



Links Players

WHY AM I HERE? 7: USING OUR GIFTS

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, ESV)

SOME PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS ARE POPULAR BECAUSE they are so extraordinarily good at a game that is extraordinarily hard. Early in his career, Jack Nicklaus fit into that category. Some are popular because they are entertaining. Chi Chi Rodriguez and Lee Trevino come to mind. But once in a while a pro golfer comes along who is “all of the above.” For me and the rest of his army, that was Arnie.

What Arnold Palmer had was a firm grip on the club, a handsome and manly visage, a slashing swing, and a great smile. But what he had most of all was charisma.

Charisma is “compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others,” and Palmer had buckets of it. Charisma is also a Greek word found in the New Testament at least 17 times, including in today’s passage. We translate it “gift.”

In Christian circles people often talk about “spiritual gifts.” Presumably those differ from natural gifts which come with the baby (see Psalm 139:13), and are sometimes known as talents. But spiritual and natural gifts have two things in common: they are gifts from God; we should use them in ways that please the giver.

Imagine yourself as a young Annie Oakley or Buffalo Bill being given your first BB gun by your father. If you say, “Thanks, Father,” and then throw it in the closet and don’t use it, will he be pleased? Will he be inclined to give you more gifts?

If you take that BB gun and use it to torment the neighbors’ pets or shoot their prize roses, will he be pleased? But if you appreciate it, take care of it, and use it to learn discipline and skills, your dad will be pleased and will probably give you more gifts.

You may be a natural athlete or a gifted singer. You may be a great teacher of God’s word. You may be a peacemaker, or an inventor, or one of the best friends in the world. You may be the smartest person in the room, or a terrific leader, or a superb follower, or have great faith. And you may not even know it.

So let’s get inside of our closets and look for BB guns and other gifts we need to rediscover or even find for the first time, and then let’s use them for God’s glory. We may not all be Arnie (or Annie), but we all have charisma.

Opening questions Does your favorite pro golfer have charisma? Who on the PGA or LPGA today has charisma? Is charisma always natural, or do people who have it work at it?

READING Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Matthew 25:14-18

Gifts are not for bragging (Romans 12)

One possible problem with having a special gift is the pride that can come with it. How did Paul encourage the church at Rome to deal with that? What does it mean to be “one body in Christ?”

The same and different (1 Corinthians 12)

These verses are today’s passage. What is “the same” in them? Can you see the Trinity there? What is said to be different? Can you see yourself and others you know in any of the three “varieties?”

5-2-1 (Matthew 25)

Why did the owner entrust different servants with different amounts? Was that equitable? How did they deal with the talents they were given? Are there any “no talent” people, or are their talents just buried?

Written by Lewis Greer ©2020 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available here: <https://youtu.be/j2CVivTU36U>