



Links Players

New Beginnings 2026 | New Hearts

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:10-12, NIV)

New clubs, new shafts, and yet, the same old swing! How many times have we tried to “buy the game?”

I don't recall how many new sets of clubs I have owned through the years. It is more than a few. One year, I thought switching brands would shake things up.

I met my dad on the tee box and promptly shanked almost every shot. I don't need to mention the brand; the problem wasn't the bow or the arrow; it was the “archer.”

Many times, what we need is an “attitude adjustment.” Nobody wants to be around the guy who bellyaches all the time.

All the data is in. A positive frame of mind toward self, family, work, and sport significantly improves our mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Despite these benefits, it is not enough to walk with the Lord.

Moral reform, while admirable, would render Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection superfluous if that is all the Almighty required.

We often hear that God loves ‘unconditionally.’ It is a muddled phrase at best. Unmerited favor, yes! Unconditional love, nope!

There are, at a minimum, two conditions for receiving God's love, a historical one and an experiential one. Remember, the issue is not getting God to love us; God, by his very nature, is love! He is also just. The issue is getting his love to us without looking away from justice.

For sinners to experience the love of God, Jesus had to enter history, die an atoning death, and rise from the dead—that is a historical and objective condition. Otherwise, the love inherent in the Trinity remains entirely among the Father, Son, and Spirit.

Second, sinners are commanded to repent and believe. That is the experiential or subjective condition. The Father had to send the Son. Sinful human beings receive his love through repentance and faith in the Son, which requires a new heart.

When David asks the Lord to “create in me a pure heart,” he uses the

Hebrew word ‘bara.’ That is the same word Moses used in Genesis when God ‘created’ the heavens and the earth.

What's the significance? In Genesis, Yahweh created [bara] ‘ex nihilo’—out of nothing. He did not take preexisting material and then fashion the cosmos. He did what only God can do: create a world by the power of his spoken word.

The same is true for the Psalmist; he is not asking for a change of attitude in his old heart; he is asking for a brand-new heart—one that never existed before. Only God can do that!

David, the Psalmist, was recovering from adultery and murder. He needed more than moral reform; to experience the love of God, he needed the Messiah to create a new heart in him, one that delighted in God and God's commands.

Did he get it? Yes! In the book of Acts, we read, “David was a man after God's heart!”

Prayer: May the Spirit of the Lord create new hearts for thousands of men and women in clubs worldwide.

READING: Psalm 51; 1 Peter 1:17-25

1. How many times have you thought that buying a new set of sticks would guarantee a better swing or game? This can be an excellent moment for shared laughter.

2. After reading Psalm 51 and 1 Peter 1:17-25, focus on the two conditions for salvation and discuss why they are required.

3. Application: Recognizing our need for forgiveness and a new heart, have we repented and trusted in Jesus' saving work on the cross?
