

A Fresh Start

It's a brand-new year.

Is it possible for me to get a fresh start?

How many of you felt the need for a do-over this week?

- *A chance to hit the reset button?*
- Life has a way of piling things up, doesn't it?
- The weight of yesterday's mistakes, the fatigue of routine, the feeling that we are stuck in a loop of our own making.

We long for a fresh start. We ache for renewal.

- The good news is that our God is the God of fresh starts.
- He is not a God of condemnation, but of restoration.

God specializes in new beginnings, no matter how far we feel we've drifted.

You harvest what you plant.

- Pumpkin seeds produce pumpkins!
- Sunflower seeds produce sunflowers!

That is exactly why you must ask the Lord for a fresh start!

- A clean heart if you will.
- So that your life *will produce clean* thoughts, actions, and motives.

The bad desires and thoughts that remain are evidence that some bad seeds have also been planted and you need some weeding.

- Complete renewal has not yet been accomplished.
- None of us will be entirely pure in this life, but purity of mind and heart is one of the worthiest goals to pursue in this new year!

Purity of mind and heart is one of the worthiest goals to pursue. Is it your goal?

How will you be different at the end of this year-inside and out if you meet that goal?

Today, we are going to look at what the Bible has to say about this divine reset.

We'll focus on three powerful verses **that guide us through the process of renewal:**

- Psalm 51:10: ***"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."***
- Zechariah 4:10: ***"Who dares despise the day of small things?"***
- Ephesians 4:23-24: ***"to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."***

Let's look at **God's response:** >>>>>>>>>

*****The Deep Clean: A Pure Heart and a Steadfast Spirit - Psalm 51:10: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."**

Our first stop is **the prayer of David in Psalm 51.**

- David had **committed a grave sin** and **was utterly broken** by it.
- He didn't ask for **a superficial change**.
- He asked for **a complete transformation** from **the inside out**.

He prays - ***"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."***

A fresh start in God's eyes doesn't begin with a change in circumstances or environment; it begins with **a change in our heart.**

- ***Think about the "factory reset" option on your smartphone or computer.***
- When things **get bogged down** with **corrupted files**, and **slow performance**,
- Sometimes ***the only way to get it working right again is to wipe it clean***
- **Start fresh with the core operating system.**

That's what **David** is asking for here - - -

A ***"pure heart" isn't something we can achieve through sheer willpower.***

- It's a **divine** act of creation.
- **Only God** can scrub away **the guilt, shame**, and our **entrenched sin**.

He also asks for a "steadfast spirit" - It's about having a firm, unwavering commitment to following God even when life gets tough.

- This isn't just about feeling good for a day or two.

It's the difference between a New Year's resolution that lasts until January 15th and a genuine life change that endures.

Example: We often see celebrities or athletes go into rehab or take a "sabbatical" when their lives spin out of control.

- They recognize that their current systems aren't working.
- *A fresh start requires a willingness to let God come in and do the deep, painful work of cleaning house and rebuilding a sustainable foundation.*
- *We need to be willing to sit in that brokenness – And ask God to do what only He can do.*

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*****The Power of Small Beginnings - Zechariah 4:10: "Who dares despise the day of small things?"**

When we embark on this journey of renewal, we often feel overwhelmed.

- The mountain of change seems too high to climb.
- We want the "after" picture immediately.

This is where our 2nd Vs. comes in, a powerful reminder from Zechariah 4:10: "*Who dares despise the day of small things?*"

- This verse speaks to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.
- The people were discouraged because the - - -
- New temple seemed insignificant compared to the glory of the first one.

God reminds them—and us that - - - *Every great movement, every lasting change, begins with small, consistent steps.*

- We tend to despise small things because they lack immediate splendor.
- We want spectacular transformations.
- But the most significant transformations usually happen incrementally.

A fresh start isn't a sudden lightning strike; it's the consistent choice to put one foot in front of the other.

Example: Consider fitness journeys. Nobody becomes healthy and fit overnight.

- **It starts with** one walk around the block,
- **Choosing** water over soda for one meal and doing five push-ups.
- These are "small things," but **when compounded over time**, they lead to massive, life-altering results.

Don't look at your current situation in despair because you can't see the finish line.

- **Just focus on today's step:**
- *A moment of prayer, a kind word spoken, an honest confession, opening your Bible.*

God honors consistency over intensity!!!

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*****The Wardrobe Change: New Attitudes, New Clothes**

Ephesians 4:23-24: "to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

The Apostle Paul gives us practical instructions on how we live out this fresh start in Ephesians 4...

- This is the **practical application of the clean heart and the small steps**.
- Paul uses an **analogy for changing clothes**.

We are called to "take off" the old self (our former habits, bitterness, deceit, and anger) and "put on" the new self.

Notice the process:

- We **renew our minds**.
- **Our actions** flow from our thoughts.

A fresh start is maintained by actively choosing what we focus on.

- ***We change our inner monologue, we change our perspective, and we change our lifestyle.***

Example: Think about the job market. When you interview for a new job, you don't wear the same clothes you wore for painting your garage.

You put on professional attire; you project a different image because you are stepping into a new role.

Spiritually, we are given a new identity in Christ. We are children of God.

We are called to dress the part, not literally, but in our character and behavior.

Putting on the new self means making intentional choices every day to live according to our new identity in Christ, rather than the old habits of the past.

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CLOSE: God's Promise – Philippians 1:6

God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

A fresh start is available to every single one of us today, right now.

****It requires the humility to ask God for a deep clean! (Psalm 51:10).**

****It requires the patience to embrace the journey of small, consistent steps! (Zechariah 4:10).**

****It requires the intentionality to change our mindset and put on our new identity in Christ! (Ephesians 4:23-24).**

You are not defined by your past mistakes!!!

****You are defined by the God who offers limitless grace and the promise of renewal...**