

## Are Golfers Really Honest?

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by Wayne Goff

### **Golf Digest asked the question**

For those readers of ours who are not golf followers let me explain that golfers have the reputation of being honest because they keep their own score and call penalties on themselves during the course of a round of golf. Thus they have the reputation of being gentlemen in a gentleman's game. Personally, I have seen this play out over and over again on the professional level where doing so costs the player lots of money. But true golfers are reputable and wouldn't think of doing otherwise. At the same time, golfers also know that the eyes of their buddies are upon them, too.

Golf Digest put this question to the test in an interesting and unique way. They distributed 25 "lost" golf wedges (worth \$100 each) around various golf courses from California to Florida to New York. The clubs were placed near various greens with labels attached to the club with a fake name but valid telephone number (Golf Digest's). The honesty test was to see how many of the 25 clubs were returned by calling the number affixed to the club. If Golf Digest didn't hear from the golf course in a week's time, they called to see if a club had been turned into the club house.

So what were the results? First, you might want to guess yourself. Consider how honest the average public might be in a similar situation. If someone lost a valuable item with their name and telephone number attached, what would be the odds of getting that item back?

Okay, the results from the Golf Digest test is that 21 of the 25 golf clubs were returned. That's an honesty rate of 84%, which Golf Digest called "inspiring" [Golf Digest, March, 2010, p. 64]

### **Are Christians Really Honest?**

Okay, we didn't relate the story about golfers in Golf Digest for nothing. You can easily see the application: how honest are we Christians? You would expect Christians to score 100%, wouldn't you? After all, the eyes of the Lord are over us and we will answer to him for being dishonest, Heb. 4:13.

Many of us remember, as little children, the shame and embarrassment we felt when we "stole" some candy at a store. When our parents found out, then they marched us right back to the same store to confess our crime. We never stole another piece of candy again.

Old Testament Israel was God's special people, consecrated to Him and bearing His Name. He commanded them to be honest:

"You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Leviticus 19:36).

God is honest and He commands His followers to be honest. Job affirmed his honesty to the point that he said, "Let me be weighed on honest scales, that God may know my integrity" (Job 31:6). Job wasn't just bragging, but affirming his character.

In the New Testament, God simply said "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Eph. 4:28). Christians should return things to their rightful owner and work honestly in order to give to the needy!

Just the same, sometimes we catch ourselves being something less than honest if we're not careful. We adopt the mores of the world while thinking such is okay. So examine yourselves (2 Cor. 13:5) and be sure you are honest in all things. If you have been less than honest, repent and be righteous!

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