

Life Lesson 57

Hannah

I Samuel 1-2

Introduction

Have you ever wanted something so much you could hardly stand it? The lady in our story today felt that way. Her name was Hannah, and more than anything in the world, she wanted a baby.

The Story

Hannah was married to a man named Elkanah. He didn't feel so badly about Hannah's having no children because he also had another wife. This second wife, Peninnah, had several children. Still, Elkanah loved Hannah best.

Perhaps it was because Peninnah knew that Hannah was the favorite wife that she acted so mean to Hannah. She was always teasing Hannah and taunting her. She made fun of her because Hannah could have no children.

What an unhappy household! Many times we see examples in the Bible of people who didn't follow God's plan for their families. Instead of one husband and one wife who love each other and are true to each other, a man would have several wives. Every single time we see unhappiness for everyone. God knows what will make us truly happy. His way is always best.

Every year Elkanah took his family to the house of the Lord. There he would make a sacrifice to the Lord. It was a custom to have a feast at this time. Hannah didn't feel like feasting and rejoicing. During this time it seemed that Peninnah picked on her more than ever.

One year Hannah couldn't stand it! Her enemy teased her and made fun of her until she

cried and cried and could not eat. She was so miserable! Hannah went into the house of the Lord and began to pray. She cried and begged God to give her a child.

“If only you’ll give me a child, Lord,” Hannah prayed, “I will give him to you all the days of his life. From his earliest days he will be set apart for You to serve You, if You will only hear my prayer and give me a child.”

Eli, the priest, saw Hannah praying. He noticed that she was moving her lips, but she wasn’t saying anything out loud. She was praying so earnestly that she wasn’t thinking at all about how she appeared to other people. Eli was used to the wickedness of the people who lived during the time of the judges. He thought she must be drunk.

“You wicked woman,” He said, “You better quit your drinking.”

“I am not drunk,” Hannah replied. “I am just so unhappy because I don’t have a child, and I’ve been pouring my heart out to the Lord.”

“Go in peace,” Eli told her. “I am sure the Lord will answer your prayer.”

Hannah was sure the Lord would answer her, too. She was so confident that she wasn’t sad anymore. She joined in the feasting and rejoicing.

God did answer Hannah’s request. He gave her a little boy just as she had asked. She named him Samuel.

“Don’t forget that you promised this child to the Lord,” Elkanah reminded Hannah.

“I haven’t forgotten. As soon as he is old enough to be away from me I’ll take him to the house of the Lord,” Hannah replied.

That’s just what Hannah did. When Samuel was just a small boy, maybe four or five

years old, she brought him to the House of the Lord and left him with the priest, Eli.

“This is the child I prayed for,” Hannah told Eli. “I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is set apart for the Lord’s service.”

It must have been hard for her to do, but he did as she promised. She left her little son in Eli’s care and returned to her far-away home. She wouldn’t see her boy again for a whole year until the family would come again to offer their sacrifices to God. That year and for every year afterward she would bring a coat for Samuel when they came to the feast.

God rewarded her for her faithfulness. He gave her more children. Hannah had three more sons and two daughters. How glad Hannah was that she kept her promise to God! Anything we give up to God is not wasted. He always gives back more than we can ever give Him.

What about the little boy who went to live in the tabernacle? We’ll learn about him next week.

The Life Lesson

Sometimes when people are mean to us, we want to take things into our own hands and punish them! It’s better to do what Hannah did. She took her disappointment and her troubles to God and asked Him to take care of it for her. He gave her the child she wanted so much. She still had the other wife to deal with, but Peninnah no longer had anything to torment her about. She had her little boy, and later on, several other children. When you have troubles, you can take them to God, if you are His child. He can fix things for you as he did for Hannah.

Review Questions

What did Hannah want more than anything?

A baby

Who was Hannah's husband?

Elkanah

Why did Eli the priest think Hannah was drunk?

She was praying so earnestly that her lips moved, but no sound came out.

What did Hannah promise God?

That if He would give her a child, she would give him to serve God for as long as he lived.

Why was Hannah able to enjoy the rest of the feast?

Because she believed God had heard her prayer and would give her a child.

What did Hannah name her baby?

Samuel

Did Hannah keep her promise?

Yes

How often did she see Samuel?

Once a year at feast time.

What did she bring Samuel every year?

A little coat.