A Golf Lesson for Non-Golfers

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Recently my husband and I, along with two friends, took a golfing excursion in Jamaica while on a cruise. Two of them golfed while the other two of us rode in a cart taking pictures of the golfers and the breathtaking beauty of the mountainous course that provided ocean views from almost every hole.



This course required a caddy (a golfing-savvy helper) to accompany every golfer, and it was the first time our friend Pam had ever golfed with a caddy. She kept marveling at the Christian life lessons she was learning from the specialized help she received throughout the game. At dinner on the last night of the cruise, the eight people at our table each shared the highlight of our week; Pam's was definitely "golfing with a caddy."

Pam realized that her experience on the golf course was a picture of how the Holy Spirit would love to bless us, as a kind of "internal caddy," if we would just allow Him to:

Giving instruction: the caddy would suggest ways to shift her stance, her grip on the club, or the way to swing. When she followed through on what he said, it helped her game—and it helped her have more fun.

The Holy Spirit knows the best way to approach and execute every detail of our lives, and will gently prompt and nudge us if we will just listen expectantly to His suggestions.

Giving direction: out of his knowledge of the challenging

terrain of the course, the caddy would suggest which club to use. Sometimes Pam would disregard the suggestion and "lean on her own understanding" (Prov. 3:5) and it never worked out as well as when she followed his advice. He never shamed her when she chose a different club, just allowing the consequences of her choice to speak far more eloquently.

The Holy Spirit knows the terrain of every step of our journey through life, and He knows how to direct our paths (Prov. 3:6). As we learn to listen to His voice, He whispers, "This is the way; walk ye in it" (Is. 30:21). When we quench Him instead (1 Thess. 5:19), He never shames us; He allows us to learn from the more painful teacher of consequences.

Encouragement: when Pam made a bad swing, she defaulted to what many women do, saying, "I'm sorry." Apologizing for not being perfect, right? How many times do we do that? Then she would hear the powerful words of encouragement, "Look, you hit the ball! Good for you!"

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate encourager, comforter and counselor. He reminds us of truth from God's word and will often whisper (sometimes even thunder!) to us exactly what we need to hear: things like, "I will take care of you," "You are not alone, I am here," and "I love you."

Trust: several times, Pam's caddy would look at her and say, "Trust me." He had the confidence of years of experience, but she had to choose to place herself in his hands by following his advice. He never steered her wrong.

The Holy Spirit is constantly engineering circumstances that invite us to trust Him. As I come up on 40 years of walking with Jesus, it seems to me that every life quiz or test from God has the same answer: "Trust Me."

In the space of a five-hours golf game, Pam made some amazing discoveries about the Christian life that will last for a long, long time. Instead of a white jumpsuited-clad caddy

helping her golf, her big takeaway was that the indwelling Holy Spirit wants to be even more involved in every aspect of her day, her life, her choices, her sorrows, her joys.

Fore!

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