



# HANNAH

LEADER'S GUIDE  
LESSON 6



A PORTRAIT OF A GODLY MOTHER

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# Hannah — A Portrait of a Godly Mother

[1 Samuel 1:1 - 2:21]

## Introduction:

Hannah lived during one of the darkest times in Israel's history but she stands out as a bright and shining light against the backdrop of moral and spiritual depravity. She was a woman who trusted God and prayed fervently. Although her life was filled with prolonged hurt and disappointment, she brought her burdens to the Lord, the only One who could answer her prayers. Her story is positive proof of how God hears and answers prayers above and beyond what anyone could have ever imagined.

## Hannah's Background:

1. Hannah's name means gracious, graciousness or favor. Her name reflects her gentle and quiet spirit [1 Peter 3:3-4]. Hannah was a woman of God. She not only knew God's Word but she practiced God's principles in her everyday life. She was a woman who purposed to follow God with all her heart even in the face of trials and adversity. Hannah lived during the time of Judges where "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" [Judges 21:25].
2. Hannah faced many heavy burdens. The three burdens she endured that are mentioned in Scripture were that she was involved in a polygamous marriage, she had a cruel adversary, and she was barren [1 Sam. 1:2-6]. Hannah's secret in dealing with her problems was to go directly to the Lord in prayer for she knew Him personally and intimately [1 Sam.1: 10, 12, 15].
3. Elkanah, her husband, practiced polygamy. Polygamy is the practice of having two or more wives or husbands at the same time. Polygamy first appeared in the reprobate line of Cain when Lamech took two wives [Gen. 4:19]. Wherever polygamy was practiced in Scripture, there was often jealousy and trouble. Because God is omniscient and knows our human weaknesses, God recognized but not necessarily sanctioned polygamous marriages mainly to protect the rights of the firstborn [Deut. 21:15-17]. Although Elkanah was a good husband to Hannah, practicing polygamy brought jealousy and rivalry to his home.
4. Peninnah was an adversary to Hannah. Peninnah had several children whereas Hannah had no children of her own. Peninnah caused Hannah much hurt and stress. She took every opportunity to make Hannah's life miserable. Peninnah's actions were fueled by the jealousy of Elkanah's love for Hannah plus the resentment triggered by the double portion given to Hannah each year by her husband [1

Samuel 1:4-5]. Peninnah's cruelty not only grieved Hannah, but also hurt her husband and set a bad example for her own children. Peninnah's brief mention in Scripture is short lived and definitely overshadowed by Hannah's godly life and character.

5. In biblical times, it was a great affliction for a woman not to be able to bear children. It was very important to have children to maintain the family's name and inheritance. But it was also the hope of every Jewish woman to be the one to bear the Jewish Messiah. Peninnah capitalized on Hannah's barrenness by taunting her with critical and harsh remarks, but Hannah did not retaliate in any way [1 Sam. 1: 6-8]. Hannah showed God's graciousness and self restraint in face of Peninnah's constant and cruel remarks. Hannah may have been childless but she was not prayer less.
6. Hannah had a very loving relationship with Elkanah even in spite of his polygamy. Because she is named first of the two wives, she was probably his first wife. Elkanah may have taken a second wife because of Hannah's barrenness, but his love for Hannah never wavered and remained very strong. Their inability to have children and Peninnah's constant diatribe regarding Hannah's barrenness only help to bring out Elkanah's tender expressions of his love for Hannah. The real key to a thriving family starts with the love between a husband and his wife.
7. Elkanah was from the priestly tribe of Levi and from the family of the Kohathites [the same clan that Moses and Aaron were from]. Therefore, Hannah married into one of the most important families in Israel. Elkanah and his family lived among the tribe of Ephraim in northern Israel. Elkanah was a goodly man who took his family up to Shiloh yearly "to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts". They were a godly family living during an ungodly time. As they went up each year to worship, Peninnah especially provoked Hannah with her bitter tongue reducing Hannah to tears and to lose her appetite [1 Sam. 1, 7]. However, Hannah knew where to take her burdens — she went to God to pray—giving her burdens to the One who alone could answer her prayers [Matt. 11:28].
8. Hannah lived during one of the most unsettled time in Israel's history in which there was great moral and spiritual decay. Judges 17:6 states there was no king and people did what was right in their own eyes not was right in God's eyes. It was a dark time in Israel's history, yet Hannah was not affected by this in her devotion to God. Her faith was so strong that neither culture, spiritual climate nor adverse circumstances could turn her eyes away from God.

## Hannah's Petition

9. It was in the house of God, that Hannah presented her heartfelt petition to her Lord. There were three aspects to her sincere prayer. Hannah prayed for a man child, she prayed unselfishly, and her prayer ended with a promise to God. Hannah's vow to God concerning the birth of a male child was that she would give him back to God "all the days of his life" and he would be a Nazarite from birth [1 Sam. 1:11].
10. A Nazarite was one who lived a life of separation. A Nazarite could not drink from the vine [wine or other strong drink], could not cut his hair, or could not touch a dead body. They were outward signs that served as a testimony of the Nazarite's dedication to God [Numbers 6:1-8]. A Nazarite could be a man or woman that is separated unto God by a vow of consecration. God's purpose in establishing the Nazarite group was to raise up within Israel a class of devoted individuals to whom God would grant special powers and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
11. Eli was the high priest of Israel. He made a serious mistake when he blatantly accused Hannah of being a drunk and worthless woman [1 Sam. 1:12-16]. Although Eli was quick to judge Hannah, he deliberately overlooked the sins of his own sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were "sons of Belial" [1 Sam. 2:12] and a terrible disgrace to Israel's priesthood — a sign of the corruption and spiritual decay that existed during the Judges. God later killed Eli's two sons for their wickedness [1 Sam. 4:11].
12. When Eli realized Hannah was not drunk but a woman of deep prayer and commitment, Eli then changed his tune and gave her a blessing. He told Hannah to "go in peace and the God of Israel" would grant the petition she prayed for. Hannah responded graciously to Eli [1 Sam. 1:17-18] and left the house of God. She sorrowed no more. Why? She believed God and it was only a matter of time God would bring that promise of a son to fruition. What an example of unwavering faith!

## Hannah's Legacy

13. Before the next annual feast day, Hannah did conceive and Hannah bore a son. She named him Samuel. His name means "heard of the Lord" — a reminder of God's mercy to those who call on the name of the Lord [1 John 5:14-15]. Hannah and Elkanah must have been beside themselves with joy and thanksgiving to God for giving them a son. Hannah's reproach of barrenness was gone, and Peninnah's

taunting was silenced forever. Hannah's desire to be a mother was fulfilled. No mother was more committed to raise her son for a life of service to God than Hannah. She instilled in him love and reverence for God and His word in the short period of time she had before giving him back to God's service. Samuel's life testifies of Hannah's outstanding job of a mother and teacher of spiritual truths. Samuel was a very important figure in Israel's history.

14. Hannah could have found many reasons for not keeping her vow in giving her son back to the Lord. Three good reasons were: (1) the polluted atmosphere of the temple, (2) the wickedness of Eli's sons, and (3) the inadequate leadership of old Eli. However, Hannah trusted God completely to meet Samuel's physical and spiritual needs. Hannah never wavered in her vow to give Samuel back to God even though it must have caused her great pain and suffering to be separated from her only son.
15. God blessed Hannah for her strong faith and resolute commitment to Him. After she had weaned Samuel [usually at 3-5 yrs of age], she dedicated her son to the Nazarite order with a burnt offering and to the Lord's service with a joyful and grateful heart [1 Sam. 1:24–2:10]. Hannah visited Samuel yearly and brought him a coat, and no doubt, remained a strong spiritual influence in Samuel's life. Sometime after Elkanah and Hannah left Samuel in the care of Eli at the temple, God blessed this godly couple with more children — three sons and two daughters [1 Sam. 2:18-21]. You can never out give the Lord!
16. Hannah's psalm of thanksgiving is often called the "Magnificat" of the Old Testament. The theme of Hannah's song was her confidence in God's sovereignty. Hannah praises God for His holiness [vs. 2], knowledge [vs. 3], power and majesty [vss. 4-8] and strength and grace [vss. 9-10]. Hannah's faith blessed many people. Even Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus, was undoubtedly influenced by Hannah's life and song of praise. The Magnificat of Mary, Mary's own song of praise in the anticipation of the Messiah's birth has many similarities to Hannah's song [Luke 1:46-55]. \*See attached chart.
17. Hannah's prayer had far-reaching effects for when she prayed for God to give her a son, little did she realize how God was going to use this male child. Samuel was the first great prophet after Moses and the last of the judges. Samuel was also the founder of the School of Prophets and had the privilege of anointing the first two Hebrew kings. He also had two books of the Bible named after him. Samuel served the Lord faithfully all the days of his life. Hannah's prayer for a child

changed the whole course of history throughout the nation of Israel. Because of Samuel, all Israel heard the word of God.

18. Some lessons we can learn from this biblical account of Hannah are: (1) Great Christian men usually have godly mothers of extraordinary faith and character [ex: Abraham Lincoln, John Wesley, Dr. Ben Carson]; Samuel was a godly man because of the influence of his godly mother; (2) Prayer is essential for spiritual health and God's guidance [Phil. 4:6]; Samuel was a man of prayer just like his mother; (3) Be mindful of your tongue; [Psalm. 141:3]. Your words can build up or tear down; don't be like Peninnah; (4) Do not rush to judge others like Eli for you may not have all the facts [John 7:51]; and (5) Be gracious like Hannah even when other misjudge or hurt you [Col. 4:6].

### **Conclusion:**

Out of the pages of biblical history, Hannah, a godly woman of fervent prayer and uncompromising commitment appears brightly during the time of the Judges. Her solid faith and unwavering allegiance to the God of Israel is refreshing in contrast to the stark reality of moral and spiritual decay. Not only was Hannah a woman of unblemished character, she was a woman of deep faith and showed graciousness in times of adversity. She is a picture of what a godly woman, wife and mother should be. Hannah's love and loyalty to her husband and children are worthy of mention. Her unselfish prayer led to the birth of Samuel which God used mightily for God's honor and glory. She used her time wisely in the short time she had to raise Samuel for the Lord's service. Not only did Samuel become a prophet and judge, but he was also a priest. Because of Hannah's desire to raise a godly man, all of Israel heard the word of God [1 Sam. 4:1a]. Even the mother of Jesus was inspired by Hannah's life. Hannah is an amazing example what God can do in a life that is totally committed to Him.



## POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN HANNAH'S AND MARYS SONGS

### Hannah's Song

[1 Sam. 2:1-10]

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord  
Mine horn is exalted in the Lord

The bows of the mighty men are broken  
And they that stumbled are girded with strength  
The Lord killeth and maketh alive  
He bringeth down to the grave and  
bringeth up

They that were full have hired out  
themselves for bread  
And they that were hungry ceased

### Mary's Song

[Luke 1:46-55]

My soul doth magnify the Lord  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour

He hath shewed strength with his arm  
He hath scattered the proud in the  
imagination of their hearts  
He hath put down the mighty from their seats  
And exalted them of low degree

He hath filled the hungry with good things  
And the rich he hath sent empty away

**Praise**

**Power  
&  
Strength**

**Provides**

*All the Women of the Bible, Herbert Lockyer, p. 66.*