



When you think of loving Him, do you feel a wall come up? What makes that wall?

What disappointments have you suffered that now limit your ability to love?

Ask Him to help you identify anything that you're not even aware of that hinders your love for Him. Write down what He shows you.

Next, we have to go to prayer. We need to ask Him to heal the hurts and remove all the junk we've identified that keeps us from loving Him completely. We also have to realize that we can't just create that great love. We have to ask Him to help us to love Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind, and all of our strength. When we ask God for this,



we are pleasing Him because we're really telling our Father that we realize we've fallen short, but we want to give ourselves to Him. He will answer your prayer.

**Prayer:** Normally, I would provide a pray for you to follow and add to, but today, I would like you to create your own prayer with these guidelines: Praise/Thank God for wanting to have this loving relationship with us, tell Him what holds you back from being able to love Him like He deserves, and ask Him to help you to love Him with all that you are. Please take the time to write your prayer on the next page. Someday, it will serve as a reminder of how much your Faith has grown. (Oh, by the way, this will not be a one time prayer. It will change over time, but it's a prayer that needs to be prayed often!)

**Plan for the Day:** It's so important to stay aware of anything that comes between you and God. How will you keep on top of any new hindrances or old reoccurring issues? What will you do when these things pop up into your day?



## Parent Challenge - Having a Heart Like Hannah's

**Scripture:** Please read **1 Samuel 1:1-28**

**Lesson:** You can hear Hannah's heart as she prays. It's hard to miss the raw emotions and pain as she asks for a son. The part of her prayer that we are able to read is a vow, but Eli's response in verse 7 shows us the real key. He prayed that her grief would be replaced by peace and joined her in asking God for her heart's desire. He was moved by her sorrowful spirit.

Eli did not give her the Job treatment (see my "When Loved Ones Hit the Road" article in this weeks newsletter). Unlike Job's friends, Eli didn't list all of her possible mistakes. He didn't put the blame for her affliction squarely on her shoulders. What about you? Do you have someone in your life that acts more like a friend of Job's than Eli?

Or, is it *you* who gives yourself the Job treatment?



No, Eli didn't condemn Hannah (That is, after he found out she wasn't drunk. Guess he's not perfect! ☺). Instead, he listened. He prayed for her and with her. Wouldn't you love to have an Eli in your life? Do you?

Now, back to Hannah, I don't believe she bore a son because of her vow. I do think that Eli's response reveals a bit of God's heart - a heart that is compassionate and filled with love for His children.

We gather from Scripture that Hannah truly loved the Lord. She honored Him and knew that He was her only hope.

Let's learn from Hannah. She, a Devote Christian woman whose faith we can admire, came to the Lord with all the junk that she felt. She held back none of her bitterness or deep sorrow. (Oh, you understand that pain, don't you?)

She came on her knees, weeping, honoring God and giving Him her request - her heart's desire. She didn't hold back, wanting to appear to be a "good Christian". She didn't pretend that everything was really OK.

I'm afraid that in OUR desire to be a "Good Christian", we do exactly that. We aren't honest with God - even though, He already knows the truth. Instead, we stuff down our sorrow, anger, and bitterness. We pretend to be



what we wish we were. We want to have peace, we don't want to worry, and we want to trust God. We go to God with a mask hiding our heart.

Looking at God's response to Hannah, what kind of prayer do you think God prefers? (One of honesty or one of pretending?) Why do you think that?

What does He want from you?

**Prayer:** Ready to get started being real with God? Take time to praise Him; remembering that no matter what our circumstances are He is worthy of praise. Follow Hannah's example. Let God see the emotion you feel. Make your request. Don't be afraid to enter into a real relationship with your Father.

Also ask Him to help you recognize the Job treatment - if it's you pointing out all of your faults or someone else doing it.

**Plan for the Day:** How can you be more honest with God throughout your day? What can you do to lessen the pain that your Job friend's or *you* cause?



# Parent Challenge - The Heart and Mind of God

**Scripture:** Please read **1 Samuel 2:35**

**Lesson:** Hopefully, you have read this newsletter's article "Shining Like the Sun at Full Strength Even in Our Storm". If you haven't yet, I would encourage you to stop here, go back and read it (you will find it at: [www.kimberlyehlers.com/shining-like-the-sun-at-full-strength-even-in-our-storm](http://www.kimberlyehlers.com/shining-like-the-sun-at-full-strength-even-in-our-storm)), and then come back for the rest of the devotion.

We have a theme going on - cleaning up our motives so we can shine for our Father. If we want to do what is according to God's heart and mind, we have to clean out our "junk" that interferes. If we are more concerned about what's on our heart and mind than God's, we can not know what He desires. So, let's start there. Do you want to take that first big step? Do you want live according to God's heart and mind?

Does the thought scare you? Or does anything hold you back from being able to say, "Yes, I'm ready to live for Him?"



Now, let's be honest, if you just do not feel any desire to live for Him, please stop here. It's OK to feel that way, but there is something you can do. You can ask God to help you want to live for Him. Let that be your prayer for as long as it takes. You can always come back and finish when you feel ready 😊.

But, if you do feel ready, I'd like to help you begin the process of purifying your heart and mind so that you can better know His. Purification is how we get rid of the stuff that keeps us from Him.

These are really big questions, and they will go along way toward cleaning up your messy motives. Give yourself time to be honest and thorough. You are welcome to spread this devotion out over as many days as you need! It will be so worth the time!

Are you ready? Here it goes!

What is in your heart, what feelings do you have that you know are not of Him?



What is in your mind, what thoughts do you have that you recognize to be un-Godly?

How would your life be different if you did according to His heart and mind?

To really know *God's* heart and mind, we must spend time with Him. We need to be in prayer and read His Word. By opening the door to Him, He can then conform our thoughts and feelings, while directing our path. Knowing



Him doesn't just happen in a day, it takes time. Be patient and trust that He is at work in you.

**Prayer:** You've dug up some messy motives that need to be taken to the Lord. Ask Him to forgive your feelings and thoughts that have not been pleasing to Him. Ask God to continue purifying your heart and mind, revealing any darkness you can not see. Thank Him that He not only wants us to know Him, but allows us to. Ask Him to help you know and love Him more.

**Plan for the Day:** How will you stay aware of any messy motives that pop up and what will you do with them?



## Parent Challenge - The Plan

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 29:11-13 and Psalm 139:1-16

**Lesson:** Oh, sweet friend, after reading these verses are you starting to see the truth? You were made with love. Your creator KNOWS you completely. He knows your personality, your past and your future. You haven't let Him down. You haven't done anything He didn't already know you'd do. AND, He still made you! He made you because you play a special role that no one else could play - only you could be your child's mom or dad.

He knows your family's future. He knows, dear one, and He's in control. He's at work turning what Satan met for evil into good (Genesis 50:20).

This is a two part lesson. You're welcome to do it all at once or spread it out over a couple of days.

The first "little" activity will give you big results. You'll develop a better vision of who God created you to be. You'll also see a clearer picture of His plan for you and your family.

Sit down with God and first list your strengths and then your weaknesses. I've provided space for you on the next page. Ask God to help you be completely honest and see your characteristics clearly. Don't be discouraged if you only write one strength. That's a great beginning! If you're someone who's very hard on themselves, it may be hard to come up with even one - so make that your goal today! Come back tomorrow and ask to see another. Be patient and work through the process with God. I can tell you that if you feel like a failure as a parent, one of your strengths is having a great love for your child.



**STRENGTHS:**

**WEAKNESSES:**

For every strength, ask God how He would like you to use it and note it below. As you do this you will see His plan unfold. Catch the vision He has for you.

**HOW I CAN USE MY STRENGTHS:**



What do you do with the weaknesses? First, ask God if this really an accurate description of you or if it comes from false-guilt or self-hate. If it comes from those things cross it off your list. Ask for forgiveness and for Him to help you be free from them. Accept His forgiveness. If it is a true weakness, give it to God. Seek forgiveness if you need to and ask Him to take that weakness and make it a strength.

Now, for the second part of the lesson: Each time I read these verses something new pops out at me! There's a reason for that. It's God's way of saying, "Kim, this is for you! Listen to what I have for you." Let's not miss the lesson God has for each of us. Slow down and read each verse again. Note everything that jumps out at you or gives your heart a little squeeze to - that's God whispering to you 😊. Write about why you think God wants you to hear that special Word.

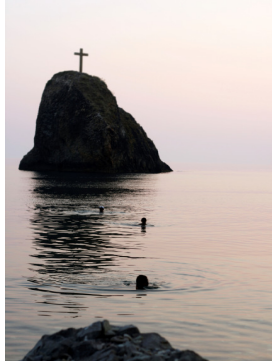


**Prayer:** I have two prayers, one for each lesson. Of course, add on anything that God is laying on your heart to pray.

(for 1<sup>st</sup> lesson) "God, help me to continue to know you and love you more. Show me who it is you created me to be. Remove the lies from my heart, may I know Your truth."

(for 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson) "God, thank you so much for your great love and care. Help me to love you more every day. Please continue to teach me the special Words you have for me."

**Plan for the Day:** Develop a battle plan to fight the lie, "I'm a failure as a parent". What can you do to actively replace that lie with the truth that you are the perfect parent for your child?



## My Products:

**Messy Motives and Wrong-Way Roads Bundle** - Do you want to continue the work of purifying your heart and mind? With this audio and devotional set God will clean up those un-pure motives and give you life you never dreamt possible - a life of YOU shining like the sun for His glory no matter what your circumstances are!

**The Faith Challenge** - Is your precious child living with a serious health challenge? Are your days overflowing with worry and fear for their future? Do you feel like you've failed as a parent? Is your life filled with stress? Take "The Faith Challenge" and allow God to heal your hurt and draw you near.

To find more products, go to: <http://kimberlyehlers.com/my-products/>



## Family Challenge Devotions Book 1

Are you looking for deep, meaningful devotions for you and your family? Is your child facing a serious health challenge? Or do you want to nurture a real thriving relationship between your children and God? Do you want the same for yourself?

**“Family Challenge Devotions – Book 1”** contains 4 precious “challenges” for the whole family and 4 “challenges” just for parents from my “Heart Connections” January – February, 2010 newsletters.

As a family, you will enjoy your time together, getting to know one another more, while also guiding your child to know the Living God. I call these “Sunday Night Devotions” because they are more than a verse and a short lesson. They are sure to bless the whole family!

Separately, Parents, you will discover who God truly created you to be, dig into the \*junk\* that keeps you from living for Him, AND much more!

So.... ready to dive in and take the Family Challenge?



Kimberly has been happily married to her best friend, Randy, for over 14 years. Together, they homeschool their 11 year old son, Seth. She received her bachelor’s degree in Mental Disabilities: Moderate, Severe and Profound from the University of Northern Iowa, and taught Special Education for 4 years before becoming a stay at home Mommy – her absolute favorite “job” ever!

Visit Kimberly at:  
[www.kimberlyehlers.com](http://www.kimberlyehlers.com)

\$8.50