The Gift in the Other Hand

Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

I came to golf from a tennis background and largely taught myself how to play. Because of that, I have always felt as though I hit every shot with my right hand and right side. While many golfers talk about pulling through the ball with their left side, mine has always felt almost useless.

I had accepted that as simply the way I was wired. That changed back in the spring, when I sat down in a small art class and discovered something entirely unexpected.

The class took place in the cabin at our family farm, with dogs wandering in and out and the screen door opening and closing—the kind of place where nothing feels rushed and everything feels a little more alive.

There were five of us, including Peggy Everett, a gifted artist whose presence alone made you believe you could create something meaningful. Sitting beside me was Allen Levi, whom I had first met nearly 50 years earlier in our church youth group. I had not seen him since. Life has a way of bringing things back around. I can now call him a friend—and that feels like a gift.

I had never painted before in my life. Not once. And yet, over the course of those few days, I somehow produced three paintings I'm genuinely proud of. Stranger still, I discovered that I paint really well with my left hand—the same hand I had always considered almost useless.

Only later, after reading Allen's Theo of Golden, did that discovery begin to feel like something more than a surprise.

In Theo of Golden, there's a quiet, steady rhythm of kindness. Theo gives, not loudly or for recognition, but simply because something inside him says it's the right thing to do. And Theo calls his gifts "bestowals."

Theo puts it this way: "The gift is not always in what is given—but in what is awakened."

Looking back, I'm not sure my paintings were the gift. Or even the time spent in that room.

I think the real bestowal was something I didn't recognize in the moment: A willingness to try. A freedom to fail. And a part of me I didn't know was there… quietly awakened.

And maybe that’s what Theo understood all along: when we give encouragement, kindness, presence, and understanding, we’re not just offering something away… we’re uncovering something within.

Kindness is never meant to be an exchange. Yet sometimes, as we offer it freely, God quietly awakens something within us. The greatest bestowal may be the one we receive without ever seeking it.

In hindsight, this reflection reminds me of a scene in the book.

Theo experiences an evening when everything feels aligned. A moment when all is right in the world. A quiet awareness that something eternal just brushed against the ordinary.

And I believe that when we are similarly bestowed, we are much closer to Heaven than we realize.

Prayer: Lord, please open the eyes of my heart so that I may see You in all things that come my way. Amen.

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