

Broken Hearts, Broken Ties

DAY 1 • AN EMPTY GARDEN

DAY 2 • A PERFECT HEART

DAY 3 • A PEOPLE FOR HIS NAME

DAY 4 • THE ORIGINAL LOVE STORY

DAY 5 • ON THE MOVE

WEEK 1

The consistent theme of *A Woman's Heart: God's Dwelling Place* is the desire of a holy God to dwell among mortals. We will explore this theme by concentrating on one vital method by which God's desire took action: the Old Testament tabernacle. Week I lays a strong biblical foundation on which we will build the entire study. This week we will span the entire history of humankind from creation to the exodus as we seek answers to the following questions.

Principal Questions

1. Why were the Israelites to build the tabernacle?
2. What is the human heart like apart from fellowship with God?
3. How did God respond to what He saw at the tower of Babel?
4. What did God preach to Abraham?
5. By what name did God tell Moses to call Him to the Israelites?

If you've studied God's Word for a long time, you may be tempted to skim over the historical background this week provides. But you have probably never studied the early history of humanity in specific relationship to the Old Testament tabernacle. Don't let the seeming familiarity of this material cheat you of countless treasures. Ask God to open your mind to a fresh understanding of these age-old accounts so you come to appreciate with great intensity God's revolutionary words: "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8).

Day 1

An Empty Garden

Read Today's Treasure and pray that God will speak to you through His Word.

See the first occasion in God's perfectly-inspired Scripture that the word *tabernacle* appears.



Read Exodus 25:I-2,8-9. According to verse 8, why were the Israelites to build the tabernacle?

When I originally wrote this Bible study, I was in the throes of the wildest and busiest years of parenting. Our older daughter, Amanda, had just entered middle school. Melissa, three years her junior, was in elementary school, and our house was splitting at the seams with a hyperactive pint-sized boy.

Michael entered our lives when he was four years old, and we were utterly convinced we'd raise him to adulthood. We were wrong. God left him with us for seven years of laughter, hard work, confusion, fears, and at least a thousand gallons of tears. Then God had other plans. Though Michael's time with us was abbreviated, he marked our lives forever. Stories of him were sprinkled throughout the original edition of this study. Though my own personal examples are updated in this edition, I can't bring myself to remove all the Michael stories. He's simply too tangled in my heartstrings. I also do not believe my journey with God through the wilderness of Exodus would have been the same had I not had Michael at the time. My ears were shocked clean. With your blessing I will, therefore, begin this study just as I did the first time: with one of a million Michael stories.

The child had an uncanny habit of taking apart any gadget he could get his hands on. One day when he was five years old, I was expecting an important long-distance phone call. I had busied myself with some work around the house to decrease my anticipation, and Michael was playing quietly—my first signal that mischief was lurking. When the phone finally rang, I sprouted wings and flew toward it, only to find that the three cords connecting the phone were plugged into different places. A two-inch cord now connected the receiver to the base. In other words, when I picked up the phone, I picked up the whole phone. The long cord that usually plugs into the wall was connected by two inserts on the back of the phone, and the extra long, curly cord was connected to the wall. Just try having a conversation with an entire phone hanging at your chin and a five-year-old boy laughing hysterically at your feet. And would you believe it worked?

I am convinced that God was sparing my son's dear flesh. He seemed to get a kick out of Michael. And Michael seemed to get a kick out of me. Still does, as a matter of fact. He loves to hear stories of how he baffled me. Even

Today's Treasure

“THERE, ABOVE THE COVER BETWEEN THE TWO CHERUBIM THAT ARE OVER THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY, I WILL MEET WITH YOU AND GIVE YOU ALL MY COMMANDS FOR THE ISRAELITES.”

Exodus 25:22

as a preschooler, he relentlessly took apart radios, tape players, and video games and managed to live to boast about it. Every time I'd catch him, I always asked the same question: "Why did you take this apart?" Hopelessly enthusiastic, his response never varied. "So I can see how it works!" Throughout this study we will take apart Scripture verses and a certain tent of meeting for exactly the same reason—so we can see how they work.

Look back at Exodus 25:1-2,8-9 and let's begin building a crucial foundation for our study.

Discover who is involved. Who is talking? _____

Whom is He addressing? _____

Who is "them" in verse 8? _____

What is Moses to have them do?

- build themselves a sanctuary build God a sanctuary
- build a church

How are they to construct it? _____

What two names does God call this structure in verses 8-9?

SANCTUARY

a consecrated or holy thing or place; a hallowed part, like a chapel; an asylum; an area devoted to the sphere of the sacred

TABERNACLE

residency

The tabernacle had to meet God's standard rather than a human one. The Hebrew word for *sanctuary* is *miqdash*, a masculine Hebrew noun meaning *a consecrated or holy thing or place; a hallowed part, like a chapel; an asylum; an area devoted to the sphere of the sacred*. It is derived from the word *qadhash*, which means *to be clean, to make clean, to pronounce clean (ceremonially or morally); to hallow, to dedicate, to purify*.

The Hebrew word for *tabernacle* is *mishkan*, carrying the basic meaning of residence. The word does not often mean a place of physical splendor; rather, it could be a shepherd's hut, an animal's lair, or the grave. Most often in the Scriptures *mishkan* refers specifically to the tabernacle in the wilderness, which we are studying. It was the place where God chose to dwell with His people.

Review the definitions of *sanctuary* and *tabernacle*. Considering them jointly, check any of the following that apply to the tabernacle.

- a simple structure an asylum a dwelling place
- a place of splendor a holy place a place of purity
- devoted to sacred things a mansion a storehouse