

THE PROCESS OF PERFECTION, PART 3

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior. (Titus 3:5-6, NIV)

WHO GETS THE CREDIT FOR YOUR GOLF GAME?

Ben Hogan famously said that the secret to golf is “in the dirt,” and most people assumed that Hogan meant that excellence in the game comes through hard work. You build mastery on your own. This may be true, but someone introduced Hogan to the game, and others helped him along. In fact, a piece of Hogan’s success may well have come from seeing faults in others and committing to doing things differently!

We simply cannot say, even the most accomplished of us, that we go it alone. Not in golf. Not in any pursuit.

In the fellowship of believers, we have been trained to step back and look at the whole body of Christ—those with public gifts and those working behind the scenes—and say that we are all necessary, that “when one hurts we all hurt and when one rejoices we all rejoice” (1 Corinthians 12:26). In Christ, we fully support one another.

But ahead of that there is the work being done in each of us by the Holy Spirit, and this work matters crucially to the process of perfection that we have been studying in recent weeks.

To make sense of this, you’ll want to remember that scripturally speaking, the move toward perfection is a move toward completion. God is “doing a good work in you, carrying it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). That is, if we are abiding in Christ, he is working unhindered in us, and he is able to make us complete unto each day. I may not be “perfect” in the way that he will have me be perfect tomorrow or a year from now, but I am “perfect” as he would have me be for the circumstances and tasks he brings my way today.

What is critical, then, is that abiding. We cannot sit back and say, “No big effort from me—God’s doing it all.” Our effort is to stay put, to not wander from Christ, to know his Word and walk in it without taking the many tempting rabbit trails. That’s a pilgrim’s only job, we might say. But it’s a job the enemy wants to deter you from. Don’t let him! Keep your eyes on Christ and watch his work in you.

Opening questions So answer the question: who gets credit for your golf game? • If God were doing formative work in you, how would you know it?

READING Titus 3:3-8; John 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

God at work in us

Considering the Titus passage, when would you say God begins his work in us? What are the characteristics that his work produces?

Abiding in Christ

In John 15, we are introduced to the idea of abiding (remaining) in Christ? What does this accomplish? How do you think this is best done?

Connected to Christ

Review the context around 1 Corinthians 6:17. What should happen to our decisions and our actions when we are united with the Lord?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today’s study at https://youtu.be/Lw2Jhs7wf_o