

Coping with Adversity

A Lesson from Hannah

Dr. Goodluck Ofoegbu
Prof. Oby Ofoegbu
Banking Blessings Ministry
San Antonio, Texas
USA

What We Will Learn

- Hannah faced adversity of childlessness
- Bitter and sad but stayed committed
- To serving and worshipping God
- Took her problem to God in prayer
- And left it with him
- God granted her prayer
- Gave birth to Samuel
- Three sons and two daughters

What We Will Learn cont'd

- David faced adversity
- From rebellion led by son Absalom
- Did what he could while resigned to God
- To provide resolution
- According to his will and timing

Hannah's Apparent Barrenness

- One of two wives of Elkanah, an Ephraimite
- Family was devoted to worship
- Hannah was childless and therefore sad
- Co-wife Peninnah took advantage
- Elkanah sought to comfort Hannah
- Hannah kept her sadness to herself
- 1 Samuel 1:6–8

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

6 And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb.

7 So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

8 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?”

Hannah Petitions God for a Son

- She took her problem to God
- Directly, privately, and whole-heartedly
- Explained to Eli with humility and respect
- Eli supported her prayer
- Though not privy to the prayer content
- Hannah was satisfied after her prayer (left her problem with God)
- 1 Samuel 1:9–10 & 13–18

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

9 So 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 tabernacle of the Lord.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish.

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

14 So Eli said to her, “How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!”

15 But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord.

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

16 Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.”

17 Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.”

18 And she said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Understanding Hannah's Prayer: Whole-Hearted Commitment

- Made a specific vow regarding the child
- Vow conveyed a commitment
- To worship God with all her heart, all her soul, and all her strength
- Whole-hearted devotion to God
- 1 Samuel 1:11
- Deuteronomy 6:5

1 Samuel 1 (NKJV)

11 Then 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.”

Conveyed whole-hearted commitment to worship God with everything

Deuteronomy 6 (NKJV)

5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

- Most important commandment
- Along with “love your neighbor as yourself”
- Demands whole-hearted commitment to serve and worship God

Understanding Hannah's Prayer: Alignment with God's Purpose

- Prayer for son dedicated to serving God
- Aligned with God's purpose
- Hannah relied on God to intervene
- According to his will and timing
- Committed to these, though not knowing
- Whole-hearted commitment to God
- Aligned her need with God's purpose

God Grants Hannah's Petition

- She conceived and had a son, Samuel
- Handed him over to Eli
- To live, grow, and serve in house of God
- Conceived several times more
- Had three sons and two daughters
- Really was not barren
- God used her temporary barrenness
- To provide a son dedicated to God

Example from David

- Fled Jerusalem from Absalom-led rebellion
- Declared for will of God
- God's solution and timing
- Though not knowing what or when
- Did what he could
 - Sent spies to Jerusalem
 - To gather information
 - And confuse rebel counsel
- 2 Samuel 15:25–26

2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.

26 But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”

What We Learned

- To cope with adversity
- Commit whole-hearted to worship God
- And serve him (live in the image of God)
- Resign to his resolution
- Though not knowing what, how, or when
- Do what you can (apply human effort)
- Consistent with living in the image of God
- To prepare yourself for God's intervention