



DAILY DEVOTIONAL FRIDAY BIBLE STUDY FOR JULY 12, 2013

'ENVIABLE' TRAITS

"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. (2 Kings 2:9, NIV)

WHICH GOLF TRAIT DO YOU ENVY MOST? The ability to hit it 300 yards? Stripe a long iron? Wedge it close? Or do you, like many golfers who eke out their rounds, desire to putt like the pros?

"Like the pros." That's an expression meaningful only in golf. Maybe when you were younger and leaner, you said to yourself, *I'd really like to hit as hard as an NFL linebacker*. But those days are gone. Which makes it so fortunate that you play golf, because in this game you really might be able to sink a bomb from across the green or hole out from the fairway—all without winding up in the hospital with broken ribs and a severe concussion!

Envy is one of those mindsets we shun in the Christian life. It is, you know, among the "seven deadly sins." But we do openly speak of "coveting your prayers" and of "desiring spiritual gifts." So let's set aside the terminology and make a simple point: you do well to want what is truly good.

Elisha dogged Elijah on the older prophet's final earthly day for one reason: he wanted what the elder man possessed. He wanted the spirit of the prophet—which was, of course, the power of God in him.

Elijah never faulted Elisha for making this grand request. However, he did say to his protégé, "You have asked a difficult thing."

You may watch a mentor in your own life and admire traits that he or she possesses. You may see in those traits the work of God, who has dispensed them mightily into this otherwise average person. And you may say in prayer, "Lord, I would love to be like that."

You ask a difficult thing, for you do not know the full plan of God for your life. Maybe he is intending to make you excellent in the same way as your mentor; maybe his design is to make you excellent in another way. But don't hesitate to ask. And be sure to emphasize that excellence, asking the Lord to make of you a person gifted for ministry in whatever way most honors and brings glory to him.

Opening questions: Traits you desire

How would you answer that opening question: which golf trait do you envy most? In another arena of life, who is a person that possesses a trait you wish you had? What is that trait?

Following the followers

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. What is the primary behavior of a person whose example we should be following?

People to admire

Read Romans 16:1-15. What noteworthy traits are mentioned in Paul's commendations here (consider also 1 Corinthians 16:15-18 and Philippians 2:19-29)?

Read Hebrews 13:7. What are the people exhorted to do in relationship to their leaders? Do you find this easy to do in your own life? If not, is the problem because of your leaders or because of you?

If you were advising young believers, what advice would you give them about finding mentors whose lives are worth following? Where do *you* go to find such people?
