

## MATTERS OF THE HEART, PART 5

*But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul... For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them. (Deuteronomy 4:29, 31, ESV)*

IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, Moses was God's megaphone exhorting the Israelites to remember his commandments in the land of milk and honey. Moses also foretold the consequences of *when* they would turn away and chase after other gods. Despite the deceitfulness of the Israelites' hearts that would lead them astray, God's love and mercy always makes a way for his people (right down to us) to return.

It amazes me how golf parallels life in many ways and I see no exception in my own experiences. One of the perks of being a tour player is instant access to the "latest and greatest" equipment. The company reps roam the practice areas looking for the next unsuspecting pro to push their tools of the trade on. It doesn't take long for a tour pro to begin fiddling with their equipment (especially the driver), even if nothing is wrong with it. We are easily led astray with the newest equipment and the promise of grandeur.

I was lured into trying new clubs many times. More often than not, however, the outcome was not helpful. In the middle of my career, I also turned away from my faithful swing instructor. I was frustrated with my performance and the physical distance that separated us. I felt like a fish out of water choking for oxygen, and in my desperation I started chasing after other teachers searching for my elusive cure.

In my cyclone of desperation for stability, I finally committed to one set of clubs and one instructor. Choosing to trust both kept me grounded through the mountaintop and valley experiences of competitive golf. Regardless of the results each week, I found a surge of hope again.

The same dynamic is true for our hearts. The evil one schemes daily to lure us away from our God. To resist him, we must be active participants in setting the compass of our heart on the real true north, Jesus. As we *seek* him, *search* for him, and *draw near* to him, our hearts will become and remain steady, teachable, and alive. This can feel hard because life is messy, but God in his mercy is waiting for us with open arms.

**Opening questions** How many times have you been swayed into buying a new piece of golf equipment because it claimed it would change your golf game? • How have you chosen your 'true north' in life?

**READING** Deuteronomy 4:25-31; James 4:4-10

### A jealous God (Deuteronomy 4)

The Lord warned the Israelites against creating and worshipping graven images (idols). Can you identify idols you have created and serve in your own life?

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### Love and mercy (Deuteronomy 4)

What does the passage tell you to do to turn away from false gods and idols? What is God's promise for you?

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### Call to action (James 4)

According to James, how can you actively participate in seeking and searching God with all your heart and all your soul?

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