

"What's your handicap?"

Written by Jim Sheard

If you are a serious golfer you probably have established a "handicap." When asked you can tell someone your USGA Handicap Index, precise to the tenths of a point. You can explain the highest and lowest it has ever been and which way it is trending. You probably have a list of reasons why it should be higher or lower. You are one of 4.5 million golfers in the world who have chosen to utilize this information as authorized by the United State Golf Association.

If you are less than serious, you have a different answer to this question. You say something like "My handicap is lack of time to play." You might be able to report your typical scores or estimate your average score on a good or bad day.

The handicap system, for those who are willing to record scores, is one of the true distinctions of the game of golf. It allows a relatively high handicapper like myself to compete with friends who have much lower handicaps. It gives us an idea of how many strokes one person should "give" to the other person to be competitive in a given round on a particular course. In *Golf World*

Adam Schupak explained, "The handicap system has become one of golf's great distinctions, whereby participants of different skill – whether male or female, young or old, and even from separate tees – can compete fairly and equitably."

Golf World

, October 24, 2011, p. 50

The handicap system is also a way of measuring improvement or decline in playing ability. Over time a higher or lower index will precisely track how you are doing even when you are playing a variety of golf courses. You can determine if your investment in equipment, lessons, or practice are actually making a difference. At my age, you can see the impact of age on your scores. Admittedly this is information we might rather ignore, it it does represent the "truth."

God's word in the Bible represents "truth" about His plan for your life. You can choose to understand and follow its guidance, or casually ignore it. God leaves the choice up to you. If you invest yourself in His Truth, it will be a source of help and comfort.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me."

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Jesus as quoted in John 14:6