

## MATTERS OF THE HEART, PART 1

*When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled... Jesus wept. (John 11:33, 35, ESV)*

THE LPGA LOST A FOUNDING MEMBER ON AUGUST 7, 2015. The heart of a golfer oozed out of Louise Suggs in her 61 victories, in every story she told, and in her insatiable ambition to promote women’s golf. She didn’t just love the history of golf; she is a main character in it. She was a woman who esteemed the game with such honor and integrity that you couldn’t help but become a better ambassador for golf.

Having the heart of a golfer is being able to love all that golf has to offer while holding the reality that it is just a game. The heart of God, however, is not playing a game. God feels deeply and longs to be in relationship with his people. His love is so great for us that he gives all of who he is—justice and mercy, anger and compassion, tears and laughter, sorrow and joy.

God’s justice reigned in his response to the wickedness of man, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh” (Genesis 6:13). But in his mercy he saved a remnant through Noah and his family.

God’s anger flared when he sent his people into exile, but he gathered them back to himself after a period of time: “I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you” (Isaiah 44:22).

Deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled, Jesus moved into the mourners’ weeping with his own tears. Celebration followed as Lazarus returned. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh” (Luke 6:22).

Jesus experienced great sorrow as he prayed. “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Where there is sorrow, joy can bloom. Jesus said to the criminal, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

God’s heart wants us in paradise with him, so much so that he sent Jesus to contain his justice on the cross and be his mercy among us.

**Opening questions** What do you enjoy most about golf? Are you able to share this with others? • In what ways do you stay distant from a deeper relationship with God?

**READING** Genesis 6:5-8; John 3:16-21; Galatians 5:16-26

**God has a heart (Genesis 6)**  
 Why was God filled with regret and grieved in his heart? How does this effect your response to your own sin?

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**God’s heart for us (John 3)**  
 God’s justice and mercy are revealed in this familiar passage. How does your heart respond to God’s love and free gift of his son Jesus Christ?

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**God’s heart in us (Galatians 5)**  
 In what ways is the fruit of God’s Spirit being revealed through you? How can you more effectively “keep in step with the Spirit”?

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Written by Tracy Hanson ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/79K7CMEipEs>