

A DIFFICULT DECISION

LESSON 148 → Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Should Harrison practice with Charles or go skiing this weekend?

Harrison dribbled the ball. Thump, thump, thump. The noise resounded through the empty gym. A couple more steps and he was on the free-throw line. Then, the shot. He made it!

He turned to pass the ball to Charles. His aim was careful, but the ball sailed on past Charles' outstretched hand.

"You've got to move your chair faster, Charles. You need to almost overshoot the path of the ball. Then you won't lose your balance when you reach for it. Let's try that pass again."

Harrison retrieved the ball from midcourt and passed it again. Undaunted by the encumbrance of his wheelchair, Charles thrust it forward with great energy this time. Too much! The ball bounced off his chest before his hands were up to catch it.

Charles laughed with Harrison. They had good times together, these two—Harrison bounding around with all the pent-up energy of a





YOU'LL FEEL HAPPY IF YOU SHARE.

Freely ye have received, freely give. — Matthew 10:8

healthy fourteen-year-old and Charles eager to soar beyond the bounds of his wheelchair.

Charles had been only seven years old when a car accident left him paralyzed from the waist down. The frustration he had known in these past seven years had been somewhat forgotten in the joy of dribbling and shooting baskets. These last six months had been great.

This past fall he had left the school for handicapped children and entered his neighborhood junior high school. Mainstreaming had been a challenge. No more special treatment. The kids were straightforward. A few were thoughtless or cruel, but most of them were really nice. Harrison was one of the nice ones.

Harrison was student body president, and well liked around the school. He was a Christian. Charles knew that just from his actions. Harrison had taken a real interest in Charles from the very beginning of the year, and his friendship had really smoothed the way for Charles.

They both loved basketball, and today they were working hard on perfecting Charles' ability to catch passes. It was an important practice session for them. Charles had only one more week until he was going to enter the Special Olympics. So at each workout he was really pushing himself.

That night after Harrison got home he received a text from Parker asking him to call right away.

Harrison set the basketball down on the kitchen counter and dialed Parker's number. "What's up, Parker?" he asked when he heard his friend's voice.

"Harrison, you won't believe our good luck. My uncle rented us guys a cabin up on Mount Hood. We can go up there Friday afternoon and ski all weekend. Tell your mom my uncle's coming too, so he'll watch out for us. Harrison, you can come, can't you?"

"Well, I think so," Harrison hedged. But a sick feeling was sweeping over him. "Parker, I'll call you back later and let you know for sure."

Harrison set his phone down and buried his head in his hands. What was he going to do? No problem with his folks' letting him go—they'd love for him to have the chance, and they trusted Parker's uncle, one of the church youth leaders.

So what was the problem? The problem was that Harrison had already made a commitment to Charles to practice, practice, practice this Saturday. It was the last chance before the Special Olympics. How could he tell Charles he was going away?

His mother came into the kitchen and noticed Harrison's troubled look. "What's the matter?" she asked, concerned. Sighing, he explained the situation.

"Harrison," his mother began, "would it really matter that much to Charles? I'm sure he would understand."

"Yeah, that's just it! I know he would. In fact, if I tell him about it he will insist I go!"

"Then what's the problem?"

"Mom, I made a promise. Charles doesn't have anyone to practice with him except me, and this is awfully important to him. I just don't know what to do . . ." His voice trailed away.

The hum of the refrigerator motor was the only sound in the kitchen.

What do you think Harrison should do? Make up your own ending for this story.

**WHAT CAN I
GIVE?**

The giving of alms means doing kind deeds. It is done without expecting a reward. Think of at least one thing you can give to someone using the things mentioned below. Write your ideas on the lines in the boxes.

HANDS

MOUTH

HEART

TIME

FEET
