

GOLF & LIFE FUNDAMENTALS 4: MECHANICS

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. (2 Corinthians 13:5, NIV)

PHIL MICKELSON RECENTLY TOLD DAVID FEHERTY on the latter’s eponymous Golf Channel show that in order to be a good golfer, you need to be either very smart or very dumb. Dumb golfers, he said, breeze through the round with hardly a care, while smart golfers calculate and adjust so their misses are minimized and their best shots are maximized.

You might be able to look at your usual golf partners and identify who’s who. And from this safe distance, it’s probably OK for me to ask you straight up: Which are you, the smart golfer or the dumb one?

Whatever your answer, I have found that the most consistent golfers are those who assess what they have going on the golf course on any given day. A “dumb golfer” may not know the mechanics of his swing well enough to make an on-course adjustment, but he relaxes into playing a different type of game that day and scoring well all the same. A “smart golfer” hearkens back to her last range session or lesson and makes the mechanical adjustment needed to salvage the round.

And the rest of us? Well, there’s a word for the rest of us: frustrated.

Self-assessment is valuable in many endeavors, and we find support for it even in the pages of Scripture. Of course, God is probably not going to press us to evaluate our golf games. What God wants all of us to assess is our faith: *How is my walk with Christ?*

The answer to that question begins with a more foundational examination: *Am I in the faith at all?* When we show little interest in personal righteousness, when we make excuses for our sin, when we experience no joy in salvation (either our own or the salvation of another), when we aren’t interested in God’s Word or building a relational connection with him via prayer—all of these are serious concerns that demand a response if we care for the state of our soul.

If we can in Christ claim our salvation and demonstrate its reality by the way he lives through us, then we know how valuable it is to keep assessing, asking ourselves the hard questions. We’re not afraid to uncover our weaknesses to gain new strengths. This is the road to mature faith.

Opening questions What are the pros and cons of being a dumb golfer? And of being a smart one? • What missteps have marked your walk with Christ? Are you past these or still struggling with them?

READING 2 Corinthians 13:1-9; Matthew 7:15-20 & John 15:5-8

Growing stronger (2 Corinthians 13)

Where does weakness come from in the spiritual sense? How do sins kept in the dark contribute to weakness?

Where does Christ’s power come from? How about our power? What spiritual condition allows you to tap into this power? How do you attain this condition?

In verse 9, what is Paul’s prayer? How can this end goal be reached?

The fruit that reveals us (Matthew 7 & John 15)

Whether or not you are a “ferocious wolf,” the fruit in your life will reveal your righteousness and allegiance the Lord. What are some fruits that show a person to be a discipleship of Christ? Does your life demonstrate this fruit?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2017 Links Players International. An introductory video for this study is available at <https://youtu.be/AeDh1A-ZnGk>.