

7

Hannah

From Misery to Praise

1 Samuel 1:1—2:11

Waiting is one of the hardest things we do. So much of life involves waiting, and in an age of instant products, waiting irritates us. But waiting is hardest when we see the clock running on, the years going by, and still our hopes and dreams are unfulfilled.

GROUP DISCUSSION. How do you react—physically, emotionally, spiritually—when years pass by and still your most cherished hopes have not materialized? How have you learned to cope with the tension this brings into your life?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. The Bible speaks often of waiting for the Lord to act and to bless. If we have blessings, how should we act toward those who are still waiting?

Hannah knew about waiting. In a society that measured a woman's worth by her children, Hannah was barren. Year after year she waited in misery for the answer to her prayers. She had two choices: to be bitter or to continue seeking God's help. This study looks at Hannah's journey from misery to praise. *Read 1 Samuel 1.*

1. Why is Hannah's pain so intense (1:2-7)?

2. Hannah turns to God in desperation. What does her prayer reveal about her (1:9-11)?

3. When you are bitter about your disappointments, to whom (or what) do you turn?

What are your expectations?

4. Just as Hannah's response revealed her inner person, what does our response to pain and disappointment reveal about us?

5. How do Hannah's subsequent actions show her certainty that her son was a gift from God?

6. Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11. Describe the shift in Hannah's focus between chapters 1 and 2.

What brought this about?

7. What does Hannah believe about God? (Find several strong beliefs.)

8. Which of Hannah's beliefs about God could you state as your own, and how did you come to these beliefs?

9. How would you define what Hannah is doing in verses 1-10?

What is the source of her joy? (Compare it with Hebrews 13:15-16.)

10. What specific things can you learn from Hannah about the solution to the pain of unfulfilled hopes?

What attracts you to Hannah as you look at her character? Ask God to bless you with her faith and joy in worship, with her willingness to give what she most valued to the service of God.

Now or Later

Hannah's song of praise was written down and became part of tradition. Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55 has similarities to Hannah's inspired words. Try writing your own song of praise, telling God what you believe about him.