

Face to Face

with

Hannah

First Day

Her Story

“But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transformed in ever-increasing splendor into His own image, and this is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.” (II Corinthians 3:18 PHILLIPS)

This week we will be looking at the woman Hannah – a woman who has been called one of the *rare women of the Bible*. Hannah is rare in the fact that there is nothing negative written about her in the Bible. We see her as a rare jewel standing out vividly in the darkness of the times when, as it is written in Judges 21:25, “...*Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*” Everyone, including Hannah’s own husband Elkanah, and his second wife Peninnah, her rival.

We will begin by looking at what Scripture tells us about Hannah. *This is her story.*

Open your Bibles to **I Samuel 1-2**. Read the verses listed below and in a few sentences summarize the events described there:

I Samuel 1

verses 1-8

verses 9-20

verses 21-28

I Samuel 2
verses 18-21

As you consider the following questions, look beyond the obvious and really think about her situation from the context of her whole story.

What was Hannah's *sorrow*? _____

- Amongst many sorrows, the mistreatment of Hannah by Peninnah stands out. It appears as if Peninnah mistreated Hannah out of jealousy. Why would Peninnah have been jealous of Hannah?
- Have you ever been mistreated by someone simply because they were jealous of you? How did that make you feel and how did you react?
- Have you ever mistreated someone simply because you were jealous of them? How does it make you feel to realize this in light of Hannah's pain?

What was Hannah's *joy*? _____

What did Hannah *learn*? _____

Second Day

Her Manner

Who is She?

"...Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." (II Peter 1:5-7)

Hannah's name means "graciousness," or "favor."

Today we will be looking at the *character* of Hannah. Reread the **I Samuel 1** account of Hannah's story and use the following words to describe her:

- *Her strength*

- *Her weakness*
- *Her courage*
- *Her dedication*

Make a list of words that *you* would use to describe Hannah's character: _____

How did Hannah's character make a difference in the way she handled her difficult situation? _____

- Do you have a difficult situation in your life right now? What is there about the way that Hannah handled her situation that challenges you to rise higher in yours?

Third Day

Her Hope

"And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:45 NASB)

From what you have studied about Hannah this week:

What was her *need*? _____

What was her *hope*? _____

What was God's *promise*? _____

Hannah's situation was difficult on many levels. She had a husband, yes, but her husband had another wife, and that wife had the one thing Hannah didn't have – her husband's children. And, on top of that, she despised Hannah and attempted at every opportunity to make Hannah's life miserable. Do you notice that Scripture gives no hint to us that Hannah repaid her rival in kind? One of the most beautiful aspects of Hannah's story is her *hope*, and *where* that hope was placed. It wasn't placed in her husband, and it wasn't placed in the possibility of Peninnah's becoming kind.

- Where did Hannah place all of her hope?
- What did Hannah do with her pain?

Speaking of Jesus and His sacrificial death on our behalf, I Peter 2:23 gives us a behind the scenes glimpse at how He handled His suffering. What does it say? _____

The NASB says that He “...kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

- In the face of mistreatment and misunderstanding, what do you think it means to *entrust yourself to Him who judges righteously*?
- Apply this to the trial you face today.

Because Hannah entrusted herself to Him who judges righteously, God answered the cry of her heart. “*And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, ‘Because I have asked for him from the Lord’*” (I Samuel 1:19-20).

What a beautiful story of a burdened heart, an uplifted prayer and the answer of God. It has been said that when God burdens a heart to pray, it is because He wants to answer that prayer. Little did Hannah know when she went to the tabernacle to pray that the answer was already on its way! One commentator said it this way: “*Samuel was conceived in God’s heart long before he was conceived in Hannah’s womb.*”

What plan might God have for you that He is just waiting for you to lay at His feet in prayer? We might imagine that Hannah had been praying for a child long before this, but it was at this time, being in great distress, that she prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly, and not only made her petition, but offered him right back to God again. Hannah’s prayer was a prayer of supplication, but at the same time it was a full surrender to God. We cannot bring ourselves to this place, it is a place God brings us to and, when He does, it may be like it was for Hannah – just at the moment He plans to fulfill our hearts desire.

Memory Verse:

Listen to some of the promises given in Psalm 34:

“*I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears*” (verse 4).

“*This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles*” (verse 6).

“*The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles*” (verse 17).

“*The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit*” (Psalm 34:18 NASB) This is our memory verse this week – begin memorizing it today!

Fourth Day

Her Gifts

What mother doesn't like to be remembered through the example and good deeds of her child? As we study Hannah's life, right away we notice that her story is told in the first two chapters of the first Bible book that bears her son's name. We notice too that she was a woman of prayer and that she prayed with the depth and fervor of a woman whose faith was grounded in God. It is evident that she had a love for God, not only because He had granted her a son, but also because she had a deep understanding of who God is and she worshipped Him accordingly!

Hannah's devotion to God was reflected in her devotion and care of her son, which sets the standard for every Christian mother. She bestowed upon Samuel all the love a mother would have for a much-desired first-born son. She no doubt tended to all of his care in those first few years, even declining a trip with her husband to the tabernacle at Shiloh because her baby had not yet been weaned. Her decision to stay behind revealed the high value and responsibility she placed upon motherhood. We would say it was her first calling.

Pause and consider for a moment the value God places on mothering. What are some of the gifts He bestows on mothers that assist them in this high calling? _____

What would you say is the most essential requirement in being a devoted mother? Why?

Hannah's unselfish devotion to God made her able to leave her small son with Eli in the tabernacle. She must have entertained thoughts of little Samuel learning to perform simple tasks, such as cleaning a utensil, lighting a candle, or running an errand for Eli. And because he would learn to do these menial tasks faithfully and with joy, Hannah would witness her son mature and rise to a much greater ministry for the Lord.

Before leaving Samuel behind and returning home, the closing verses of chapter one reveal that Hannah and her son worshipped the Lord together. How endearing that scene must have been for both mother and son. There was thanksgiving in the act of receiving a son and also in the process of "letting go."

Hannah's gift of faith was exercised and expressed through her prayer and praise to God. In the first ten verses of I Samuel 2, she prayed a prayer of exultation, believed by some to be the inspiration for a similar prayer by another devoted mother, Mary, upon hearing that she would bear the Messiah to the world (Luke 1:46-55).

Take time to carefully examine Hannah's prayer in I Samuel 2:1-10. After reading it through, summarize in your own words each of the following parts:

Hannah's Joy in the Lord... _____

Hannah's Praise of the Lord... _____

Hannah's Expectation from the Lord... _____

Now carry the exercise through from your own personal perspective. As you consider your relationship to God, write your thoughts on each of the following:

My joy in the Lord... _____

My praise of the Lord... _____

My expectation from the Lord... _____

Close your study today in an attitude of praise and worship.

Fifth Day

Her Legacy

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

How will you be remembered? How would you like to be remembered? What will you leave behind of benefit for others? What you do and say today will leave imprints for others to view tomorrow.

Taking a closer look...

- What impression did Hannah leave with you this week?

- How might her life impact a woman in today's world?

Taking a personal look...

Read through Hannah's prayer again in I Samuel 2:1-10. As you read, notice what these verses say about God's *attributes* as well as His *actions* and His *abilities* to accomplish His will. Keeping your current circumstances in mind, write down what God reveals to you about each of the following...

- *His attributes:*

- *His actions:*

- *His abilities:*

If you remain alert to God in any given situation you will most likely find these three areas evident and at work on your behalf. It is through the Lord's attributes and actions that He demonstrates His sovereignty over our lives. Since the final word rests with Him and the final victory is His, He is more than able to cause us to triumph every time!

Passing it on...

- What have you learned this week through your study of Hannah's life that you would like to pass on to someone else? Commit this to prayer and ask God to give you the opportunity to speak to someone about it. Stay alert!

Sixth Day

Your Prayer

Each day this week you have examined up close – face to face – a woman of the Bible: her *story and manner*; her *promise and hope*; her *gifts and legacy*. Throughout the process, as you learned about her, you also learned about yourself.

Now the focus shifts to *Your Prayer*. Each week during your group time you will have the opportunity to pray in agreement with the other ladies for the things you write down on this personalized page. Keep an updated account in the *Praise* list each week as God answers your petitions. Let's begin this year by coming boldly to His throne and learning to pray the **BIG PRAYER** with expectancy! The only prerequisite for such boldness is being *humble* and *real* in His presence.

Prayer: Write out your prayer for each of the following...

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God _____

I thank God for _____

I ask God for _____

Promise: Write out this week's *promise* in the space provided...and learn this year to pray these promises from Scripture.

Praise: If God has answered a prayer request for you this week or fulfilled a desire of your heart, please write it out and date it as a stone of remembrance.

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