

## MATTERS OF THE HEART, PART 4

*I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Ephesians 3:16-17, NIV)*

LET'S SAY YOU COULD EVEN GET A HOLD of a direct number for Butch Harmon, that exceptional golf instructor whose most celebrated student these days may be current Players champion Rickie Fowler. Then let's imagine you of the 16 handicap dialing Butch's number and asking if you could get scheduled into his lesson book.

Butch Harmon is going to want to know a few things about you. First, he'll want to know where you got his number! After that, he'll ask some questions intended to give him a sense of who you are and whether you are worth his time: *Where do you play? What do you shoot? What do you need to work on in your game?*

Butch Harmon is in demand, which means he is in a position to pick and choose his students. The instructor at your local muni may be dying to add a few more lessons to his schedule. He may take anyone. But Butch will be far more selective.

Now let me ask you this: Would you prefer that God be highly selective or open to taking just about anyone?

It's an interesting question, and one that doesn't quite match our Butch Harmon scenario. You see, Butch Harmon can be selective because he is one of the very best. In his excellence, he may shut you out. But what we really want in God is that he be preeminently excellent and yet exceedingly inclusive. In fact, this is what we *need* from God. If God is not excellent, he has no power to save us. And if he is not welcoming, he would not have us bumblers.

Grandly, the God of all creation and sovereignty is both, made so in the person of Jesus Christ. In the incarnation, Jesus showed that as God he was totally powerful, but as the lover of humanity he was deeply compassionate.

The fullness of this dual truth about Christ comes in his willingness to occupy the small space of our sinful hearts. By his Spirit, Christ dwells in those who put their faith in him. This may be truly the most stunning surprise in the cosmos, that God himself would live where he can turn our affections to him.

**Opening questions** What words would you use to convince a top teacher to work with you on your swing? • Why do you think it is our heart that Christ is said to enter when we trust in him?

**READING** Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 3:14-21

### The Spirit at work in you (Romans 8)

What specific outcomes of the Spirit living in us do we see in this passage?

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### What a prayer! (Ephesians 3)

What elements jump out at you from Paul's prayer for the Ephesians? For whom would you want to pray this same prayer today?

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### Power at work (Ephesians 3)

When we say that God's power is at work in us (verse 20), what do you think that means? How does God's power affect you each day?

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Written by Jeff Hopper ©2015 Links Players International. A 5-minute video accompanies today's study at <https://youtu.be/GINigHi-VoA>