



Links Players

Sometimes Willpower Won't.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10, ESV)

There are questions we ask on the golf course that, on close examination, are goofy. “Why didn’t that putt turn left?” “Why didn’t the wind move my shot to the right?” “How come that group in front of us is so slow?”

These, and others like them, are among the great mysteries of life. They probably belong on one of Wikipedia’s fourteen pages about unsolved problems.

But there are also legitimate questions asked on the golf course.

Just recently, my friend Jim, who had hit a number of good shots that day, fozzled his approach shot on the 18th hole. I know because I was sitting in a cart just a few feet from the miss.

“Why do I do that?” He asked himself more than me, and neither of us had the answer. But it was not, like the question about slow play, unanswerable.

In fact, the question is very similar to one many of us have asked after we have fozzled in life. Perhaps we yelled (from the safety of our car) at another driver. Or, under pressure, fibbed about why we missed a deadline.

In David’s case, his failings were far more grievous. He had committed adultery with Bathsheba and then tried to cover it up by arranging for the death of her husband.

When confronted, he confessed, and Psalm 51 is his great lament.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God,” is a cry for help. David had seven wives before Bathsheba and a number of concubines. A woman to sleep with was not his problem. Perhaps it was pride. In any case, David knew his heart was unclean in that area. And now he understood that he could not fix it himself.

If there is some recurring flaw in your golf game – like missing shots you know you should make – it is unlikely that you will ever fix it with sheer willpower. It is time to talk to a professional.

If your heart is damaged in some area – lust, pride, anger, etc. – willpower is not the solution. You need to ask God to fix it. You need a new, clean heart.

Our sins may not be the same as David’s, but the solution is the same. Ask God for a clean heart, and really mean it like David meant it. God can do that, and he will. Willpower won’t.

Prayer: Father, when we have soiled our hearts, may we come to you and seek a whole and clean heart. For your glory. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen!

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