

Our Hearts

Has your mother or father ever fixed something that was broken? What was it? People can fix a lot of things: flat tires, a shirt with a missing button, and lawn mowers. Sometimes doctors can even fix really important things, like a weak heart.

But there is a heart problem no doctor can ever fix—a very, very serious heart problem. It can't be fixed with medicine or an operation . . . and every single person except Jesus is born with this heart problem. That includes Abraham in the Bible, King David, Mary and Joseph, your grandparents, your parents . . . and you.

The heart with the problem is not the one that pumps blood through our bodies. But it is the heart the Bible talks about, which is your deepest thoughts and feelings and the things you love most. This is what the Bible says about the heart:

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
(Genesis 6:5)

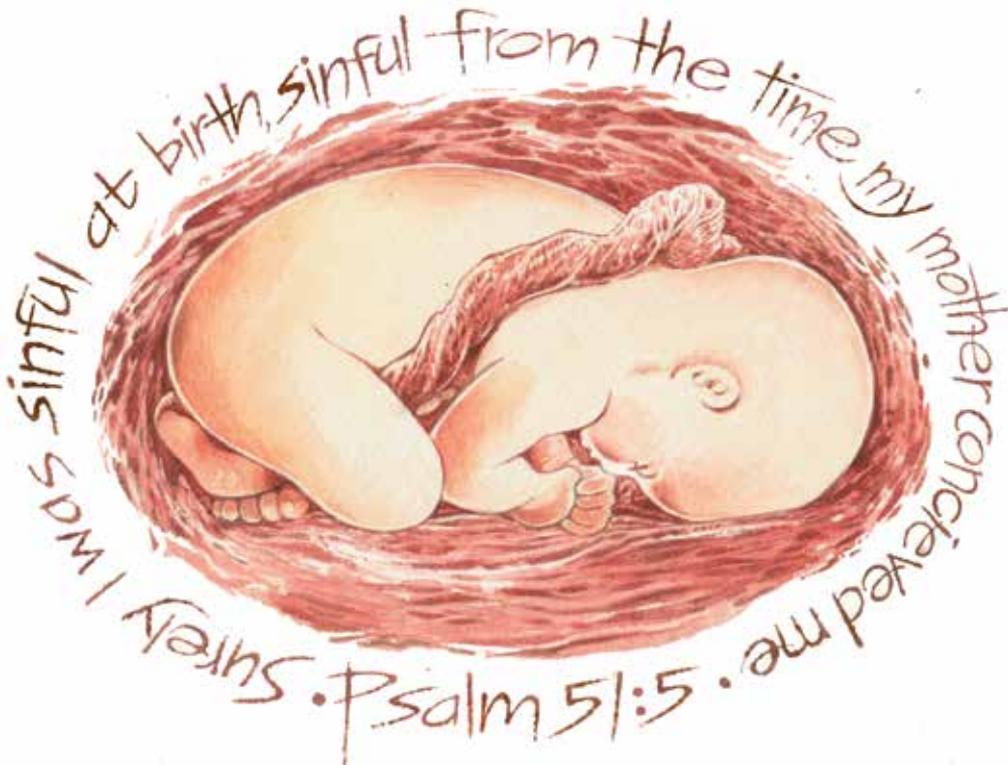
What words in this verse show you how bad the heart is? “Every,” “only,” “continually.” Is the heart just a little bit bad or very seriously evil? It is very seriously evil, and this very serious heart problem makes us turn away from God. It keeps us from loving and doing what we should. It makes us love sin and struggle to do what is right. Our hearts don't naturally love being generous, or being more concerned about others than about ourselves, or being told we can't get our own way.

Do you know how our hearts got this way? They got this way the same way King David's heart got this way.

Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5 NIV)

When David was born, and even before he was born, he had a sinful heart. And we did too. Every person is born with a sinful heart; we can't change that. Just like we can't change what color of eyes we have, how tall we will be, or what we will be good at, we can't change the kind of heart we have.

Some things become damaged—like new tennis shoes worn in the mud, or a torn shirt, or a rusty bike. But not our hearts. They came with a sin problem.



If something is dirty, you can wash it. If it is torn, you can sew it. If a screw is missing, you can put in a new screw. If something is dented, you can pound out the dent. But there is nothing we can do to fix our sinful hearts.

That is really BAD NEWS! It is bad news because God hates sin and cannot accept anyone with a sinful heart. This is what the Bible says about God:

You who are of purer eyes than to see evil
and cannot look at wrong . . . (Habakkuk 1:13)

There is no evil in God. He is pure—good and right. He cannot even stand to look at sin! With our sinful hearts, we cannot have a friendship with God. We have no right to enter heaven. Instead, we deserve eternal punishment in hell. This is *horrible* news for sinners who cannot fix their sinful hearts. This should make us all very sad, scared, and upset.

But there is more to the story. There is also GOOD NEWS! Very, very, very good news. It is good news that should make us full of joy, unafraid, and peaceful.

Do you want to know the good news? To know the good news, you need to keep reading this book. See if you can discover the very, very, very good news . . . the best news ever!



LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

- ✦ Read Genesis 6:5–8, 11–22. What is the bad news in this Bible story? What shows you that there is good news?
- ✦ Read Romans 3:23. How have you sinned? What does it mean to “fall short of the glory of God”?
- ✦ *Activity:* Take a glass of milk and add some dirt to it. Would you drink it? Why not? Can you take the dirt out of the milk? How is the dirty milk like our hearts? How does this experiment help you to understand Habakkuk 1:13? Why can’t God accept sinful man?