

Hannah's Promise – 1 Samuel 1:9-11

I. INTRODUCTION • 1 Samuel 1:1-8

A. *Desire*

1. Ever want something really badly?
 - a. I mean, you just *had* to have it.
 - b. And if you didn't get it, well – you might not make it.
2. When I was a kid living in the suburbs of Chicago, we had a weekly Saturday routine.
 - a. My Dad would take me to the store, then we'd come home, work on the yard, & whatever other work needed to be done around the house.
 - b. He worked a lot of hours & Saturdays was about the only time I saw him.
 - c. My reward for helping him with the yard was that while he was picking up supplies at the store for that day's work, I went to the plastic models & picked out a new one to build later that weekend.
 - d. I was totally into army men, & loved models of WWII airplanes.
 - 1) So I had models of B-14's, 17's, B-24's Liberators, & English Lancasters
 - 2) I had Spitfire fighters; Corsairs, Mustangs, Hurricanes, P-40's, Thunderbolts, & German Messerschmitts
 - 3) It would take me hours to paint & assemble each one.
 - 4) Then I'd hang them from the ceiling in my room.
 - e. Eventually, I had so many models there wasn't any more room & my parents had to duck when they entered.
3. Now the normal routine was, when we entered the store, Dad would drop me off in the models aisle, then go get the items he needed, & on the way back to the register, he'd collect me, along with the model I'd selected, & we'd head to the checkout.
4. But one day, when he came back to get me, he told me to put the model back on the shelf; he wasn't going to buy it.
 - a. Huh? Surely he was kidding. This had never happened before.
 - b. No, I was told to put it back – no model today.
 - c. This had never happened before. Maybe My Dad had forgotten how this worked.
 - 1) I go to the store with him and while he shops, I pick out a model.
 - 2) He buys it, we go home, do the yard . . .
 - 3) Then later that afternoon, I spread some newspaper on the card table, sit down, & make my model.
 - 4) That's the way life works, see.
 - 5) If I didn't get a model, who knows what disturbance that might make in the eternal cosmic design.
 - 6) If I put that model back of the P-37Lightening back on the shelf, the entire future of the human race would be in deep peril.
 - 7) Surely he knew that!
 - d. My protests didn't phase him. So I put the model back and left the store in tears.
 - e. I wanted that model – badly. In fact, I was convinced I could not live

- without it.
5. When we got home, I ran in the house, found Mom, & told on Dad.
 6. She seemed rather *happy* about it. She was tired of getting hit in the head every time she went in my room by plastic airplanes.
 7. Her lack of support only fueled my suspicion that while I'd slept the night before, aliens had taken me to another planet and were running some kind of bizarre experiment on me, seeing how much torment I could take.
 8. Now, despite my earnest belief that if I didn't get a model life would end, I made it through the day just fine.
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B. Longing

1. Most of us have experienced that kind of intense desire at one time or another.
2. We're convinced we have to have something and if we don't get it, well, life just won't be the way it's supposed to be.
3. That's where Hannah was. She desperately wanted a child, but no matter what she did, conception eluded her.

II. BODY

A. Set the Scene

1. Hannah was married to a priest named Elkanah.
 - a. They lived in the village of Ramah, within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim.
 - b. That's why they're referred to in v. 1 as Ephraimites.
 - c. Later we learn that Elkanah was a priest, a descendant of Aaron. [\[1\]](#)
 - d. Only a small number of priests lived near & served at the tabernacle, which at this time was only 16 miles from Ramah, at Shiloh.
 - e. The majority of priests lived in various cities, towns, & villages around the nation, serving as local pastors for Israel.
 2. Elkanah was Ramah's priest.
 - a. And he'd done a good job leading his family in spiritual things.
 - b. He made sure they went to Shiloh for the feasts, as the Law of Moses commanded.
 - c. Three times a year, they were to travel to the tabernacle & celebrate God's goodness, remembering what He'd done for their ancestors in the Exodus.
 3. While Elkanah followed the Law pretty well, he'd allowed the customs of his time to distort his thinking as it related to marriage; he'd taken on another wife.
 4. When his beloved Hannah had failed to produce a child, Elkanah married Peninnah, who turned out to be a baby-making machine!
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5. While there's quite a bit of polygamy in the OT, it's clear that God's plan was one man & one woman, for life.
 - a. While Abraham, Jacob, David, & others had multiple wives, it never turned out well.
 - b. These men allowed social customs to trump the counsel of God; always an unwise move.
 - c. And so it turns out for the household of Elkanah.
 - 1) The guy that thinks multiple wives would be fun doesn't realize the

- miser* he's acquiring in the inevitable rivalry between the women.
- 2) Patrick & Sue were at the store when an attractive woman walked by.
 - a) Pat absent-mindedly allowed his eyes to follow her just a bit too long.
 - b) Without looking at him, Sue said, "Was it worth the trouble you're now in?"
 6. Hannah continued to be Elkanah's favorite, even though she was barren, just as Rachel was Jacob's favorite though unable to conceive.
 7. Every new child Peninnah delivered was more ammo to lob at her rival Hannah.
 8. V. 6 tells us Peninnah had set herself against Hannah.
 - a. She was jealous of Elkanah's favor toward her.
 - b. She was merciless in the way she treated Hannah, using every opportunity to remind her of her barrenness.
 9. It was torment enough for Hannah to have Elkanah marry another wife.
 10. But to see her produce a whole nursery full of kids was agony!
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11. Do you have a Peninnah; someone who takes special delight in tormenting you? They're just nasty!
 - a. No matter what you do to try & be right by them, they just keep after you.
 - b. The hostility isn't *continual*; there are seasons of relative peace.
 - 1) And at times you think, "Maybe they've changed & everything's okay."
 - 2) Then overnight, they're right back to their old tricks.
 - 3) They give the same dirty looks, make the same nasty comments.
 - 4) And you realize they were only using calm as a way to lull you into hoping things were better – just so they could disappoint you & catch you off guard.
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12. That's the way it was between Hannah & Peninnah, but not for anything *Hannah* was doing.
 - a. Peninnah was just jealous because Hannah was Elkanah's favorite.
 - b. Peninnah's fertility was the chief weapon in her war with Hannah.

B. Envy

1. Jealousy is often the cause of these pitched battles that go on among people.
 - a. The one who's being nasty sees a *threat* in the object of their scorn.
 - b. They're powerless to do anything about what they're jealous of,
 - c. So they try to make life *miserable* for the other person.
2. Peninnah could draw no real joy from her many children as long as she *used* them as a *resource* in her contest with Hannah.
3. It's interesting that Hannah longed for children – what delight she would have had in her own child.
 - a. She probably looked with a certain amount of envy at Peninnah,
 - b. While Peninnah was looking at her with envy over Elkanah's love.
 - c. But what each had & was envied by the other for, neither enjoyed when they had it!
 - d. Peninnah wanted Elkanah's love – Hannah wanted kids.
 - e. Peninnah had kids but couldn't really enjoy them as long as she saw them as assets in her rivalry.

- f. Hannah had Elkanah's favor but couldn't enjoy it, as v. 7 makes clear.
4. This is the great cheat of envy, jealousy, and coveting.
- It's a lie that tells us happiness comes by acquiring what we don't have.
 - All it does is **steal** the happiness we could have now by being content with what we have.
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5. Pete wanted a new rally car; a Subaru, WRX STI.
- His 2000 Accord had seen better days & all his friends had later model rides.
 - So he saved up & bought his dream car.
 - But after a week, hanging out with his homies, he felt like the show-room finish needed to be tricked out.
 - Visions of The Fast & The Furious he'd seen a dozen times kept flashing in his head.
 - If he just had new exhaust then his car would be complete.
 - So he got the new exhaust, but 3 days later realized the transmission wasn't quite as tight as it could be.
 - So he got a hi-performance transmission; but that wasn't really what it needed; it needed ground effects – that would complete the package.
 - New wheels, tires, fuel injection, paint, seats, sound system, Nitrous; Pete did it all.
 - And when there was nothing left he could add to his car, a new model came out with improved performance.
 - Pete had a great car the moment he drove that Impreza off the dealer's lot, but he was never content with it – because contentment isn't something we can acquire.
 - Contentment is a choice; a decision to be satisfied with what we have, trusting that God is faithful.
6. The 10th Commandment is a prohibition of coveting – of desiring what belongs to someone else.
- All of the commandments are aimed at safeguarding God's blessing & our enjoyment of life.
 - The reason why coveting is prohibited is because it robs us of the satisfaction of what we already have.
 - It turns us into the dog with a bone in its mouth, which sees its own reflection in a pool of water.
 - In trying to take the bone away from the other dog, it loses its own in the depths of the pool.
7. In **Phil 4:11** the Apostle Paul said,
I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.
8. In **1 Tim 6:6-8** he said –
Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.
9. **Heb 13:5:**
Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you

nor forsake you.”

C. Ignore it

1. Hannah’s misery was at it’s worst when the family went to Shiloh to worship.
2. It was at this time that Elkanah’s favor for her was most obvious,
 - a. When they ate the fellowship offering, he gave her a double portion.
 - b. Seeing this, Peninnah responded by turning up the heat on her rival.
 - c. Hannah’s reaction was to weep & fast; so she never got to enjoy the blessing her husband showed her.
 - d. Of course, Peninnah saw this – that’s why she tormented her; she knew Hannah would get all weepy & upset & miss out on the demonstration of Elkanah’s love.
3. If you’ve got a Peninnah, someone who’s made themselves your rival, don’t let them get you down.
 - a. Don’t let them see how the comments hurt.
 - b. Don’t react to their attempts at torment.
 - c. Don’t give them the satisfaction of being miserable; which is exactly what they’re trying to lay on you!
4. I told you we got a puppy for Christmas.
 - a. Our older dog, Gretchen, died in November, leaving Lady, the younger dog pretty lonely.
 - b. Now, Lady used to harass Gretchen mercilessly, trying to get her to play.
 - c. And Gretchen would try to play along but she was so old, she wore out quickly, despite Lady’s insistence she play.
 - d. Then Seth came at the end of December, & he will not leave Lady alone!
 - e. He runs around her, barks, jumps on her, trying to get her to play.
 - f. She just looks at us with this look which says, “Oh, I am so, so sorry for the terrible way I treated Gretchen.”
 - g. SO after enough taunting, Lady finally plays with Seth, and thoroughly whoops him because she’s twice his size.
 - h. But after a while, she’s had enough and lies down.
 - i. Well, he’s just getting started – so he comes up behind her and wraps his entire mouth around her leg and pulls on it, like he’s trying to drag her across the floor.
 - j. At first she growls & nips at him, and as long as she does, he keeps at it.
 - k. But after a while she just ignores him, and he quickly gives up and leaves her alone.
 - l. He goes off and finds something else do to – like eat the houseplants or chew up a pillow.
5. You get the point – don’t give Peninnah the satisfaction of knowing they’re troubling you.
6. There’s a good chance if they don’t see their nastiness having the desired effect of making you miserable, they just move along and find someone else who doesn’t have the grace and patience you do.

D. Elkanah’s Comfort

1. Look at Elkanah’s reaction to Hannah’s distress in v. 8. He’s a sharp guy.

Then Elkanah her husband said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?”

2. No! Elkanah, you’re not! In some ways, he’s the cause of her problems.
3. It’s the obvious favor he’s showing her that has caused Peninnah’s jealousy.
4. And it was his bone-headed decision to marry a second wife that started the whole thing.
5. Hannah longed for a child!
 - a. This was something ingrained in her as a woman & as a member of the covenant Israel had with God.
 - b. Hannah felt a deep sense of connection to God’s promise to Israel,
 - c. And having a son who would carry on the family name was **crucial** as part of **her participation** in the covenant.
6. In a word – Hannah was **desperate!**

7. While Elkanah tried to console his wife, in typical male fashion, he went about it in the wrong way.
8. He tried to **solve the problem** that lay at the root of Hannah’s distress.
 - a. For Elkanah, Hannah just needed to **think** clearly.
 - b. He tried to **reason** her out of her depression.
 - c. That was not the way to go about it.
9. What would have been far more effective is if he’d just said, “Honey, snockems! What’s wrong? Tell me sugarpie.” Then – silence!
10. Once Hannah shared her heart, all she needed from him was understanding.
 - a. Just a kind, tender, caring word that affirmed his unchanging love.
 - b. And a quiet word of prayer that God would work.
11. It would have been wise for him to ask, “What can I do? What do you want from me? IS there anything I can do to make it better?”
12. Of course, in Hannah’s case, being as low as she was, she might have said, “Yes Elkface – can you poison Pain-ninny?”
13. Guys, while we want to fix our wives when they’re upset – they just want to know that we care & understand, and that our love for them does not vary according to their moods.

E. Hannah’s Promise

⁹So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the ^otabernacle of the LORD. ¹⁰And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. ¹¹Then she made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.”

1. When the feast was over, the family started getting ready to head back to Ramah.
2. While the others were busy packing, Hannah went to the tabernacle where the

- high priest Eli was sitting at the door.
3. Her agony was intense. It had been yet another time of torment.
 - a. They went to Shiloh to celebrate a joyous feast – but as with all the others, it had turned into a nightmare.
 - b. What was supposed to be a happy time was for Hannah, painful.
 - c. What was supposed to be a time for worship, was an occasion for anguish.
 4. She wept, her soul was in agony.
 5. In the depths of her pain & brokenness, she made a vow to God: “Give me a son, & I’ll give You one.”
 - a. She said that he would be a Nazirite, one specially devoted to the sacred service of God, all the days of his life.
 - b. The Nazirite vow was one of complete consecration to God, and so exacting in its requirements that it was usually only taken for a short period of time.
 - c. Only three persons in the Bible are identified as being life-long Nazirites: Samson, who totally failed in the vow, Samuel, & possibly John the Baptist.
 6. This is the point Hannah needed to come to; one of complete surrender to God.
 7. In v. 6 it says that God had closed her womb.
 - a. Why? It doesn’t say, but we can venture a pretty good guess –
 - b. Her motive in wanting a child wasn’t right.
 - c. If she’d have had a child before this point, she would have raised him with the wrong mindset & motive.
 8. God had a special destiny for Hannah’s child. But her plans didn’t jive with God’s so He closed her womb.
 9. It didn’t open until her barrenness had done its proper work of producing surrender.
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10. We look at adversity & only see the pain it produces.
 - a. As believers, we must hold on to the promise of Romans 8:28-29.
 - b. God is at work in & around us to bring us to the place where we can be truly useful.
 11. If a raw piece of oak spinning in the lathe could speak, it would cry out in pain as the knife is brought up to it & begins cutting away the rough exterior.
 - a. For hours it spins as the master craftsman uses different tools to shape it.
 - b. At each new cut there’s distress; why is it being treated so harshly? Where’s God?
 - c. But when it’s finally turned – it holds the intricate pattern of a gorgeous, ornate bedpost fit for a king, and the wood realizes the pain was the means of its glory.
 12. This life is a spiritual lathe God is using to shape for glory.
 13. Trials & adversity are some of the tools he uses to cut away what’s only in the way of our destiny.
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14. Hannah’s promise ought to be the template for every mother; really for every parent.
 - a. We ought to see our children as children of God.
 - b. And raise them in the nurture & admonition of the Lord.

15. Just as the Jews were told to raise their children in the knowledge & fear of God, we must raise our children in The Faith of Jesus Christ.
 16. Of course the day will come when they'll each face the decision of what they'll do with Christ *on their own*; whether or not they will follow Him.
 17. But it's the awesome privilege & solemn duty of the Christian parent to present the truth & beauty of the Faith to his/her children.
 18. Even when a child makes the decision to believe in Christ, they'll face the constant challenge on what degree they will follow.
 - a. So parents need to raise them with the same sense of devotion Hannah had,
 - b. To be totally surrendered to the Lord, living a life of complete devotion to God.
 19. This is not to mean that every child is destined to be a pastor, a priest, a nun, or missionary.
 20. It means that in whatever their vocation, whatever calling God places on them, they give themselves completely to Him in it.
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21. This is the vision for our school;
 - a. Which we see as nothing but an extension of the home & role of parents –
 - b. To shape young men & women who know their calling & are well prepared to fulfill it –
 - c. Taking their vocation, whatever & where ever it is – captive to the Lordship of Christ.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Moms*

1. We honor you today.
2. And now we ask you to honor the Lord you love by devoting your children to the Lord as Hannah did.
3. If your children are young & still at home, follow God's directions for parents.
 - a. Don't look to the world for parenting wisdom – after all, it changes every 5 years anyway.
 - b. Look to the Lord's Word which changes not – and whose counsel has been proven true every time it's tried.
4. If your children are grown, pray for them as Hannah prayed, with an urgent fervency.
5. A mother's prayers are a powerful thing. I know from personal experience.