



Links Players

11 WHO AM I?: GIFTED FOR GOOD

...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. (Romans 12:5-6, NIV)

IN GOLF, THERE IS SCRAMBLING AND THERE ARE SCRAMBLES. The first denotes the ability of a single player to save par even though he does not hit the green in regulation. Use just one chip and one putt with regularity and we'll call you handy at scrambling.

What's funny, though, is that scramblers aren't that helpful when it comes to playing a scramble. This is the format where we all hit our shots from the tee, then all move our balls to the position of the best shot among us. Then we play again from there. Because this format eliminates the big mistake, scrambles teams hit a lot of greens and don't often need the short game prowess of a skilled scrambler.

The apostles address the fullness of God's giftings to us. Paul wrote to Timothy of God's servants being "equipped for every good work," while Peter noted that we have been given "everything we need for a godly life." So I ask you, were they speaking of solo acts or concert choirs? When God gives us his gifts, does he give them to us individually, or does he give them to us corporately?

I think you know the answer: both. God gives individuals gifts to share with others in the community of faith, so that together we have all we need to fulfill his calling among us, chief of which may be that we go into all the world and make disciples.

When Paul wrote to the Romans about the gifts they were given by the Spirit of God, he said that these gifts came "according to the grace given us." We might tangle ourselves up with the question of measures of grace and their relationship to certain gifts. Instead, we should simply recognize that grace saved us and now grace equips us. What we have comes from God, be it a merciful heart, an encouraging tongue, a serving attitude, a teaching mind—you name it.

But more than this, Paul was saying, *use* what you have been given. This is good for the body of believers, for it is how we minister to one another. It is good, too, for the world around us, for when we act with the Spirit's equipping and guidance, we become the city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Which means one more good thing: when we function humbly as those gifted by God, it is God who gets the praise, and we should want nothing more for our lives.

Opening questions Are you a good scrambler on the golf course? What's your favorite shot to play around the greens? • When it comes to a scramble format, how do you best contribute?

READING 2 Peter 1:3-4; Romans 12:3-8; Matthew 5:14-16 & 6:1-4

The nature of our equipping (2 Peter 1)

What is included in the "everything we need for life and godliness" that God has given us? How do these things equip us to move from sinfulness to holiness as we live out our lives?

Gifted and giving (Romans 12)

What big principles do you find in this passage for receiving from God and giving to others? How do you think you can most meaningfully contribute to your church body or small group (including your Links Fellowship)?

Why we do good (Matthew 5 & 6)

What do these passages from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount tell us about the proper motivation for doing good? What is the best good thing you can do today?
