

■ ■ HANNAH

Week One | June 4, 2017 | Stories of Our Faith

PREPARATION

■ ■ MONDAY THROUGH WEDNESDAY

Read through 1 Samuel 1:21–2:10. Pray the Holy Spirit would bring to life the truths of this text and allow you to teach it well to those in your care.

■ ■ THURSDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

Many questions have been included in this week's guide. Read through this lesson to determine which questions will work best to encourage, push, and grow your group.

■ ■ DAILY

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming weekend. Pray also for your time in this week's study.

THIS WEEK

■ ■ KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Like Hannah, believers should display great patience, sacrifice, and faith in the Lord.

■ ■ THEOLOGY APPLIED

As we are patient and sacrificial with the gifts we receive from the Lord, we show that we trust him above all else. When we do the opposite, we show that our faith is in ourselves or something else apart from God.

■ ■ MEDITATE

"For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." (1 Samuel 1:27-28)

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

🗣️: *How would you describe our culture's sense of impatience to someone from another culture or time period?*

🗣️: *What types of things usually cause people to believe God is not in control or good?*

🗣️: *Why do you think we so often cling tightly to the things we hold dear?*

🗣️: *When someone gives you a gift, how do you view that gift: as theirs or yours?*

Despite our current culture's strengths, patience, sacrifice, and faith are not typically considered to be among them. Waiting is extremely hard for an American in the 21st century. Our technological advancements take five minutes to produce results that would have taken a month to achieve only 50 years ago. To be told we have to wait for something sounds impossible.

The same goes for sacrifice. Instead of giving up things, our society is often bent on receiving them. And when we do receive something, we can often be stingy and territorial with those gifts, can't we? We see this in children on Christmas day—tearing through gift wrap to reveal a beloved toy, then clutching it tightly so a sibling or even the parent who gave it cannot enjoy it.

The same goes for the idea of faith. Instead of trusting God for what's best, our culture often preaches trust in self. Due to our sin nature, we tend to believe that we are better in the driver's seat than the Lord, and we are skeptical that he could be both good and in total control. While we have the ability to believe, we believe in the wrong things to give us hope, confidence and security. As we will see in this lesson, God has something to tell us about faith, sacrifice, and patience through the story of Hannah.

🗣️: *When God asks you to give something up, how do you usually respond?*

Q: *What helps you stay patient in difficult situations?*

■ ■ UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This week, through the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel, we will see what great patience, sacrifice, and faith looks like. These characteristics are not easy for believers in our day and age, but they are very possible with the help of God's strength and love. By learning from Hannah's example, we too can be these things:

1. A PICTURE OF PATIENCE

2. A PICTURE OF SACRIFICE

3. A PICTURE OF FAITH

GOING DEEPER

+ *Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.*

A PICTURE OF PATIENCE

■ ■ 1 SAMUEL 1:21-23

Q: *Why did Hannah decide not to go on the yearly sacrificial trip with the rest of her family?*

Q: *What does Hannah promise to do as soon as her child is ready? (v. 22)*

Verse 21 opens with a picture of a faithful and obedient Israelite family who has just experienced a miracle. God has given a child to a faithful, prayerful, and barren woman named Hannah. Her husband, Elkanah, is heading out for his yearly trip to sacrifice and pay vows to the Lord for his family, an annual requirement for all Hebrew men (Deut.

16:16). Elkanah's whole family comes with him, except for Hannah. While Hannah would usually go up with Elkanah for this important trip, she decides to stay behind this year (v. 22).

Though still a new mother, women during this time period were well-accustomed to carrying nursing children wherever they traveled. Hannah does not stay behind because the journey is too far or difficult, but because she has made God a promise that she would "give her son to the Lord" (1:11). Hannah knows that the next time she encounters God's dwelling place, she must fulfill her promise by giving Samuel over to the priest in God's name and leaving him there. When she goes to the temple her son must be ready to stay. So, Hannah chooses to stay behind until Samuel is weaned and ready to be taken care of by others, and ultimately, by the Lord. Up until this point, we've already seen an incredible amount of patience in Hannah's life as she waited for a son. Now we see her showing great patience all over again, as she waits for the right time to give that son to the Lord.

♀: *How long does Hannah intend to give her son to the Lord's service? (v. 22)*

♀: *How does Hannah's husband respond to her plan? (v. 23)*

Verse 22 reminds us of the staggering level of her commitment: Hannah is not giving her son to minister in God's name for a season, but for as long as he lives! When she says that "he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever," she suggests that she's dedicating Samuel as a Nazirite—one who volunteers to be in special service to God and abstain from alcohol, long hair, and proximity to corpses. While the Law only required a Nazirite to volunteer for this type of service for a season (Num. 6), Hannah is dedicating him to be in special service of God forever.

Hannah has patiently waited for a son, carefully decided the right time to give him to the Lord, and now she will patiently brave a lifetime without his presence in her home. She knows that his presence will better serve the Lord's home. Seeing Hannah's amazing example calls us all to a higher standard of patience in the lightning-fast world we live in. May we all, like her, learn to stay patient in seasons of hardship and petition when we can't understand the Lord's plans.

♀: *What circumstances trigger impatience in your heart?*

♀: *In what ways do you relate with Hannah at this point in the story? In what ways are you challenged by her example?*

A PICTURE OF SACRIFICE

1 SAMUEL 1:24-28

Q: *What does Hannah immediately do once the child is weaned? (v.24)*

Q: *Why do you think the writer mentions that the “child was young?”*

Once Hannah’s son is weaned she fulfills the vow she made to God in 1:11 and dedicates Samuel to the Lord’s service. According to Jewish custom at the time, when a faithful Israelite made a clear vow with God (like Hannah’s) and the Lord answered, a formal acknowledgement of answered prayer was required. This happened through a public statement and an offering of a young bull, fine flour, and wine (Lev. 7). Hannah brings all three with her, signaling that she’s keeping her end of the vow, and she brings them all in higher measure than what was required. An ephah of flour was more than what was called for, and a skin of wine could hold up to six gallons. Because these types of offerings would have been very expensive, Hannah’s extravagance reveals her heart in the midst of sacrifice. Her example challenges us to not only give to the Lord what is appropriate, but to give in a way that communicates our unwavering loyalty and thankfulness to the Lord.

Q: *Hannah believes this child is a product of what? (v. 27)*

Q: *To whom does Hannah believe her child ultimately belongs? (v. 27)*

Q: *Put verse 28 in your own words. Have you ever “lent” something entirely to the Lord? What was it?*

In addition to the sacrifice of the bull, flour, and wine, Hannah makes an even greater sacrifice in giving up her son to God’s service. Verse 24 tells us “the child was young.” While she could have held him back a little longer and enjoyed more time with her son, she didn’t hesitate to follow through with her commitment. Hannah gives him up while he is still young.

She intended to lend her son to the Lord for his entire life (v. 28)—a picture of sacrifice we can all learn from. Hannah has the ability to “lend” her son to the Lord because she recognizes that he belongs to the Lord in the first

place. Samuel was a gift to her, not a “right” to which she was entitled. Samuel was never a product of her plans, control, or even biology. Samuel was a product of prayer and God’s grace. Seeing her story now, how much more should we view our own lives as a gift, one which we can give back in total service to the Lord who died for us? How can we grow to view our own lives, and the lives of our loved ones, as belonging to God and not to us?

♀: *Why is it hard to “lend” or “sacrifice” certain things to God?*

♀: *Think of the lives of your children or those you spiritually mentor—do you see them as a product of your effort or a product of God’s grace?*

A PICTURE OF FAITH

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10

♀: *Hannah only mentions her specific circumstance—barrenness—once in her entire prayer (v. 5). What takes up the majority of the rest of her prayer?*

♀: *What do you think is the main message of Hannah’s song?*

♀: *Who do you think Hannah is referring to when she speaks of “my enemies,” “the wicked,” and “the adversaries of the Lord”? (v. 1,9,10)*

Once her vow has been made and the Lord has provided a miraculous son, Hannah offers her public statement in the form of a joyful song of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10). The primary theme of this song is Hannah’s great faith in the Lord’s sovereignty and grace. The song starts and ends (v. 1 and 10) with God’s ability to raise up the lowly and “exalt” their obvious weakness into strength through his mighty power. She once was barren and sorrowful, but the Lord took her weak situation and, in his great power, exalted her to be the mother of a mighty man of God. Knowing that this strength only comes from God, she goes on to say that there is “none holy like the Lord,” “no rock like our God” (v. 2). For Hannah, there’s no one on earth as strong and mighty, knowledgeable, and trustworthy as God.

While her faith is strengthened by her own miraculous situation, she sees beyond her circumstances and into all the

places that God has complete control (v. 2-8). She declares that the Lord has the ability to judge all human action, raise up those whom society has marginalized, direct all of history, set the foundations of the earth, and even exercise authority over both the living and the dead. Verse 9 sums up where her faith and trust truly lie: not in the might of human power, but in the Lord who can do anything. Hannah's faith and praise is so clearly demonstrated in this song, that it ends up being the very model for Mary's song of praise when she gets pregnant with Jesus (Luke 1:46-55)! When we see the Lord work in specific areas of our life, may we, like Hannah, show this kind of faith and worship for the larger works he does in the world.

Q: *Does Hannah believe her God will judge only her people? (v.10b) Who else will he judge? Why do you think this is an important statement to make in her culture at the time?*

Q: *God not only exalts Hannah's strength, but who else's? (v. 10c)*

While Hannah's song clearly displays her great faith in God, it also showcases her great faith in something specific God will do in the future: raise up an anointed king (v. 10). Hannah has a great honor here, for this is the first time in all of the Bible that God's "anointed king" is mentioned. In this passage, Hannah is doing two things. First, she is pointing to the monarchy that is about to be instituted in Israel, believing God will raise the first king of Israel to a place of prominence in her culture out of their lowly circumstance, just as he raised her out of her lowly circumstance.

Second, we know that "the anointed one" is another way of saying "messiah," and she connects this king with the judgment of the entire earth (v. 10). Hannah is also pointing to the coming of the eternal messiah who would one day not only rule Israel but the entire world. Her faith here is especially bright, as she wholeheartedly trusts that God is able to raise up Israel's king now and forevermore in the future. She trusts in God's goodness and power for the here and now in the miracle of her son, for the immediate future in the installment of Israel's king, and for the eternal future in the coming of the Christ. How different would our lives be if we truly trusted God for the here and now (the stuff of daily life), for our immediate future (the fate of our nation and our world), and for the eternal future (life with Christ in eternity)? May God grant us the faith of Hannah as she models what it looks like to believe God is in total control of all things.

Q: *Why do you think we often fail to believe God is in total control of our circumstances?*

Q: *Explain how God “raising up the lowly” in Hannah’s life gives us a picture of the way that Christ would come.*

NEXT STEPS

+ Connect the truths from God’s Word to your daily life. Process how what you’ve learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.

Q: *Hannah was patient in asking for the gift of a son, but was also patient once she received the gift. What gifts are you impatient to get? What gifts do you fail to be patient with once you have them? How can you practice patience with the gifts in your life this week? (ex: the gift of a spouse—we can be patient to get a spouse, and then once receiving a spouse, we can grow impatient with him or her.)*

Q: *In what places do you sacrifice the bare minimum to God? What does this reveal about your level of thankfulness? Discuss ways you can display your thankfulness to God for his work in your life as Hannah did by bringing more to the Lord than what was required.*

Q: *On what level do you most struggle to believe God is both good and in control: in your daily life, in your immediate future, or in your eternal future? Why do you think that is? List some passages from God’s Word that will help remind you of his goodness and control in your life.*

Q: *Use Hannah’s prayer as a model. Discuss the small ways God has worked in your life, and how they point to the big ways he is working in the world.*

PRAY

+ Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.

- God, grant me the type of patience I see in Hannah's life. Help me remain patient as I pray for specific things, but also keep me patient with the gifts you've already given me.
- God, give me a heart that considers it a joy, not an obligation, to sacrifice whatever you call me to give to you.
- God, help me trust you in both my current circumstances and my future circumstances. Give me eyes to see that you're totally in control and good to me.
- God, help me see the larger works you're doing in the world through the small ways you work in my life.

COMMENTARY

1 SAMUEL 2:1-10: As Hannah joyfully sings a song of thanksgiving, the writer has more than just her barren situation in mind. The audience of 1 Samuel are those people of God in distress and exile, suffering judgment from the Lord in this particular season of their journey. Thus, Hannah becomes a source of identification for the godly remnant who innocently suffer along with the disobedient and guilty among them. She is both faithful and fruitless in her barren condition. Since the Scripture attributes her bareness to the Lord, she represents one whose suffering comes from God (1:5-6), yet without a visible or explainable cause. This is very similar to the experience faithful followers of God are dealing with during exile. For the writer of 1 Samuel, Hannah represents a significant portion of his readers, and her song gives them hope that God is in control of everything, and that he's still good.

1 SAMUEL 2:10: Many people (like priests and prophets) as well as objects were "anointed" throughout Scripture up until this point. "Anointing" something was an action to set someone or something apart for particular use. However, it was the king who ultimately had the title of the "Lord's anointed" or "the anointed." This is the first time "anointed" comes not in the form of just an ordinary action, but the form of a specific title or person—"his king" or "his anointed" one.

**All commentary resourcing for Lesson 6 was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, The Reformation Study Bible Notes, and the NIV Compact Bible Commentary.*

