



REFLECTIONS

March 22, 2015

**Man looks at the outward appearance, but
the Lord looks at the heart."**

1 Samuel 16:7

A Look at the Heart

"Look! There's Jack Nicklaus!" Janice exclaimed with excitement, her finger pointing toward the then chubby faced golfer walking by her only a few feet away. Grinning at the attention, the now hall-of-famer strolled by her to the next tee. His career was newly emerging back then, but he had already captured the public eye with his accomplishments. And to see him up close was something unexpected that day.

There were lots of other well-known players of the day there too, Arnold Palmer and Ben Hogan among them. Those and many others were known for their prowess on the golf course and we watched in awe that we could see them perform up close. We knew them by what they did. But we didn't know them then for who they really were.

Watching them play that day was a thrill at our tender age. Our second child presented himself to us that weekend in the form of morning sickness, but that didn't slow us down—especially me. I basked in the day watching my heroes of the game perform in all their glory. It would be years later that I discovered that who they were in their hearts was far more important than how they displayed their skill.

"This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." This last piece of advice Polonius offered to his son in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has always captured my attention. The advice attaches no importance to accomplishment, wealth, or fame. The advice challenges a son to simply be truthful with himself. But that's not as simple as it sounds.

The truth of one's self requires discovery of how God made them to be—the benefits of physical characteristics, the talents given, and the unique circumstances in life. It requires acknowledgment that the many things admired in others may not be included in God's design for them. And it requires acceptance of both.

Many years have passed since we watched my golf heroes perform. All they did in their days as accomplished players have faded into memories and history books. But who they are is still very much alive. Arnold Palmer symbolizes the character represented by the game; and in his iconic fashion, holds today's players accountable to them. Jack Nicklaus exemplifies the value of family unity and love. And both are committed to humanitarian causes expressed through the hospitals they support.

Somewhere inside a person's soul beats their true heart. It may be supported by what they do; but what's in the heart defines who they are. Too often we fail to peer into the hearts of others to see who they really are. And too often we fail to peer into our own heart to accept the truths that are hidden there. But isn't that the place to look? God does.

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Richard +

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