



Links Players

The Heartbeat of Links | The Heart of the Matter

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (Proverbs 4:23, NIV)

Watch [guard] your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16, NIV)

It is no surprise that our sport places a premium on swing mechanics. After all, proper positions (P1-P10) figure prominently in building a consistent swing, especially one that will perform under pressure.

It is also no surprise that a ton of emphasis is placed on the mental game. Scads of books, articles, and interviews by Bob Rotella and David Cook are readily available to anyone who wants to “look under the hood.”

I am happy to acknowledge deficiencies in both mechanics and mental strategies, yet I am eager to express that my love for the game is reaching its peak.

I love the banter of good friends. I love golf tutorials. I love watching a friend play well and lose to me by a shot. I love the feel of a compressed six iron. I love the history of golf. I love sanctified trash talk. I love....

When Proverbs admonishes us to “guard our hearts,” he is not talking about eating healthy, exercising, or stress-reducing techniques. Obviously, he is addressing our need to guard the center of our being—our deepest self—the one with which you are always talking.

Our deepest self—our soul—is that which our Maker is intensely pursuing. What motivates us reveals a lot about who we are. And if we discover something other than our Maker and Redeemer at the core of our being, fueling our lives and shaping our secondary loves, it is time to take stock.

However, taking inventory of our desires is not the end of the matter. We need more than a subjective accounting of our heart’s fickle condition; we need an objective standard outside our thoughts and emotions, one that is unchanging and eternal. Paul describes this as “life and doctrine.”

If I had a nickel for every time I heard someone tell another, “Follow your heart,” I would make the Saudis look like paupers. Advising a friend to “follow your heart” without an external and eternal standard is lethal.

That is why, among other reasons, Jesus and Paul stress the need to “watch [guard] your life and doctrine.” The orientation of our lives is a direct reflection of our understanding of and commitment to biblical beliefs

[doctrine].

Knowing and believing orthodoxy [correct beliefs] are essential if we are to navigate the serpentine roads of life.

Sadly, the word “doctrine” has become, for far too many, a four-letter word. Strangely, the current cultural atmosphere decries or diminishes the importance of knowing what we believe and why.

It is a common metaphor, but one often overlooked— “the Bible is our map.” This map reveals what we need to know about God, our origins, our destinies, our motives, our moral conduct, and our deepest needs.

Biblical [doctrinal] illiteracy is like covering your eyes while traversing a treacherous mountain trail with sharp turns and 10,000-foot drops at every bend.

As Paul would say, “study to show yourself approved.”

Prayer: Jesus! Please give us a deep hunger to know your divine map!

Afterword: Links Fellowships exist to provide an atmosphere for exploring the “true story of the world.”

READING: Proverbs 3:5-6, 4:23, 9:10, 10:8, 12:1, 13:14; 1 Timothy 4:16.

1. How important is it for you to spend time studying swing mechanics and mental strategies? Discuss!

2. After reading these texts, what do we learn about the importance of God’s word?

3. We cannot overstate the importance of studying God’s map, the Scriptures. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being excellent.
