

**A BOY
AFTER
GOD'S
OWN
HEART**

JIM GEORGE



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Introduction

A Few Thoughts Before You Get Started

Hey there!

I'm Jim, and I'm so glad to meet you. And it's great that you are holding this book in your hands. I cannot tell you how excited I am that you and I are going to go on a journey together with Jesus. I've also invited a boy named Dylan to come along with us. He's a tween guy just like you who loves God and wants to follow Him.

As you prepare to make this exciting trip, here's a little information to get you started on your adventure.

Open your book

...and enjoy it. It's just a book! It's not homework. It's not assigned reading. It's not a chore. No, I wrote this book to be a fun adventure. Everything you need is here—except your favorite pen or pencil. I even put the Bible verses in the book for you. And if you have your own Bible handy, great!

Open your eyes

...to your friends. It will be so cool to go on this adventure with your best buddy and close guy friends! The more guys you get together, the merrier your adventure will be.

And if your dad is willing, you can ask him to go through the book with you.

...and pray. Ask Jesus to help you realize how much He loves you and wants to help you through life. Also, ask Him to show you what it means to be a boy after His own heart.

...and dream! Dream about your future. Dream about all the great things you want to do, like to do, and hope to do. You are very special, and it never hurts to dream your special dreams. They are a part of the wonderful person you are. I know you'll pick up lots of tips from this book that will help you live out your Number One dream—to be a boy after God's own heart.

Are you ready to let the fun begin? I am! As you read, please remember that every page of this book is covered with my prayers for you. And every word has been written with you in mind. I've tried to imagine what your day is like, and what would help you most as you get to know God and the Bible more. My hope is that through this book, you will become more and more a boy after God's own heart.

So—ready...set...here we go!

In Jesus' great and amazing love,

Jim George



My Heart

Dylan? Dylan! Dylan Douglas!” Mrs. Abrams called out. But Dylan was deep in thought. It wasn’t until Dylan’s friend Bart punched his arm that Dylan came back from the world of gaming. It took all his will to refocus his attention away from medieval knights and slaying dragons to the realization that he was at school and everyone was looking at him!

After a sheepish “Duh” followed by a blank stare, Mrs. Abrams, Dylan’s English teacher, repeated her question.

You see, Dylan had become very distracted ever since he had started playing video games at Bart’s house. Dylan was hooked. He couldn’t stop thinking about battles and military strategy. He couldn’t wait until school was over so he and Bart could ride off to Bart’s house to play more games. Dylan and Bart’s families were longtime friends, and it was understood that the two boys would work on homework together until Dylan’s older sister, Helen, arrived from high school to take him home. But Dylan knew there was no way he and Bart were about to let a little schoolwork keep them from taking on their next gaming challenge!

Fun in God's Word!

There are many things in a guy's life that can distract his attention away from what is truly important. For Dylan, it was video games. They took his mind off his schoolwork—and everything else. He just couldn't stop thinking about all the cool fun he could have while playing video games.

So what's the problem? What's wrong with a video game? What's so bad about having some fun? Well, nothing! Especially if it's done after you've taken care of your responsibilities. And as long as it doesn't get out of hand or go to extremes. But Dylan's real problem was the focus of his heart. His was concerned with only one thing...Dylan! What he needed was a better understanding of where God wants His growing boys to focus their hearts.

I know that talking about your heart is not necessarily a “guy thing,” but hang in there with me as we see why this is so important. Let's have some fun with the acrostic below that spells out H-E-A-R-T. Before you start, find a pen or pencil—and it's okay if it's a color like blue or red. Then, with your pen in hand, let's begin an adventure with Jesus and a trip into God's Word.

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

So here we go! Say a prayer to God, and ask Him to work in your heart. Then let's take a moment to spell out H-E-A-R-T—God's way.

Have a heart checkup. 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 Dylan, it's pretty obvious that his “treasure”—the focus of his heart—was on playing video games. For other boys, the focus of their hearts may be sports, or their desire to be part of the “in” crowd at school.

That brings us to the biggest, most important question of all: Where is *your* treasure? Where's *your* focus? Where's *your* heart? A boy after God's own heart wants to make sure his treasure—what he thinks is most valuable and important in the whole world—is what God says it should be.

As you begin this adventure in following Jesus and obeying Him, here's a key verse that shows you what God wants to be first in your life. It is 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 God 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 apart?

My friend, this is the goal of this book—that you be growing into a boy after God’s own heart, a boy who follows God and is willing to go on the adventure of doing whatever God 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 He loves you. As much as your parents and grandparents love you, guess what? No one loves you more than God does. Let’s look at what the Bible says 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 guide 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 it is to do His will. 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 boy after God's own heart is a boy who will do what God wants him to do. His thinking goes like this: "If God wants me to do this, I am going to do it. And if God doesn't want me to do this, I'm sure 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 some great news for you! God has already told you His will in His Word, the Bible. So be sure you take some time each day to read your Bible. If you don't understand what you are reading or you have questions, ask your parents, pastor, or Sunday school teacher. God has given these people to you to guide you and help you understand what God wants you to do, how He wants you to act, and the choices He wants you to make.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105). How does this verse say the Bible will 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. Think about some of the things you love. I hope your mom and dad pop into your mind as people you love. And maybe a younger brother or sister. Perhaps you even thought of your dog, or a hobby like Legos, building models, or playing computer games. Or maybe you really like playing sports like baseball or soccer, or going swimming or to the beach. Or even things you love to eat like ice cream, chocolate candy, chips, and donuts. (Help—I'm getting hungry!)

Take a few minutes to make your own 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, for His blessings, for all the good things in your life, and for a new day.

- ★ You know what people do when they want to remember something, don't you? They write it down. If you haven't been doing it already, why not start writing down some things you don't want to forget. Especially things you learn about God and Jesus and their love for you. Try it! Then when you are getting ready for bed at night, say, “Thank You” to God for all the wonderful things He gave you in just this one day!

Take the temperature of your heart. In this book we'll talk a lot about your heart—that part of you that feels happiness or sadness, that part of you that has wants and feelings. So let's start by taking the temperature of your heart. You already know about how your mom or dad takes your temperature with a thermometer when you're not feeling well. That helps your parents to know if you are sick or not. And, if you are sick, your temperature helps them know if you are just a little sick or *really* sick!

With that in mind, let's look at this scene from the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible. 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). In those words, Jesus mentions three heart conditions or temperatures. List them here:

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

What is the reading on your heart's thermometer? Or, put another way, what is the level of your feelings toward God? It is hot, lukewarm, or cold? Be honest. God already knows, so let Him know that you know! Then you and He can work together to do something about it.

Straight Talk About Your Heart

Just think about Jesus' love for a minute. He loved you so much that He died for you on the cross so you could have eternal life and live with Him forever. And think about how He loved you before you ever loved Him. That's what the Bible says: *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8).

I hope your heart is as excited about Jesus right now as mine is. And I hope it's a fiery excitement. And if it's not, I hope your heart will warm up, ignite, and burn with a real love for Jesus.

All sorts of exciting and positive things happen when 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. Use these words to tell Jesus about your desire to know and love Him more and more.

A Prayer to Pray

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

★ TRAVELING WITH JESUS ★

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

H—Have a heart checkup

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 journey!
