



Links Players

Selection Criteria

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

Who are the three greatest golfers of all time? And what criteria would you use to make your choices? How many PGA tournaments have they won? If that's the method, we have Tiger Woods (82), Sam Snead (82), and Jack Nicklaus (73). Not a bad list.

How about the criteria that mattered most to Jack and Tiger, the number of majors won? Then our list becomes Nicklaus with 18, Woods with 15, and Walter Hagen with 11. It's a solid group as well.

Recently, I reread an article that suggested a different method for making the choice. Coming out just after the completion of the Summer Olympics, the author proposed ranking by the number of medals won in majors.

In other words, if they had finished first (gold), second (silver), or third (bronze) in a major, they would have won a medal. Using those criteria, who are the top three of all time?

The top spot belongs to the Golden Bear, with 46 top 3 major finishes. And you're probably not surprised to learn that Tiger ranks second, with 26. But #3 might surprise you. It's not Sam Snead or Walter Hagen. It's not Ben Hogan, Gary Player, or Arnold Palmer either. The third spot belongs to Phil Mickelson, with 25 top-three finishes.

The point is you can come up with many different choices, and it comes down to the criteria you use for making your selections. Now, let's move on to the Bible and review the people God chose to serve him.

A good place to look is Hebrews Chapter 11, the Faith Hall of Fame. If they are listed here, surely these were extraordinary people. So who do we see on the list? Noah, who drank too much; Abraham, who lied; Jacob, who schemed against his twin brother; Moses, a murderer. Even David, the greatest king in Israel's Old Testament history, committed adultery and arranged murder.

Maybe if we try the New Testament, we'll have better luck. How about the disciples Jesus picked? If you've read the gospels, you know this group had some major faults and character flaws. They continually made mistakes and misstatements, had attitude issues, and lapses in trusting their Master. Even Jesus, who chose them, remarked they were slow learners and spiritually dense.

Maybe we can look to the Apostle Paul, who traveled thousands of miles to share the good news of the gospel and authored almost half of the books in the New Testament. Sorry – don't forget that

before his transition, he was Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee who focused on persecuting the early followers of Christ.

The point is this: God uses deeply flawed people to accomplish his purposes because that's all He has to work with. He doesn't need an elaborate method to choose who can serve him; he qualifies the ones he calls. And that's good news for us. However, like Isaiah, we need to say "Yes!" God does the rest.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to be intentional about looking for ways to serve you and to say "Yes!" when those opportunities come. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

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John Bown

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