

# Study Guide: One Heart Before God

Based on Psalm 51 - A Fresh, Moldable Heart

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## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to soften hearts and create an environment where group members feel safe to be honest about their spiritual journey.

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## Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

**Question:** Share about a time when you tried to fix something broken but realized it needed to be completely replaced instead of repaired. How did that feel?

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## Key Takeaways from the Sermon

### Main Theme

God desires a fresh, moldable heart—one that is connected to Him, soft, and ready to be transformed rather than conformed to the world's patterns.

### Four Characteristics of a Transformed Heart:

1. **Repentant** - Acknowledges sin without excuses
  2. **Surrendered** - Allows God to do the creating work
  3. **Presence-focused** - Values God's presence over performance
  4. **Joyful** - Experiences joy that flows from God's presence
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## Discussion Questions

### Section 1: Understanding Conformity vs. Transformation (15 minutes)

Read Romans 12:2

1. What does it mean to "conform" to the world in practical, everyday terms? Can you share an example from your own life?

2. The sermon compared conforming to floating on a lazy river. Where in your life do you find it easiest to just "go with the flow" instead of being transformed?
3. What's the difference between a caterpillar becoming a butterfly (transformation) and Play-Doh being molded (conformity)?

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## Section 2: True Repentance (15 minutes)

Read Psalm 51:3-5

4. David didn't use "but," "if," or "or" in his confession. Why is it so hard for us to confess sin without qualifiers or deflecting blame?
5. The pastor shared the story of the hidden burrito. What "burritos" do we tend to hide instead of dealing with? Why do we think covering up works?
6. **Personal Reflection:** Is there anything in your life right now that you've been trying to cover up rather than confess? (Share only what you're comfortable with)

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## Section 3: God's Creative Work (15 minutes)

Read Psalm 51:10

7. The word "create" (bara) is the same word used in Genesis 1 when God created the heavens and earth. What does it mean that God doesn't just repair our hearts but creates something completely new?
8. How does this truth change the way you view your past mistakes or current struggles?
9. Why is it important to remember that creating a clean heart is "God's business" and not ours?

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## Section 4: Presence Over Performance (15 minutes)

Read Psalm 51:11-12

10. David's greatest fear wasn't losing his reputation or position—it was losing God's presence. What do we typically fear most when we sin or fail?
11. In what ways do we fall into "performance mode" in our relationship with God? (Examples: praying because we "should," serving to be seen, etc.)
12. What's the difference between serving God out of duty versus serving Him from a place of intimacy and presence?

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## Section 5: Joy from God's Presence (10 minutes)

13. David had wealth, power, and fame, yet he asked God to "restore the joy of salvation." What does this teach us about where true joy comes from?
14. **Honest Assessment:** On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your joy level right now? What do you think is affecting that number?
15. What are some practical ways we can pursue God's presence in our daily lives?

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### Personal Application (10 minutes)

#### This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

##### Option 1: The Repentance Practice

- Set aside 15 minutes for honest confession before God
- Write down anything you've been hiding or covering up
- Pray David's prayer: "Create in me a clean heart, O God"

##### Option 2: The Presence Practice

- Each morning this week, before checking your phone or starting your to-do list, spend 10 minutes simply being in God's presence
- Don't perform, don't ask for things—just be with Him
- Journal about what you notice

##### Option 3: The Joy Audit

- Each evening, write down three things that brought you joy that day
- Note whether that joy came from God's presence or from circumstances
- Ask God to restore the joy of your salvation

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### Accountability Questions

- What is one specific area where you need God to create something new in your heart?
- Who in this group can you text this week to check in on your spiritual temperature?
- What's one way your heart has become "hardened" or "crusty" lately?

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### Closing Reflection (5 minutes)

**Read together:** Isaiah 64:8 *"And yet, O Lord, You are the Father, we are the clay, and You are the potter, and we are formed in Your hands."*

**Silent Reflection Question:** What is molding your heart today? If it's not God, what is it?

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### **Prayer Time (10 minutes)**

Break into groups of 2-3 and pray for each other using David's prayer as a model:

- Confess areas where hearts have become hard
  - Ask God to create clean hearts
  - Pray for restoration of joy
  - Ask God to help each person value His presence over performance
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### **For Next Week**

#### **Homework:**

- Read 2 Samuel 11-12 (the backstory to Psalm 51)
- Read Psalm 51 every day this week
- Come prepared to share one way God worked in your heart