

USEFUL DIFFERENCES

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.

—Romans 12:6

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever get a little jealous because someone else can do something better than you? Maybe they can hit a baseball farther or run faster on the basketball court or handle a hockey puck better. Maybe they are better at doing math, spelling, or creating beautiful artwork. Whatever it is that makes you a bit envious, you need to remember that God gave each person unique talents and skills. And he has important work for every one of them to do. In fact, that's *why* he made each person different—so they could do the special job he has for them! God doesn't want you to waste time wishing you had somebody else's abilities. He wants you to be happy using the gifts he's already given you to serve him.

Today's devotion is based on Romans 12:6, which says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." The devotion is called "Useful Differences."

DEVOTION

Trent was teaching his friend D.J. how to play golf. Standing on the practice range, he pulled a large club out of his bag. "This is the driver," he told D.J. "It hits the ball the farthest." Teeing up a ball, Trent hit it past the 150-yard target. Then he pulled out a smaller club. "This is a seven iron. It hits the ball higher but not as far." Again he demonstrated. This time the ball flew higher, landing near the 100-yard marker. Trent pulled out two more clubs. "This one's a sand wedge. It's for hitting the ball out of sand traps. And this is the putter. It knocks the ball in the hole."

D.J. pointed at another item in Trent's bag. "What does that club do?"

Laughing, Trent said, "That's not a club. It's for getting your ball back after you hit it in the water!"

Different golf clubs do different things. Yet a golfer uses them all to play golf. Likewise, people with different spiritual gifts serve God differently, but God uses them all to build his kingdom. Don't compare yourself with others, in terms of what gifts you have or how you can serve God. Just be joyful in doing what God created you to do!

WORDS TO TREASURE

*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.
There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.*

—1 Corinthians 12:4–5

QUESTIONS

1. According to the Bible, what are some of the gifts that God gives his people?

Have children look up Romans 12:6–8, 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, and 1 Corinthians 12:28–31 for the answers if they can't come up with many on their own.

2. Why wouldn't it be good for everyone in God's kingdom to have the same gifts?
3. If you were an apple tree in an orchard, what do you think would please the farmer more: if you did your best to produce apples, or if all you did was feel jealous toward the pear trees and peach trees around you? How does this relate to today's devotion?
4. If it's hard for you to stop feeling envious of others, what are some things you can do?

Some answers are: pray and ask God to help you not be jealous; keep in mind that all Christians are part of the same family, working together to build God's kingdom; focus on being thankful for the gifts God has given you and on doing your best to use them to serve him.

5. Since everyone has different gifts, all the people in God's kingdom need each other. Do you think God meant for it to be that way? Why or why not?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:14–27 to the children to reveal what the Bible says about this.

Consider spending some time playing a game or doing an exercise to help children memorize the "Words to Treasure" Scripture verse.