



Links Players

Useful To The Master

Now in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:20-21, ESV)

Someone might ask, “What club did you use on that last shot? If you are a PGA Tour player, that violates Rule 10:2, which comes with a two-shot penalty. If it is merely a friendly, non-competitive round, asking another player what club they used is deemed appropriate.

When it comes to equipment design, we intuitively know things are created for specific purposes; that is, we make them to be used in a certain way. We don’t drive with a sand wedge or extricate ourselves from a green-side bunker with a driver.

Unlike the equipment we design, “being used” is customarily frowned upon by humans, right? No one wants to be used by another person! What we typically mean when we speak like this is that someone we thought loved and cared for us only used us for their self-advancement.

All of this requires qualification, especially concerning being used by God. For example, if the Ryder Cup Captain chooses one player over another in the afternoon Fourball, the chosen player is honored and happy to be “used” to win. So, whether being used is good or bad depends on contexts and motives.

Unlike being used by another person for their self-promotion, being used by the Cosmic King to advance his cause on Earth is an unparalleled privilege. We can always trust his motive, even when we don’t understand it.

And while it is true that God uses us when and how he chooses, that is all a part of what we mean when we say, “God is Sovereign.” That is, we serve at his pleasure. None of this, of course, implies we can dodge responsibility or preparation.

If God can speak through a “donkey” (Numbers 22:28, ESV) to a disobedient prophet, he can use people like us to accomplish his purpose(s). However, more times than not, the Almighty expects his disciples, unlike the donkey, to “always be ready” (1 Peter 3:15) when he decides to “put us in the game.”

He is sovereign, and we are responsible for preparing ourselves for his use. Those two ideas might look like a contradiction, but, in the end, they are not.

In the immediate context of today's text, Paul saturates his "pep talk" with striking metaphors: "Share in sufferings as a good soldier," "An athlete competes according to the rules," and "The hard-working farmer ought to have the first share of the crops." We are compared to soldiers, athletes, and farmers. In each of these vocations, being prepared is essential to success.

Further, Paul tells Timothy to remind us, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

May the Lord find us daily training in righteousness and voicing our desire for him to use us as honorable vessels in his kingdom's advancement.

Prayer: Lord, find us faithful!

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Dennis Darville
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