



Links Players

The Ultimate Instructor

I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:16-17, NASB)

My brother was in town a few weeks ago, so I took him out to Champions Golf Club for the day. We've been playing golf together since we were kids, and it's always fun and usually competitive. However, to quote the great Tiger Woods, "I did not have my A game today."

After the round, we went to the range to hit balls. While my brother was trying to fix my swing, I noticed Steve Elkington hitting balls in the slot just behind me.

Elk sightings at Champions have become more common in recent years, and when he's on the range, I always try to watch him hit a few shots. Elkington still has one of the best swings in golf.

This day, as I watch him hit one 300-plus-yard drive after another on the same line and trajectory, I'm mesmerized by the effortless and unhurried tempo of his golf swing. I think if I could just know how that felt for one or two swings, I might be able to repeat it.

I've taken lessons, but regardless of how good a golf instructor is, the instruction is limited to description or demonstration. How much better it would be if I could be taught from the inside, like internal training wheels guiding me through the proper motion and tempo.

Jesus told His disciples it was better He go away because then He would send the Helper, who had been with them but would now be in them. The Holy Spirit can do for Christians what the best golf instructor cannot do for the best pupil because He guides and empowers Christians from within.

As fantastic an idea as that is, too often, the presence of the Holy Spirit seems merely theoretical. We believe Jesus' words but experience no power or guidance, and we wonder why. I think there is one reason that is most common: We do not acknowledge His presence.

The Bible says the children of God are led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14), but one must acknowledge the leader's presence to be led. If I'm on the range with my golf instructor, but I ignore him, I might as well be on the range by myself. I won't get the benefit of his instruction.

That is the premise of Brother Lawrence's spiritual classic, "The Practice of the Presence of God." I think this is what Jesus described when He said of Himself, "He does only what He sees the Father doing." When we are actively and consciously aware of the Holy Spirit's presence, we can begin to engage Him.

When we actively engage with the Holy Spirit, we open ourselves up to His guidance and empowerment. This is not limited to ministry matters, but extends to all aspects of our lives. The Apostle Paul's declaration, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me," is a testament to the Holy Spirit's versatility, not Paul's personal power. He was acknowledging that the Spirit can assist in all types of situations, including finding contentment in his financial circumstances.

In other words, the Holy Spirit is not a one-trick pony. He's not just knowledgeable about ministry. He can teach and empower us in our work, relationships, sanctification, and many other things. I think He might also know something about golf.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be consistently conscious of your presence. Amen.

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Scott Fiddler

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