

? If your heart is rotten why is self-control not the answer?
Self-control by itself is fighting the inevitable, at some point, it will not be strong enough, it will slip.

*** Read Colossians 2:20-23**
What was Paul's attitude to this kind of self-control?

Self-control is not enough, we do not have the resources within ourselves to be holy or to resist temptation. Self-control sounds spiritual but it does not have the power to restrain sensual indulgence. A change of heart is needed.

*** Read Ezekiel 36:26**
This is what happens at salvation God gives us a new heart. Everything becomes new, new nature, new ways of thinking, new standards.
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17

! David is a man of God, he is 'saved' yet he still prays 'create in me a clean heart.'
Why?
It is a case of becoming what we already are. 1 Corinthians 5:7

Beyond this, life, in this old sinful world tends to make us hard and old, it happens so slowly that we don't notice it. We need to be refreshed and renewed.

The word for clean in Psalm 51:10 is tahor, it means pure or clean, physically, morally and ethically.

! What are the characteristics of a clean heart?

- Yes it's clean, thank you,
- I love righteousness and hate sin
- It sees things God's way
- A clean heart is one that agrees with God

! Our hearts need to be brought into conformity with God's standards, a heart that wants what is right. Just as a sinful heart leads us to sin a clean heart leads us to righteousness, we act out our nature.

- Jesus told a parable about old wineskins, apart from the point of the parable (the old cannot contain the new) the process is interesting. If old wineskins cannot take new wine then effectively you can only use a wineskin once, this would make the production of wine expensive. Each year the old brittle wineskins would be worked over with oil to refresh them for another year's use. This is what needs to happen to us. Matthew 9:17

? How is your heart going to be renewed?
Ask God to create in you a clean heart and let the Holy Spirit renew your life.

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Create in me a clean heart

▶ This series of two studies are really about one verse.
Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

As important to David as repentance is, he concentrates on what happens after repentance. He sees forgiveness as a start, not a finish.

? Is repentance the end of the matter or the start of the matter?
Why?

We usually view repentance as a closed deal, we sin, we confess, God forgives us. Forgiveness is the end of the matter, the sin is erased and God forgets it ever happened. In reality, repentance is about the future. It is because God forgives us that we can go on in a relationship with Him. To this extent, forgiveness is always the start of the matter.

? What are the results of repentance that David sees?

Psalm 51:13

Psalm 51:15 & 19

! It is repentance that enables us to go on to serve and worship God. Without it, none of us could do anything for God, our sin would have disqualified us for His service. David also wants to go on to live in purity. He is concerned about next time.

He looks at what he has done with shock and horror. Adultery was bad enough but most people manage adultery quite happily without killing anyone. Adultery is not enough for David, he has to throw murder in as well. David was a righteous man of God and king of his people. How could he have done this? If this is a shock to us today, it seems that it was more of a shock to David himself. Up until Nathan confronts him, he seems to have been in denial about his own actions and nature, almost as if someone else had done those terrible things or they had never happened at all. David sits with his head in his hands, horrified at what he has done and the sinfulness of his own heart.

! Most people live in denial about sin. Sin is what other people do, my sin is not really sin, it is excusable, it has mitigating circumstances, I am not responsible for it, it is a result of my past life, and it's not as bad as other people's.

! Most people live in denial about their true nature. I am a good person, others do evil. We extenuate the things we do right and excuse the things we do badly. We all seem to have a long list of things we would never do.

Why do we have this kind of denial?



www.freedom.gen.nz
studies@freedom.gen.nz
Pastor Ray Moxham

David was a good man who did some incredibly evil things. The same human nature that was in him is in us. If we have not committed adultery and murder, it is not because we are any better than him. What he was capable of, so are we.



Why do good people do evil things?

What part does opportunity play in sin and temptation?

What opportunity did David have regarding Bathsheba?

The opportunity was not only that he saw her and was filled with lust, he had the power to do something about it, He was king he could make it happen and could cover it up. This was a sin he could get away with. We do not know how willing a part she played in the sin, but even if she had been unwilling, refusing the king was never going to be easy.



There are many factors that are involved in sin and temptation, one that is often neglected is opportunity. It is often only when we are faced with the opportunity to sin, the power to do it, cover it up and get away with it that we find the true pull to sin in our own nature. Don't be proud you have never murdered anyone if you have never had the chance or the reason to do so.



David comes to a realisation of what he has done and his own sinfulness, but he comes to a much more serious realisation, he will do it again. He looks into his heart and realises he is the same David and given the same circumstances he will do the same thing. If he is going to continue to be pure before God, if he is going to succeed next time, if next time he sees a beautiful woman bathing he is going to take a cold shower and forget about it. Something is going to have to change. His heart is going to have to change.



So after repenting, he prays "Create in me a clean heart".

In Hebrew the word create 'bara' is the same word used in Genesis 1:1, it is a word that is only used of God in Biblical Hebrew, only God can create.



What implication does this have for David's heart?

Only God can change a heart, David can't change his heart and you can't change your heart.

This does not make the whole thing fatalistic, you have to cooperate.

In Hebrew idiom, the heart represents the seat of thought, not the seat of emotion as it does in our minds. All our behaviour and our emotions come from our cognitive (thought) processes. We do not act unless we first think. Therefore the heart controls what we do and who we are.



Read Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? KJV

What does this mean? Is this true of my heart?



Read Jeremiah 17:10

What does this mean?

The natural state of the heart is to be deceptive.

What does it mean when we speak about living in denial?

How can it happen?



Read Matthew 7:3-5

How can we see the speck in someone's eye and not the plank in our own?

How is this possible?

Very often people see situations as they think they are and not as they really are.

How is this possible?

The only solution is for God to rule our hearts.



Read Proverbs 4:23

The KJV says; *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

What does above all else mean?

What do we need to guard our hearts against?

Deception
Sins that war against the soul
Doubt
Bitterness
Dissolution



How are you going to guard your heart?

Pray "Create in me a clean heart"
Breastplate of Righteousness + Shield of Faith
Making the state of your heart a priority
Doing things that build it up

How do you guard your heart with the breastplate of righteousness?

By using righteousness as a standard for your thinking, is this thought true, is it right, where will it take me. By using righteousness as a standard for your actions.



Why do you need to guard your heart?

If you have a problem in your life your heart is the first place to look.



Why do I feel like this?

Why do I think like this?

Why do I want this?

What are my motives?

Psychology tells us that the things we think about are the things we will eventually do.



Read Luke 6:43-45

What comes out of our hearts?

Why do we need a clean heart?

What does "out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks mean?"



It is the heart that controls all you do and all you say. For your actions to be right your heart has to be right. Most of us think the answer to holiness is good self-control.