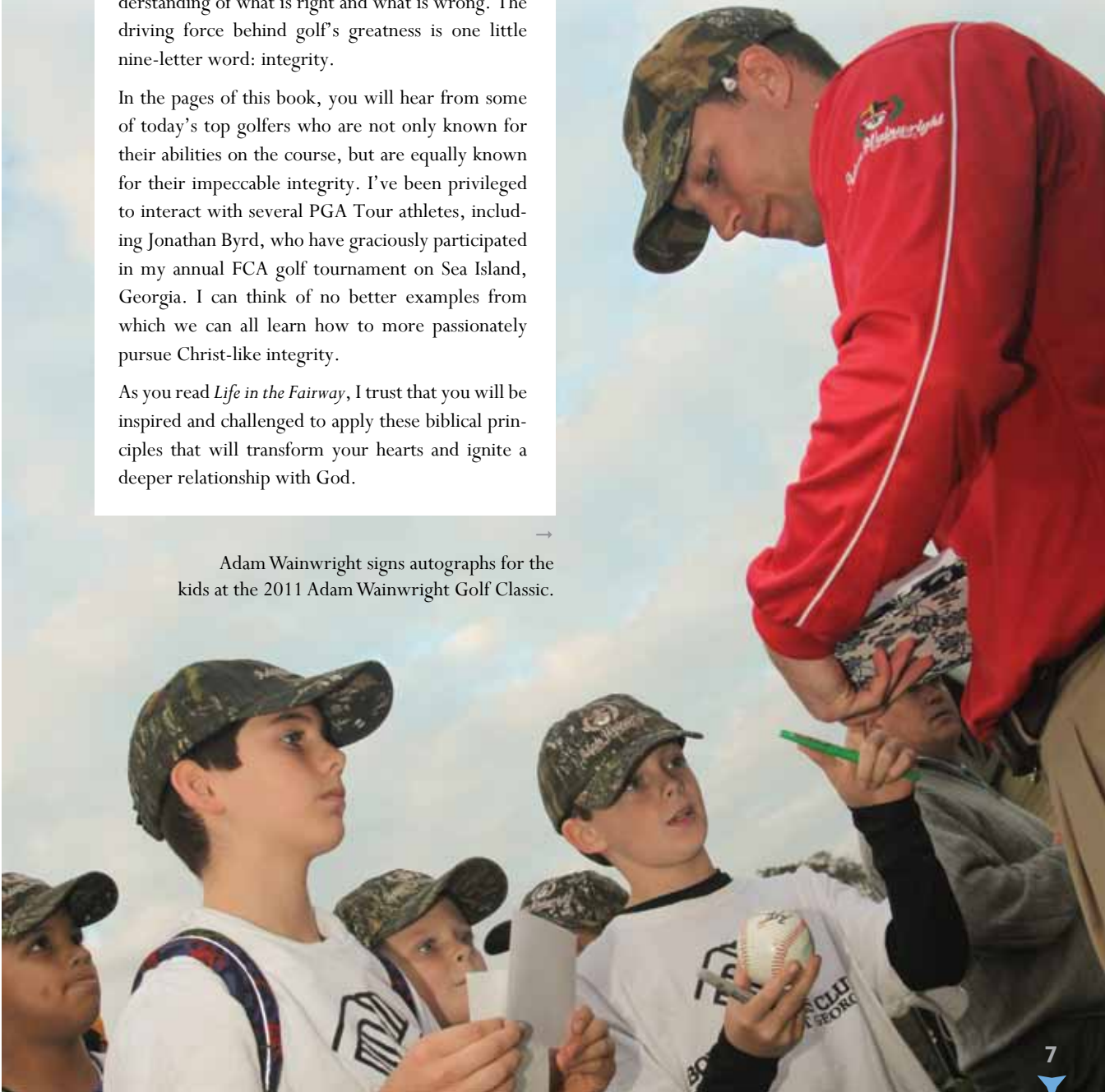
By Adam Wainwright

I believe the reason that golf has remained such a pure game is found at its roots. The game of golf is based on the values of honesty and a general understanding of what is right and what is wrong. The driving force behind golf's greatness is one little nine-letter word: integrity.

In the pages of this book, you will hear from some of today's top golfers who are not only known for their abilities on the course, but are equally known for their impeccable integrity. I've been privileged to interact with several PGA Tour athletes, including Jonathan Byrd, who have graciously participated in my annual FCA golf tournament on Sea Island, Georgia. I can think of no better examples from which we can all learn how to more passionately pursue Christ-like integrity.

As you read *Life in the Fairway*, I trust that you will be inspired and challenged to apply these biblical principles that will transform your hearts and ignite a deeper relationship with God.

→
Adam Wainwright signs autographs for the kids at the 2011 Adam Wainwright Golf Classic.



4-24-06

Player Tim

hole	pace of play hrs. mins	white	yellow	par	str.	score
1	:13	370	355	4	10	6
2	:27	411	395	4	6	14
	:40	352	337	4	16	5
	:54	419	411	4	8	17
	1:11	514	514	5	5	2
	1:24	374	360	4	12	4
		350	349	4	4	3
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If you're not cheating, you're not trying.

That old adage is, at times, intended to be a tongue-in-cheek statement about the competitive nature of athletics. Unfortunately, it's become less of an exception and more often the rule at all levels — from grade school sports all the way up to the professional ranks.

In baseball, catchers pull an errant pitch back into the strike zone in an effort to sway the umpire's call. Outfielders trap fly balls after a diving attempt and quickly pop up to declare they made the catch. Base runners steal signs and relay the information to the base coach who then relays the information to the batter.

In football, offensive linemen invent techniques to help them get away with holding their defensive counterparts. Like baseball outfielders, receivers also trap the ball and do their best sales pitch to convince referees of a clean catch.

Basketball is equally notorious for producing a culture that encourages players to work around the rules. Defensive practices such as inconspicuously holding onto another player's shorts or jersey and flopping in order to draw a charge are commonplace mechanisms used to gain an unfair advantage.

And then there are more egregious forms of cheating such as the use of performance-enhancing drugs, the falsifying of birth certificates, and secretly videotaping another team's practice.

So why exactly has cheating become such a prominent factor in modern-day sports? There's an easy answer to that question: It's all about the big W. All too many owners, executives, coaches, and athletes have bought into a statement by UCLA Bruins' football coach Red Sanders that was later repeated and made famous by legendary Green Bay Packers' coach Vince Lombardi.

Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing.

Of course, it doesn't help that professional sports (and now even college sports) has become

such a big business. There are multi-million dollar contracts to be signed. There is power to be gained. There is fame in which to bask. There is personal pride and self-satisfaction to be enjoyed.

In many regards, golf is no different from those other sports. It can become a lucrative career for the elite athletes that reach the top. It can also bring varying levels of fame, power, and pleasure. But unlike baseball, football, basketball, and just about any other sport imaginable, golf has the concept of integrity tightly woven into its fabric. Golf makes you decide what kind of person you're going to be. Are you going to follow the rules regardless of the consequences or are you going to take advantage of the fact that in most situations, it's just you, your ball, and individual decisions that ultimately reflect how much you respect the game, your opponent, and yourself?

That's what this book is all about. It features some of the game's biggest stars sharing stories of tough decisions they've been forced to make on the golf course and in their personal lives. Sometimes the consequences were unfair. Other times, the end results worked out in their favor. But at no time did they waver from the biblically inspired integrity that they committed to pursuing once they entered into a relationship with Christ.

Throughout these pages, it is my prayer that you will gain a deeper understanding of integrity and why it still matters in this morally relativistic time in which we live. As Stewart Cink told me, "You've got trouble to the left and right every day now on these courses." That's why it's tougher and tougher for even the best pro golfers to keep their ball on the fairway.

The same is true in the life of the Christian. Our goal is to stay on the narrow road that Jesus talks about in Matthew 7:14. But in a world that favors pride over humility, lust over love, and selfishness over servitude, walking on the straight path has become an increasingly difficult task. Just like on the golf course, it can be all too easy to get lost in the rough, fall into a water hazard, or find ourselves out of bounds.

But with the truth found in God's Word, the corrective guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the accountability and support of like-minded individuals, we will discover that there is an abundance of true peace, prosperity, and purpose when we pursue *Life in the Fairway*.

Integrity Has No Price.

Webb

A lot of things go through a golfer's mind before a crucial putt.

Are my hands in the right position?

Do I like my line?

How's my stance?

I wonder why they're cheering on the 18th?

Relax.

Visualize your swing.

And then, even if for just a split second, the most disciplined golfers empty them out and turn their laser-like focus onto the ball, the club, and the cup. As soon as the putter makes contact with the ball, one last thought fills the cranium.

Get in the hole!

Webb Simpson is no different than any other golfer. He has his routine. He has his progression. He has his collection of thoughts that race through his mind.

So when Simpson approached his ball on the 15th hole during the final round of the 2011 Zurich



Simpson

chapterFOUR

"You can play video games or board games or card games and it always seems like you can beat the game or perfect it. Well, in golf, you can never perfect it. The lowest round I ever shot was 58 and I felt like I left two shots out there. I missed a six-foot putt on one hole and I made par on a par five that was reachable. So I think that element of thinking you can always do better is what keeps people coming back whether they're an amateur or a professional."

– Webb Simpson





Classic, like clockwork, he did the same thing he always does. Only this time, the stakes were much higher. Tapping in this six-inch putt meant that just three more holes would separate Simpson from his first career PGA Tour victory.

Up until that Sunday in Avondale, Louisiana, a suburb just 15 miles west of New Orleans, the Wake Forest All-American had managed to make a modest impact on the circuit. He was winless, but four Top-10 finishes had helped the rookie place 70th on the 2010 money list. Earlier in the 2011 season, Simpson had his first close call at the Transitions Championship before a bogey on the final hole knocked him out of a first-place tie with Gary Woodland.¹

Other than the unusually high winds of 17 miles per hour (as opposed to the average 9 mph typical of late April and early May),² it was an uneventful sunny spring day in the Gulf Coast. Players especially needed to make adjustments on their tee shots and approaches, but for the most part weren't as concerned about the weather condition's impact on the putting game.

Simpson certainly didn't hold a lackadaisical attitude. He knew anything was possible as he paced a green that he would later describe as "pretty bare."³ The lanky 6' 2" Raleigh, North Carolina, native approached the ball, took his stance, set his feet, and grounded his putter six inches behind the ball.

And then, just as he was ready to pull back his club and make contact, Simpson's ball moved.

Oh no. Not again.

It wasn't more than a half-inch, but it moved nonetheless.

For Simpson, that singular moment felt like part déjà vu and part nightmare. He was instantly transported back in time to the 2009 Bob Hope Classic where on the 11th hole of the final round he experienced the same agonizing circumstances. The wind moved his ball after he had addressed the ball and grounded his club, resulting in a one-stroke penalty. Simpson finished that tournament tied for fifth.⁴

"If you address the ball with the intention of making a stroke and the ball moves, you're deemed to have caused it to move," Simpson explains. "If the ball is there and you put your putter down but you haven't set your feet in place and it moves, that's no big deal. But if you're ready to putt and your next step is to take your putter back, then that's a penalty."⁵

Simpson knew the ball moved, but apparently he was the only who actually saw it move. Still, in his mind, there was only one choice: go to the officials and ask if he had taken his stance. After conferring about the situation, they ruled that he had, in fact, taken his stance. Instead of a par four to keep him in the lead by a stroke, Simpson made bogey on the hole and fell back into a tie with final round playing partner Bubba Watson.

"In the moment, it was tough," Simpson admits. "You're out there grinding and you're fighting and you're trying to win your first golf tournament, and you hate to think that might cause you to lose the tournament."⁶

Simpson didn't lose the tournament at that moment, but considering that he and Watson both went on to par the remaining three holes to force a sudden death playoff where Watson won on the second hole, some would argue that the penalty did in fact cost him the victory. If that's

true, then the penalty also cost Simpson \$460,800 — the difference between the first and second-place checks.⁷ Taking that logic one step further, it could be argued that the penalty eventually cost him much more. Nearly six months later, Simpson finished the 2011 season in second place on the money list with \$6,347,353 behind Luke Donald who earned \$6,683,214.⁸ That’s a difference of \$335,861 or, more importantly, less than the \$460,800 that Simpson didn’t collect by falling short at the Zurich Classic. And with the money title comes a valuable five-year PGA Tour exemption.

As far as Simpson is concerned, integrity has no price. Simpson wasn’t thinking about losing out on nearly half a million dollars and he certainly wasn’t thinking about the impact it might have on his year-end stats. But in that moment, all he could think about was doing the right thing no matter how unfair the rule might have seemed at the time.

At the end of the tournament and having a moment to decompress, he turned to his wife Dowd for counsel. “I’m going to say what I think about this rule in the media room,” he told her. “Do you think I should?”

“Yes,” she replied. “But make sure you don’t say anything you’re going to regret. Do it in a way that still honors the Lord.”⁹

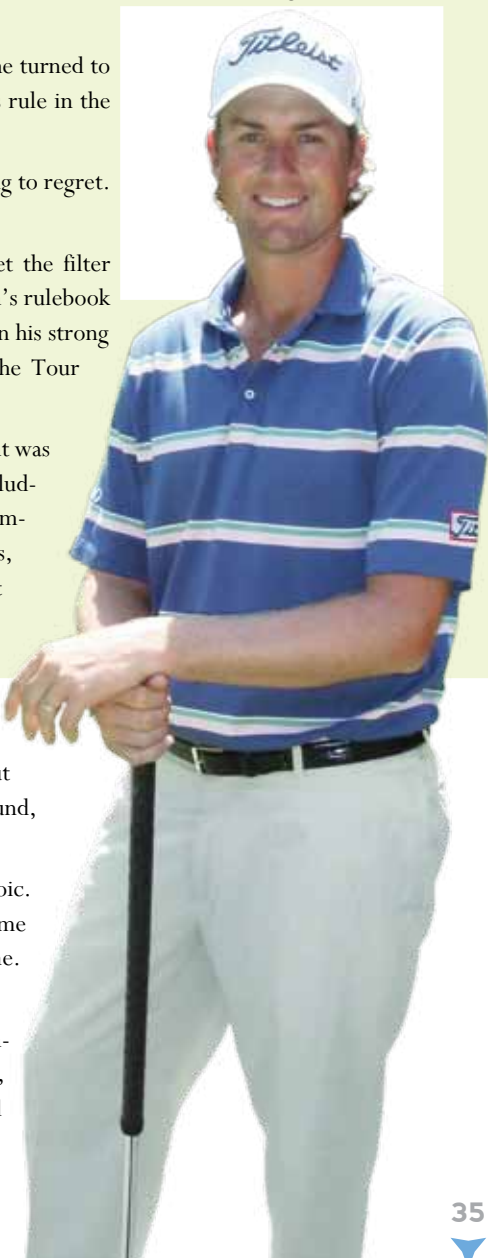
Simpson went into the pressroom where he uncharacteristically “let the filter down.”¹⁰ While complimentary of the United States Golf Association’s rulebook and showing his overall respect for its purpose, he didn’t hold back on his strong opinion of this particular rule and his belief that every golfer on the Tour would agree that it was a rule that unfairly penalized competitors.

One of those peers that wholeheartedly supported Simpson’s argument was American golfing legend Tom Lehman, a five-time PGA winner (including the 1996 British Open) and currently a dominant force on the Champions Tour. When Lehman watched the events unfold in New Orleans, he was immediately struck by not just the injustice of the situation but by how professionally and maturely Simpson handled himself in the aftermath.

“When you’re in a position where it could cost you a tournament, it just shows the class, the integrity and the character of the individual and also the beauty of golf,” Lehman says. “Webb paid the penalty. But you know what, I think in the end, when you do that, what goes around, comes around. He will be rewarded in some way.”¹¹

Simpson, however, doesn’t feel like his decision was all that heroic. “I think and I hope that every other player would have done the same thing,” he says. “It wasn’t a choice that I had. It was a rule of the game. I’ve received too many compliments for just following the rules.”¹²

Other golfers see it a little differently. Simpson’s actions that day impressed several of his more experienced tour mates. Stewart Cink, Jonathan Byrd, Ben Crane, and close friend Kevin Streelman are all on record showing their admiration for his show of integrity. D.J.





Brigman, another rising star on the Tour, calls Simpson “a perfect example of integrity”¹³ after watching him handle multiple situations when he could have easily made a more selfish decision.

“He did what was right,” Brigman says. “It just speaks volumes to Webb’s integrity and how his faith plays a part in his life. That will allow people to be open to what he has to say when it comes to his faith. He’s going to be able to reach more people because of what he’s done in those situations as opposed to winning those tournaments if he had done the wrong thing.”¹⁴

Nudges in the Right Direction

Simpson didn’t wake up on the morning of May 1, 2011, and suddenly have the moral fortitude to make a principled decision. The ability to make that tough call was seeded into his young heart and mind at home years earlier. He vividly remembers one time in particular when as a youngster his father taught him a lesson about integrity. Standing on the 18th fairway of a local golf course, nine-year-old Simpson noticed that there was a divot about a foot in front of dad’s ball. At the time, there seemed to be an obvious opportunity. “Why don’t you just tee it up on the front of that divot?” Simpson innocently asked.

“That would be closer to the hole,” his father replied. “It doesn’t matter if it’s one inch, you can never, ever fib on the rules at all.”¹⁵



Early on, it was teachable moments seized upon by his father that nudged him toward an appreciation for the value of honesty and ethical behavior. But as he grew older, Simpson began developing not only a strong love for golf, but a respect for the game as well. Those two powerful components have guided him throughout his amateur and professional careers — even when faced with seemingly unfair circumstances.

“If your ball moves a quarter of an inch or you ground the club in the sand and it barely touches the ball, you’ve always got to maintain the integrity of the game,” Simpson says. “I’ve always remembered what my father taught me and it’s helped me in those situations where nobody’s looking and I’m the only one that knows that the ball moved. It has allowed me to keep the integrity of the game.”¹⁶

One of Simpson’s first major opportunities to test his adherence to that standard came in 2005 while playing at the College All-America Golf Classic in El Paso, Texas. Simpson entered his sophomore season with high expectations, having won Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Freshman of the Year honors just a few months earlier.¹⁷

Playing at the All-America tournament may not have been the Masters, but for Simpson and the 30-plus college golfers invited to play there, it probably seemed that big. The event has produced some notable winners such as Tiger Woods, Matt Kucher, and Davis Love III.¹⁸

During an early round, Simpson was working out of the rough. When he put down his club, the ball moved ever so slightly.

Did it move and come back to the original spot or did it move and stay there?

It was quite the conundrum for a young player eager to perform well on a sizable stage but equally fervent in his quest to maintain integrity. Simpson struggled with his decision. Thinking he could call a penalty on himself at the end of the round, he waited until entering the clubhouse before coming to a conclusion.

Turned out, Simpson was supposed to replace the ball if it had moved into a different position and then play his next shot.



“Either it moved and you’re disqualified or it didn’t move and you’re fine,” the officials informed him.

“I just kind of prayed about it,” Simpson recalls. “I felt the Lord telling me to penalize myself. I did, and I got disqualified. It was really tough at the time because it was a huge tournament and a great honor to be there.”¹⁹

Simpson wasn’t able to play in El Paso the next year due to an injury, but returned in 2007 during his senior year where he claimed the prestigious title in redemptive fashion. “In no way am I suggesting I won because the Lord was rewarding me,” Simpson clarifies. “But it was cool how I went through a difficult situation and then was able to win the golf tournament a couple years later.”²⁰

Simpson can think of at least ten times in his playing career where he faced a difficult decision involving a self-imposed penalty. But it ultimately wasn’t the game that required him to act with integrity but rather his relationship with God and some timely nudges in the right direction.

“Our deposit of the Holy Spirit living inside of us, more than anything, has allowed me to make those tough decisions,” Simpson says. “For me, it’s not as much the nature of the game but the fact that the Holy Spirit is prompting me to call a penalty on myself. Within our own nature, we don’t want to call a penalty on ourselves. We want to see how much we can get away with. That’s been a part of every tough decision I’ve made in golf.”²¹

Course Correction

For the golfer out on the course, the closest human equivalent to the Holy Spirit is his caddy. Of the caddy’s numerous responsibilities, carrying the golfer’s bag is probably one of the least important. The best caddies are intricately involved with virtually every shot a golfer takes. The caddy helps the player make sound decisions (what club to use, what type of shot to hit, etc.) based on natural elements such as the wind and the distance to the hole, along with his knowledge of the golfer’s strengths, weaknesses, and ball-striking tendencies.

It’s not uncommon for a golfer to have multiple caddies over the course of a sustained career, but preferably, it’s nice to have the same person on your bag for an extended period of time. Bernhard Langer, for instance, worked with caddy Peter Coleman for 22 years before the two amicably parted ways.²² When two people work together that long or even for 5 to 10 consecutive years, there’s an ironclad trust that goes well beyond the golf course and carries over into their personal lives.





Simpson, on the other hand, has mostly worked with two caddies in his young career. The first was William Kane, who grew up with Simpson in Raleigh. Kane and Simpson became friends at the age of six while playing on the same youth basketball team. When Simpson pursued golf, Kane stuck with basketball and played at a small college. The two eventually reunited when Simpson joined the PGA Tour in 2009.²³

But in 2010, Kane was diagnosed with multifocal motor neuropathy (MMN), a condition that is often confused with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). In a day and age where performance is money, Simpson refused to turn his back on Kane and kept him on the bag until his good friend accepted an offer to go back into youth ministry.²⁴

“Loyalty is one of the most important things, if not the number one thing, in a friendship, and that trust factor,” Simpson says. “I think they go hand in hand.”²⁵

Needing a quick but solid replacement, Simpson was referred to veteran Paul Tesori by fellow PGA golfer and friend Nick Watney. Tesori had previously worked with Vijay Singh, Sean O’Hair, and Jerry Kelly, and was entertaining some high profile offers at the time. But after a ten-minute phone conversation, both men were sold and a new relationship was forged.²⁶

Simpson and Tesori shared more than a love of golf and a collective vast knowledge of the game. They quickly learned that both were followers of Christ and have often relied on their faith to deal with daily challenges. Simpson was also immediately impressed by Tesori’s professional and personal integrity.

“If he’s thinking something, he’s going to tell me,” Simpson says. “He got a job offer (during the 2011 season) from a player who at the time was ranked way ahead of me. On paper, this player has had a way better career. (Paul) told me as soon as he got the voice mail from the guy’s agent. Most caddies are not like that. Most caddies will go talk with their buddies first and see what they think and maybe not even tell the player at all. In a game where you see a lot of backstabbing, it’s really refreshing. The fact that I can trust him is more important than anything.”²⁷

Not only does Tesori provide Simpson with an extra pair of trustworthy eyes, he also helps check his boss’s attitude when necessary — call it a course correction of sorts where Simpson has gotten off track in his thinking. It’s in these times, when playing well has nothing to do with drivers and irons and everything to do with the mind and the heart, where Tesori steps in with a simple question.

“How’s your joy?” he often asks Simpson.

“Something Paul and I often talk about is our attitude when we go out onto the course,” Simpson says. “Are we out here to serve ourselves and seek our own pleasures or are we out here to play for God and His glory.”²⁸

One of the pair’s running themes for the 2011 season was doing their best at all times. The discussion about godly excellence usually brought up one of their favorite Bible stories, David and Goliath.

“Our favorite part of the story is how the Bible says David ran quickly to the battle line,” Simpson says. “David believed in His God despite the fact that he was physically outmatched by his opponent. We want to run quickly like David did. We’re going to believe in our God. David wasn’t wrapped up in whether or not he was going to win. He just believed that his God would never fail him.”²⁹

Family Matters

As far as Simpson is concerned, there's a direct correlation between integrity and that spirit of David, or attitude of excellence, not just on the golf course but everywhere else in his world. And quite frankly, Simpson's world is usually located in the same general vicinity of his wife, Dowd, and son James (born February 2011).

"Whether I win a golf tournament or I lose a golf tournament, I always try to tell my wife that it doesn't matter," he says. "She's far more important than a tournament win or a disappointing loss."³⁰

Simpson's son is too young to understand that concept, but you can believe his dad feels the same way about him. As the elder Simpson has grown more popular with success, he has experienced an increased level of interest within the golf community and is more recognizable in the public eye. While that does bring more pressure, it also brings more opportunity to share an important message.

"One thing I want people to know about me is just how much I care for my wife and my son and how important family is to me," Simpson says. "It's easy to get wrapped up in this golf world and find my identity in being a golfer. But I want everyone to know that I want my identity to be in the fact that Christ and my wife and son mean more to me than golf."³¹

That's where Simpson's desire to be excellent ties back to integrity. Giving his best to God is actually a display of integrity. This is also true for his wife and son. As discussed in chapter one, husbands are called to love their wives in the same way that, "Christ loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25).

For that reason, Simpson believes that "the most important and sacred relationship that exists on earth is between a husband and a wife."³² And how can we truly have integrity (or "soundness of moral character")³³ if we don't even have a Christ-like love for our spouse?

"The ways I try to be a great husband usually have to do with my own heart," Simpson admits. "If I'm seeking the Lord at all times, then that allows me to be able to serve my wife in a way that she is worthy to be served. But when I'm falling short in my relationship with God, that's when I start to make mistakes and fail to serve my wife like I've been called to do."³⁴

Simpson says his heart is broken when he sees so many marriages that are "either run up dry or falling apart."³⁵ He's especially troubled by the source of failure: lazy husbands that aren't putting enough love and effort into the relationship.

"I'm so young at it and I'm so new to it, but daily, my goal is to see how I can keep from being a burden on my wife and how I can be a blessing instead," Simpson says. "The only way that I'm ever able to do a great job is when I'm humbling myself before the Lord and humbling myself before my wife."³⁶

The same is true for his role as a young father. Even when little James was just a few months old, Simpson says he could see the correlation between he and his wife's relationship and the way he seeks to serve his son. When reading Proverbs 22:6, Simpson is reminded of his responsibility and the positive impact his example and his teaching will have as his boy grows older: "Train

Webb Simpson with his wife Dowd and son James





←
The Simpson Family

a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”

Integrity is a benchmark principle that Simpson hopes to share with his son. He can

already point to the way he has handled difficult circumstances, like calling a penalty on himself despite the financial costs, as a future lesson he’ll likely share. Finances in general provide a great opportunity for modeling integrity. It’s often been said that you can judge a man’s heart by the way he spends his money. But in Simpson’s case, he wants his son to also gauge his integrity by the limited value he places on material things.

Simpson is reminded of a sermon he once heard in which the pastor told a story about his four-year-old son who wanted a train set for Christmas. Desiring to grant his son’s wish, the man bought him a ten-piece set and frustratingly put it together until the wee hours of Christmas Eve. The next morning, his son was predictably excited and screamed for joy. But when the father asked his son if he could play with one of the trains, the boy looked at him and said, “No! It’s mine!”

That story really hit home with Simpson who understands how easy it is to claim possessions as his own while failing to realize that everything really belongs to God. In Psalm 50:10, David writes (as a messenger for God) that “every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.”

Yet in this age of man-made technology and pervasive do-it-yourself attitudes, Simpson says it’s no wonder God only requires ten percent of our earnings as part of the Christian tradition often referred to as tithing (see Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:10; et al).

“He knows how sinful and selfish our hearts are,” he says. “I think tithing is the least we can do to try to be faithful with what God’s given us. The way my wife and I like to look at it is it’s all God’s and we’d better be good managers of what He’s given us or He will gladly discipline us.”³⁷

The Influence of Integrity

How Simpson handles his business is first and foremost a product of his desire to honor his relationship with God. But it also has an impact on family. As the leader of his household, he is called to set the tone by making sound decisions based on biblical principles of integrity. In this regard, he is afforded great influence over them, especially with his son who will look up to him as he grows up and begins to look to his father for instruction and direction.

But the influence of integrity is more far-reaching than that small circle. For some people, it may not be that much bigger, but rest assured, people are watching and the opportunity to have a positive impact is directly tied to reputation. In 1 Peter 3:16, the Apostle reminds the early Christians to have “a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” (ESV).

The reverse of that is also true. The follower of Christ sets himself up for intense scrutiny and disdain when his actions do not match up with his words. And the taller the platform, the harder the fall will be.

“When you’re in the public eye and you mess up, everyone’s going to find out about it,” Simpson says. “Everyone will question anything good you’ve done up to that point. Even if you’ve been faithful for 20 years and proclaimed Christ for 20 years, they’re going to neglect everything you’ve ever said.”³⁸

That doesn’t mean we should hide under a rock for fear of failure or bringing dishonor to God’s name. As Simpson says, it’s true that “the more influence you have, the more careful you need to be.”³⁹ But Christians are ultimately called to use whatever influence we possess to fulfill the charge that Christ gave in Matthew 5:16: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (NIV).

That’s something Simpson is getting more used to living out every day.

“In the past, I’ve been too reclusive,” he admits. “My wife keeps telling me that God has given me this talent for a reason. I need to glorify Him with it as much as I can and that means having conversations with as many people as I can about why I do what I do. The better I play, the more things come our way.”⁴⁰

Sometimes, the things that come his way (and our way, for that matter) aren’t good, like wind that moved his ball at the Zurich Classic and effectively blew close to half a million dollars out of his grasp. Ironically, that rule (Rule 18-2b) was modified after the 2011 season. Now the penalty will not apply “when it is known or virtually certain that (the golfer) did not cause the ball to move.”⁴¹

But even if the rule hadn’t changed and Simpson faced the exact same circumstance, he would undoubtedly make the same choice. “Looking back, I’ve seen how God has used that situation to affect other people,” Simpson says. “I heard from a lot of people who were watching with their kids and they were able to teach their kids a cool lesson in that moment. It was a small thing I did that wasn’t even noble; it was just part of the game. But the Lord definitely used it.”⁴²



Maybe that's the real purpose behind integrity. Certainly the biblical principle is in place as a means by which the believer can honor God, but as His messengers of the gospel, it's integrity that often sets us apart, allows a trust to be forged, and provides the greatest opportunities to tell others the Good News.

"In a relationship, integrity is important whether it's between 2 people or 150 people," Simpson says. "If integrity is lost, then people begin to question everything. That's why it's so important that we have men and women of integrity today. Without integrity, we lose that chance to change somebody's life."⁴³





BACK 9

Augusta

1	What's your favorite thing about golf?	It is universally the best sport for this reason. My dad and his buddies who are all about 10 handicappers can have a match where coming down the 18th hole, to them, is like they're at the Masters. They're all square and it comes down to whoever makes the putt to win.
2	What's your least favorite thing about golf?	The amount of time I spend away from home.
3	What's your favorite golf course?	Augusta.
4	What's your favorite tournament?	Wells Fargo Championship.
5	What's your favorite hole?	The 13th hole at Augusta.
6	What's the toughest hole you've ever played?	The 12th hole at Sunriver Resort in Oregon (host to the 2006 NCAA Championship).
7	What's your favorite club?	My putter.
8	Who is your favorite playing partner?	Pat Perez. He's hilarious.
9	With what legend in their prime would you most enjoy playing 18 holes?	Ben Hogan.



SCORECARD

Birthdate	August 8, 1985
Birthplace	Raleigh, NC
Residence	Raleigh, NC
College	Wake Forest (2008, Religion)
Nationwide Tour Victories	0
PGA Tour wins	2 (2011 Wyndham Championship, 2011 Deutsche Bank Championship)
Top 25 finishes	36
Top 10 finishes	18
Career PGA Tour money	\$8,608,449

**All stats through the 2011 season*

