

# The Story of Hannah

## Women of the Old Testament—part 1

1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

May 8, 2016

### Day 1: Pain in the loss of a dream

*1 Samuel 1:1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkannah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.*

*<sup>2</sup> He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.*

*<sup>3</sup> Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.*

*<sup>4</sup> Whenever the day came for Elkannah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.*

*<sup>5</sup> But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb.*

*<sup>6</sup> And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.*

*<sup>7</sup> This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.*

*<sup>8</sup> Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"*

1. Try to imagine the pain that Hannah was feeling. She desperately wanted a child but God had closed her womb. In that culture at that time, children were considered a blessing from God so if you could not have children it was considered a curse. If a woman was barren it was common for the man to take another wife to bear children. Hannah could not have children so Elkanah married Penninah who was very fertile and gave Elkanah many children.

2. What kind of relationship did Hannah have with her husband Elkanah?

3. Even though he loved her, how did Elkanah add to Hannah's pain?

4. How did Penninah add to Hannah's pain?

5. Try to describe how Hannah must have felt.

6. What pain are you experiencing right now?

## **Day 2: Surrendering your dreams to God; God's deeper work in us**

*1 Samuel 1:9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.*

*<sup>10</sup> In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.*

*<sup>11</sup> And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."*

1. The scene is in the house of worship.
2. Describe Hannah's state of being.
3. When Hannah prays that God not "forget her," but "remember her," she is not saying that God is not omniscient or uncaring. These are euphemisms for her heart saying to God, "Please remember this prayer and act."
4. Do you think this was the first time Hannah had prayed for a son? Why/why not?
5. What does Hannah's prayer reveal about her motive for wanting a son?
6. What vow to God does Hannah make in her prayer? (Note: the "razor" part of her prayer is the commitment of a priest).
7. Is there something or someone you need to surrender to God?

### **DAY 3: Battling through discouragement, inwardly and outwardly—to a place of peace**

*1 Samuel 1:12 As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.*

*<sup>13</sup> Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk*

*<sup>14</sup> and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."*

*<sup>15</sup> "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.*

*<sup>16</sup> Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."*

*<sup>17</sup> Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."*

*<sup>18</sup> She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.*

1. As Hannah pours out her heart, the priest, who in this case is a “clueless male,” completely misses her pain. His response is like hearing nails on a chalkboard.

2. How does Hannah respond to him?

3. Unfortunately, sometimes God’s people are just not that “helpful” as they could or should be.

4. Yet, she does not get derailed by his obvious insensitivity. Why do think this is true?

5. After praying, how did Hannah feel even though her circumstances had not changed?

6. Why do you think her feelings changed so radically?

7. What lesson do you draw for yourself from her example in today’s passage?

#### **DAY 4:**

*1 Samuel 1:19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. <sup>20</sup> So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."*

*<sup>21</sup> When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, <sup>22</sup> Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always." <sup>23</sup> "Do what seems best to you," Elkanah her husband told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.*

*<sup>24</sup> After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.*

*<sup>25</sup> When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, <sup>26</sup> and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD.*

*<sup>27</sup> I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him.*

*<sup>28</sup> So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.*

1. God granted Hannah's request and gave her a son, Samuel.
2. After having been through the pain of infertility, and the pain of being provoked by Peninnah, what do you think Hannah felt when she realized she was pregnant?
3. What do you imagine would be her response to God, upon realizing she was pregnant?
4. Hannah kept her commitment to God and gave Samuel back to him – to serve the Lord under Eli the priest.
5. After experiencing the "lows" and the "highs" regarding pregnancy, what do you think it cost Hannah to give up her son, Samuel, just after he was weaned?!
6. Is there something you need to give back to God? A person? An event? Other?

## **DAY 5: What is your greatest priority?**

*1 Samuel 2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance.*

*2 "There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.*

*3 "Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the LORD is a God who knows, and by him deeds are weighed.*

*4 "The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength.*

*5 Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry hunger no more. She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away.*

*6 "The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.*

*7 The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts.*

*8 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. "For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; upon them he has set the world.*

*9 He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. "It is not by strength that one prevails;*

*10 those who oppose the LORD will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the LORD will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."*

*11 Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.*

1. Even though this must have been difficult, what does Hannah's prayer in chapter 2 reveal about her heart and feelings?

2. What are some attributes of God that Hannah praises God for?

3. Even though giving birth to Samuel would have great personal meaning, what turns out to be more important to Hannah? Why do you think this is so?

4. What has God given to you that you can give back to Him to be used for His glory and His Kingdom?

5. What can you praise God for today?