

A
Girl After
God's
Own Heart

Elizabeth George



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My Heart

Emma? Emma! Emma Thomas!” Mrs. Jones barked out. It wasn’t until Emma’s friend Jenny shook her arm that Emma refocused her gaze from looking out the window and realized that everyone in her class was staring at her.

“Could you please repeat the question, Mrs. Jones?” Emma sheepishly asked her history teacher.

Emma had been a complete mess ever since she’d received an invitation to Tiffany’s birthday party. That was a week ago, and Emma was still caught up in the thrill of being invited to a party given by the coolest girl in her class. For months Emma had been totally absorbed in breaking into the “cool girl” circle. At last it looked like her hard work was finally paying off. And now that she was about to be “in” with this group of girls, she wanted to focus on how to stay in the “in” circle.

FUN IN GOD’S WORD!

Lots of things in our lives attract our attention and distract us from what’s truly important. For Emma it was a

birthday invitation that took her mind off her schoolwork—and everything else. She just couldn't stop thinking about that birthday party!

So, what's the problem? What's wrong with a party and having some fun? Well, nothing, of course! But the real issue was the focus of Emma's heart. What she really needed was a better understanding of where God wants His girls to focus their hearts.

To help you take a closer look at the heart—*your* heart—let's have some fun with the acrostic below that spells out **H-E-A-R-T**. I'm guessing you have a favorite pen or pencil, or a favorite color of ink. (Mine is turquoise!) Whatever your favorite is, get it out and keep it handy. An adventure with Jesus and a trip into God's Word are about to begin!

As you read the verses in the following chapters, you may want to mark what you like and learn. And feel free to write all over the margins! Also try to answer the questions, even if only in your mind. And if you don't have a pen handy or you only feel like reading, that's fine! I want reading this book to be fun—not feel like another homework assignment.

Well, here goes! Whisper a prayer to God, and ask Him to work in your heart.

Have a heart check-up. Wow, was Jesus ever right on when He told the people who wanted to follow Him, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). For Emma, her "treasure"—her heart—was in

friends, parties, and the “in” crowd. For other girls, their heart’s treasure may be in getting straight A’s, winning trophies in gymnastics, or wearing the right clothes.

Now the big question is, where’s *your* treasure? Where’s *your* focus? Where’s *your* heart? A girl after God’s own heart wants to be sure her treasure—what she thinks is most valuable and important—is what God says it should be.

As you begin this adventure in loving Jesus and following Him, here’s a very important verse that shows you what God wants to be first in your life. It’s Acts 13:22—and it’s dynamite! In this verse God describes the heart of the man He chose to be king over His people. Here’s what He says:

I have found David son of Jesse a man after My own heart; he will do everything I want him to do. What does a person after God’s own heart do that sets him or her apart?

My new friend, this is the goal of this book—that you be growing into a *girl* after God’s own heart, a girl who follows God and is willing to go on the adventure of doing whatever He wants you to do. Does this sound impossible? Well, it’s not. Read on!

Experience God’s love. Having a heart for God starts with realizing that God loves you. As much as your parents and grandparents love you, no one loves you more than God. The Bible tells us these things about God’s love:

God is love (1 John 4:8). What do you learn about God in this verse?

God so loved the world [including you!] *that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16). Jesus, God's one and only Son, died for sinners. What does this tell you about how much God loves you?

Allow God to lead you. Knowing God loves you requires a response from you. One key way you show your love for God is by doing what He wants you to do. Jesus tells us in the Bible how important doing His will is. He said:

If you love me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15). What does a heart that loves Jesus do?

As we've already discovered, a girl after God's own heart is a girl who will do what God wants her to do. Her thinking goes like this: "If God wants me to do this, I'm going to do it. And if God doesn't want me to do this, I'm not going to do it."

Are you wondering, “How? How can I know what God wants me to do? How can I be sure of what He wants?” Well, I have good news! God has already stated His will in His Word, the Bible. So be sure you set aside some time to read your Bible. If you’re not sure about what you are reading, talk it over with your parents, pastors, or Sunday school teachers. God has given these people to you to guide you and help you understand what to do.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Psalm 119:105). How will the Bible help you?

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11). How will learning and memorizing God’s Word help you?

Remember, God wants you to love Him. Now think about some of the things you love. I hope your mom and dad pop into your mind. And maybe a best friend. Perhaps you thought of your new puppy, or a hobby like knitting, doing crafts, ice skating, swimming, ballet, music, or your doll collection. Or maybe playing sports like soccer or basketball or tennis. Or even things you love to eat like ice cream, chocolate, chips, and donuts—yum, yum!

Now it's time for you to make your list of "Things I Love":

Now—back to God! God wants you to love *Him*. In fact, He wants to be at the top of your "Things I Love" list. He wants you to love Him *more than* all other things. And He wants you to love Him with all your heart. Jesus says,

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37). Circle every time the word "all" is used.

Love like this is a tall order, isn't it? But it is possible to love God more than anything else. All you have to do is choose to put Him first in your life and in your heart, one day at a time. Here are some ways to get started:

- ⊗ When you go to bed at night, tell God that you love Him and that you are going to think about Him first thing as soon as you wake up. Then say, "Good night, Lord. I love You!"
- ⊗ When you wake up, say, "Good morning!" to God.

It's just like King David said in Psalm 5:3: "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD" (NKJV). Thank the Lord for His love, His blessings, all the good things in your life, and your brand-new day.

☉ I don't know about you, but when I was a girl, I dearly loved writing in my diary. It was a special, private place where I could share about my heart and my life. A lot of things happen in one day, things you don't want to forget. So write about them! But don't forget that the most important thing to write down is what you learned about God or Jesus, and how much you love Him. Try it! It will be just between you and God, a time to say, "Thank You for my special day, God."

Take the temperature of your heart. Throughout this book we'll talk a lot about your heart. But right now it's time to take the temperature of your heart. You already know how your mom takes your body temperature with a thermometer when you're not feeling well. That helps her know if you are sick or not. And, if you are sick, it helps her to know if you're a little sick or *really* sick!

Think about this scene from the book of Revelation. Jesus is speaking to the people in a certain church. Here's what He said to them:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—

neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth
(Revelation 3:15-16).

Jesus mentions three heart conditions or temperatures.
List them here.

To be *coldhearted* means to be unemotional, unaware of God. It's hard to imagine being a person who doesn't even think about God at all! To be *lukewarm* means to be indifferent and bored. Oh, dear! Imagine being numb toward God, bored about God! The third temperature—*hot!*—means that the heat of your heart and your emotions toward God is sky-high. That means your love for God is boiling over with emotion, excitement, and passion. It's fiery! It's the heart of someone—*you!*—who loves God and is committed to Him.

♥ HEART 2 HEART ♥

Just think about Jesus' love for a minute. He loved you so much that He died for you so that you could have eternal life and be with Him forever. And think about how He loved you before you ever loved Him. I hope your heart is as excited about Jesus right now as mine is. If it's not, I hope your heart will warm up, ignite, and begin to burn with a real love for Jesus.

All sorts of exciting and positive things can happen as you turn up the heat of your love for Jesus. So let's discover how you can understand a bit more about Jesus and His plan for you. But first, pray this prayer. Its words will tell Jesus of your desire to know and love Him more and more:

*Dear Jesus, help me
to love You more,
to know You better,
and to follow You with all my heart.
Amen.*

MY ADVENTURE WITH JESUS

In this chapter we had some fun in God's Word learning about the importance of **H-E-A-R-T**. On this page, write out the point for each letter. (I'll get you started with "H.")

Have a heart check-up.

E _____

A _____

R _____

T _____

Now, write out one thing you liked, learned, or want to do about your heart and your love for Jesus. Then enjoy the adventure!
