



Links Players

EIGHT GREAT TRAITS 7: KINDNESS

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. (Titus 3:4-5, NIV)

YOU HEAR IT EVERYWHERE: Golf has become a power game. If you don't strengthen yourself, your game is going to look weaker and weaker against average opponents.

And then there is the tap-in.

Imagine applying a power game to the one- and two-footers you need to make to seal your score on many holes. I suppose if your playing partners never make you putt these, you can hop on the power game bandwagon. But in true stroke-play competition, the power game will always need to be accompanied by finesse and even the gentlest touch to put your best score together.

This is a good thing to keep in mind when we consider the character of God and the character traits he wants to see built in us. Paul wrote a most curious line to his Roman readers: "Consider the kindness and sternness of God" (Romans 11:22). We'll unpack this in a moment, but first we can recognize immediately that God has both a power game and a gentle game. Though we may be especially enamored with and even comforted by his strength, God's nature includes a soft side as well. And just as with his strength, God is unmatched in his kindness.

Paul was writing to the Romans in the context of those who had been offered every promise of the Messiah yet had rejected him when he came (many Jewish people) and those who had been newly offered the possibility of salvation through this same Messiah and had received the gift (some Gentile people). God was severe with those who rejected him, but he was kind toward those who had gladly taken up his mercy. And, Paul wrote, that kindness continues to those who continue in it.

So now let's make that frequent, inescapable connection. What resides in God resides in us, too, by way of the Holy Spirit. Though our kindness may be tainted by the sin that still tugs at our hearts and minds, nevertheless we are to be mindful of what we have been given and in turn give to others.

Let us look to be kind, then—dispensers of mercy to those who need a thoughtful word, a gospel truth, or a caring bit of provision. This must likewise become our nature.

Opening questions Have you made any attempt to increase the power in your game in recent years? How about the finesse? Which has been more effective for you?

READING Ruth 2:19-23; Psalm 141:5 & Proverbs 27:6; Isaiah 63:7

A kind man (Ruth 2)

In the account of Ruth, Boaz is a picture of Christ, redeeming a woman who was without place unless he intervened. What special trait of Boaz is noted in this passage? How is it specifically displayed?

Surprising kindness (Psalm 141 & Proverbs 27)

What stands out about the way kindness is described in these passages? Give an example of a friend showing kindness in a hard fashion. Who in your life now can you trust to be kind to you in all ways?

Spreading the news (Isaiah 63)

What activity does the prophet say he will engage in here? How might we do the same thing? What are some kindnesses you have seen God work in your own life? How is it a kindness to share God's kindness with others?

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/p92tNPKuHnQ>