



Links Players

PEOPLE WHO HELP 6: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7, NIV)

WHILE NOT AS COMMON AS IT ONCE WAS, you will still hear sportscasters make mention of an athlete’s God-given ability. Where that gifting overlaps with the hard work of the athlete through years of diligent practice is only something we can guess at. What does help us recognize the difference, however, are the millions of stories of those who worked and worked and worked but never made it. It’s not just will and sweat that puts a trophy in an athlete’s hands.

The golf swing provides a detailed example. The biomechanical levers and variable flexibility from golfer to golfer means that even the slightest differences might amount to great gaps. If your shoulders can turn a half inch more than mine to begin with, there may be no amount of conditioning I can do to close that gap. And it’s a gap that can mean five miles per hour more in swing speed, or 12 yards of distance with a driver. I’m sure you’re beginning to get the picture. What God gives each of us may lead you to playing on the PGA Tour and me to writing about it.

But the differences God creates in us are not only physical. He has made us different spiritually as well—that is, the Holy Spirit has dispensed gifts to me that he has not given to you. And in this economy, neither of us can complain because no matter our gift, we’re called to the same environment: service.

As we have progressed through these studies together, I hope you have noticed that, biblically speaking, helping others and serving others is the same thing. People who help are people who serve. The servant comes under the one with a need.

In the body of Christ, we generally play both roles. Sometimes we are the one in need; other times we are the one who serves. But what follows is another truth: Although I keep my eyes open in service for those who have need, I cannot help everyone. Sometimes I am not equipped in the way that a brother or sister is. When this is the case, my best act of service may be to say, “I know just the person who can help!”

What we must keep in mind at all times is that we are called to function for the common good. We are to use the gifts we’ve been given to bless others. That means we must be ready to be called upon and willing to respond. In doing so, we honor the one who has gifted us.

Opening questions Do you consider yourself a naturally gifted golfer? What advantages do you think other golfers have over you? • Are there other places in your life where you recognize God has gifted you?

READING 1 Corinthians 12:4-13:3; Romans 12:6-8

Gifts we are given (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 & 27-30 with Romans 12) How do we come by spiritual giftedness? What is their purpose in us? What are some of the gifts Paul listed for the Romans and Corinthians? Do you recognize any of these in you?

The blending of the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

How are we to view the gifts we are given in comparison to others? How does verse 26 feed a good perspective in this matter?

Subjecting the gifts to love (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:3)

While the idea of being given spiritual gifts is cool, how do they compare to love? How do we know when we are acting in love as we should?
