

## MATTERS OF THE HEART, PART 2

*O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. (Psalm 139:1, NIV)*

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GOLFER and technology in the game was not advancing at breakneck speed like it is today, we could look into the mysteries of the game more easily than we can now. For one, a bladed wedge produced a cut in the ball. And once that cut was opened, the fun began.

With even a dull blade, you could open up the cover of the ball and wrestle it away from the innards. There you would find a coil of rubber, wrapped ever so tightly. With a bicycle and a friend, you could unwind that golf ball's core all the way down your street—right up to the point where your friend called out, “Oooo, what’s this?!” The juice in the middle of the ball was spilling into his hands.

Seeing into the heart of anything, even something as playful as an old school golf ball, allows us to know what we otherwise would not. What made a ball spring off the driver? That core of rubber and the magic liquid inside!

If only our heart were so purely magical. Then what God sees of us would be so much more closely aligned with his own heart.

For all the pretenses we might use to fool even our closest friends, God has never met with a ruse he did not see past. The outside may be strong or beautiful or clean. He looks right past all that. God sees what is inside us, what is in our heart.

This is unnerving. Even the apostle Paul wrote that while his conscience was clear, this did not make him innocent: “It is the Lord who judges me” (1 Corinthians 4:4). Jeremiah had long before spoken more adamantly of our guilt: “The heart is deceitful about all things” (Jeremiah 17:9). The New Living Translation closes that verse in this way: “Who really knows how bad it is?” Of course, that is our landing point today. God has every idea how bad our heart is.

But God knows, too, when a heart is healthy, when a heart is his. It was on the day of David’s anointing to be king that God told the prophet Samuel specifically, “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). What God saw in David’s heart, even when David was a young man, was one who would be faithful to him.

What does God see in your heart? Pray that he sees a heart like David’s.

**Opening questions** What “mysteries of the game” have been fun for you to discover through the years? • How do you know when someone’s heart is right with God?

**READING** 1 Samuel 13:7-14; 1 Samuel 16:1-7; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

**An unsundered heart (1 Samuel 13)**  
 How was Saul calling his own shots? In what way did this indicate to God the state of Saul’s heart?

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**Where God looks (1 Samuel 16)**  
 What do you think God saw in David’s heart that was like God’s own? How would you coach someone to align their heart to God’s? Do you follow your own coaching?

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**Consciences and hearts (1 Corinthians 4)**  
 What does Paul’s teaching about consciences and hearts reveal about how we will be judge by God? How do the closing lines of verse 5 both challenge and encourage you?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 6-minute video accompanies today’s study at <https://youtu.be/dm-B6-mK9ac>