

### Samuel Digging Deeper Week I

Samuel was born at a turning point in biblical history where the 12 tribes were becoming a nation that would not be independently ruled by 12 judges but the nation as a whole would be ruled by a king. It was a time of great unfaithfulness for the people of God. So, what was life like in Israel during the time when Samuel comes on the scene? It can be best described in the final verse in

*Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

It is easy for us to judge the people of the Old Testament for their unfaithfulness, but often we are more like them than we like to admit. Is there a time in your life when you did what was right in your own eyes? Is there a time when you were not walking with the Lord or walked away from the Lord for a period of time? We all have times of great faithfulness and times when we are less than faithful. Ask the Lord to show you areas in your life where you are going your own way and pray that you can follow the Lord's way and not your own.

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We don't know a lot about Samuel's father Elkanah, we do learn a bit about him in 1 Samuel 1:3

*Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord.*

This was a time when many of the people of God were not following Him, but rather dabbling in the pagan Gods of the Canaanites. But clearly this was not the case for Elkanah because he took his family on the yearly pilgrimage to Shiloh to make sacrifices. Elkanah was faithful to the Lord. Parents can certainly have an impact on their children in many ways and their faith is one of those ways. What kind of impact did you parents' faith have on your faith?

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What type of influence has your faith had on your children, grandchildren, or nieces or nephews? Are there others in your circle that you feel your faith is impacting? How so?

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Who has influenced your faith journey and how? Ask the Lord to reveal to you how your faith journey is impacting those around you – are there things you need to change in order to have a more positive impact?

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Elkanah loved his wife Hannah and showed her great compassion.

1 Samuel 1:4-5 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb.

Struggling with infertility can be so hard. It can really test a person's faith, test a marriage and cause great anguish. Anyone going through this situation needs the kind of compassion Elkanah showed Hannah. Infertility was especially difficult for a woman in a patriarchal society where producing a male heir was of the utmost importance. It was important for the husband so that he had a son to pass on his inheritance. It was important for a woman so that if something happened to her husband, she would have a son to take care of her.

While producing a male heir may not be as important in our society, not being able to have a child is still extremely difficult. Do you know someone who has struggled with infertility or have you had that struggle? Have you been the one to show compassion to someone who struggled to have a child or did someone show you compassion? Write a prayer for those you know who are struggling with infertility and cry out to the Lord on their behalf.

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Not only was Hannah not able to conceive, but she wasn't the only wife. Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, was able to have children and rubbed it in Hannah's face.

1 Samuel 1:6 *And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.*

Can you imagine how hard that must have been for Hannah? What kind of emotions do you think she experienced? How do you think she handled the situation?

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Have you ever been in a situation where someone purposely provoked you? How did you handle it? Write a prayer for the person who provoked you and ask the Lord to move mightily in their life. Ask the Lord if you have forgiven the person or if you are harboring some resentment or bitterness and, if so, ask the Lord for His help in healing your heart.

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Have you ever been the one to provoke someone else? Ask the Lord to forgive you and if you should seek forgiveness from the person you have wronged.

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Hannah's torment went on year by year.

*1 Samuel 1:7 So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.*

Can you recall a time when you were so upset that you weren't even able to eat? How did you handle the situation? Did you cry out to the Lord?

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As I said in the teaching, church can be one of the hardest places for people to go. It seems counter intuitive for it to be one of the hardest places to go, but for many it is. For the single mom who doesn't feel like she fits in, for the single men and women who don't feel like they have a place since they aren't part of a family or aren't married, for the person who is angry with God, for the person who doesn't feel like God hears them or is answering their prayers, for the person who is steeped in their sin and doesn't see a way out, for the person who is struggling financially and doesn't feel like they can tithe or contribute enough, for the person who is struggling with addiction, for the person who doesn't think they could ever be forgiven or used by God, etc. Unfortunately, we as the church, often give off the vibe that you have to have your act together BEFORE you come to church.

Have you ever found it hard to come to church? When have you struggled to attend regularly and why was that?

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Do you know someone who struggles to come to church? Write a prayer for them and be intentional about inviting them to join you at church. Ask the Lord to give you eyes to see those who find it hard to attend church and reach out to them and show them great kindness and compassion.

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*1 Samuel 1:9-10 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.*

It was not easy for Hannah to be around Penninah as she was so mean to her. I am sure Hannah was sad and reminded that she didn't have any children as Elkanah gave portions to Penninah and her children. Her sadness and grief were multiplied by the way Penninah provoked her. But, Hannah did not take it out on Penninah – she removed herself from the situation. Have you ever had to remove

yourself from a situation in order to keep your mouth shut and not sin? Can you recall a time when you wish you would have removed yourself after the fact?

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Hannah didn't just remove herself to get some space – she removed herself and went to the temple of the Lord. She took her hurt, frustration and anger to the One who could do something about it. She didn't vent to a friend or take it out on those around her – she took her emotions to the Lord. Where do you generally take your hurt, frustration and anger first? Do you take it to the Lord or to your spouse or to a friend? Is there something you need to take to the Lord now, if so, take time to do it.

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Verse 10 says she was deeply distressed and wept bitterly. Hannah didn't wait until she had it all together or had calmed down – she went before the Lord exactly the way she was. Do you go to the Lord just as you are or do you try to get it together first?

What a difference it would make in the church if we were people who really came as we are. Many churches state 'come as you are' but do people really do it? What would happen if we did go to church just as we are? Wouldn't it be a more welcoming place for those who find it hard to come to church? Would it be better if we were more authentic in church? Just a thought.

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God already knows our situation, He already knows what we are going through even before we go through it and He knows how we are going to respond. He knows if you're a hot mess express. He doesn't need you to get it together. He wants you to come to him in the middle of your mess and He will meet you right where you are. What do you need to take to the Lord?

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Who do you know that is suffering and waiting to get it together before they seek the Lord or come to church? How can you share the story of Hannah with them?

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1 Samuel 1:11 *And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts,...*

I talked about in the teaching that Hannah is the first person to call God Lord of hosts. Lord of hosts – the word hosts in Hebrew means armies – angel armies. According to Biblestudytools.com "Lord of hosts points to God as the leader of heaven's armies and points to His power and authority – it paints

a picture of an all-powerful God. This term makes us think of a God who fights on behalf of those who are his own.” (Exodus 14:14, Romans 8:31, Psalm 91:11-12)

How does it make you feel to know that God fights for those who are His own? What trial are you facing now and how do you need the Lord to fight for you?

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When the Lord told me to write the study on Samuel in January 2021 I wasn't sure why He chose for me to write a study on Samuel – I was thinking about writing one on Ephesians. Nonetheless, He was clear it was to be Samuel. Little did I know our world was about to completely change on Feb. 1, 2021 with one phone call from my 25 year old daughter, Emily saying, “I have Leukemia.”

The preparation for Samuel was put on hold but the Lord was clear this was the study I was supposed to write. I did some beginning prep work and I learned that Hannah called God the Lord of hosts and I started digging into exactly what that meant. It is a name I have come to call the Lord as my daughter battles cancer. I pictured the Lord's army all around her battling for her. In fact, the Lord had gone before me because in my prayers for Emily I began calling Him Lord Almighty which is the translation of Lord of hosts in the NIV. He knew exactly what I needed and He knows exactly what you need.

Who do you know that is facing a trial right now and would be encouraged to know that the Lord of hosts is fighting for them? Make a plan to reach out and share this encouraging news with them and maybe even use the Scripture verses above as a way of affirming what the Lord can do. Be specific about your plan – commit to a time and date.

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*Samuel 1:11 O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”*

Hannah calls herself a servant – she cries out to the Lord of hosts and acknowledges that she is His servant. How often do we cry out to the Lord acknowledging that we are His servants? I wonder if we were to approach the Lord in humility the way Hannah did if it would change how we prayed – if it would position our hearts to be more aligned with His, if it would help us remember who we belong to? How do you approach the Lord in prayer? Try Hannah's approach and write a prayer to the Lord.

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*1 Samuel 1:15-16 <sup>15</sup> But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before*

*the Lord. <sup>16</sup> Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation."*

Hannah says, "I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord." When was the last time you poured out your soul before the Lord? Would you be willing to be that transparent and vulnerable? Why/why not?

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There was a shift in Hannah after she poured out her heart to the Lord. She gave everything to God and LEFT IT THERE!! Look at the difference in Hannah.

*1 Samuel 1:18 And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*

Clearly Hannah left her burden with the Lord because she was different afterwards – she was able to eat and her face was no longer sad. What a difference it makes when we LEAVE our burdens with the Lord and don't pick them back up. She had an encounter with the Lord in prayer and she was not the same afterwards. Anyone who has an encounter with the Lord is forever changed. When have you had an encounter with the Lord and how did it change you?

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Is there a burden that you need to share with the Lord? Is there a burden that you gave to the Lord but then you went back and picked it up again? Ask the Lord for forgiveness, share it with Him again and commit to leaving it there. Spend time in prayer until you feel that you can leave it there. This may take some time, it may not be instantaneous, but it will be so worth it. Do you know someone that would benefit from giving their burden to the Lord and leaving it there? Help them do it.

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Imagine the joy for Hannah when she realized she was pregnant and that the Lord had answered her prayer for a son. Then imagine how hard it must have been to turn her beloved son over to the Lord. It is similar to the way the Lord sent Jesus to be born of a virgin and to live a life here on earth.

I was spending time at a friend's cabin this summer and was writing out 1 Samuel – a practice I do before I teach on something. When I got to the part where Hannah gave her son to the Lord for his service I was overcome by the Lord asking me if I would be willing to do the same with my daughter. Would I be willing to give her to the Lord. It was a gut-wrenching question, one that literally made me catch my breath and find it hard to breath. I know the right answer is yes. I know that my children are a gift from God and belong to Him even more than they belong to me. That is head knowledge – what the Lord was asking me was would my heart be able to do it. Knowing the right answer intellectually didn't help me be able to answer it in my heart. It took me a long time to wrestle through it. I had to

come to grips in my heart that I might have to give my daughter back to the Lord due to her Leukemia. I wish I could tell you today that I am totally settled with this that it's not something I struggle with but I still do. However, I can also tell you that there is a different feeling about it – one filled with much more peace and with a greater trust in the Lord than I had before. There is no doubt in my mind why the Lord chose for me to study Samuel – I needed to learn that he is the Lord of angel armies and I needed to learn that our children truly do belong to Him in a deeper way and I needed to experience Him ministering to me in the midst of my mess. I hope the Lord reveals to you throughout this study why He chose for you to study Samuel – it is not by chance – there is a purpose to it and my prayer is that He reveals it to you.

*1 Samuel 1:26-28 And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. <sup>27</sup> For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord."*

Don't you wish you could have been there to see Eli's reaction when Hannah told him, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted my petition that I made to him."? He thought she was drunk and when he realized she wasn't he prayed the Lord would grant her petition and now he sees that the Lord did. I wonder if this was affirming for Eli's faith as much as it was for Hannah's?

What follows next is Hannah's prayer. We are going to spend some time really looking at it and how she honored the Lord through it. Many say that Mary's Magnificat was based on Hannah's prayer. Hannah's prayer is found near the beginning of 1 Samuel 1 and David's prayer is found at the end of 2 Samuel – it is like they are book-ended in prayer.

*1. 1 Samuel 2:1-10 Hannah's Prayer And Hannah prayed and said,  
"My heart exults in the Lord;  
my horn is exalted in the Lord.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.*

There is no doubt that Hannah's heart exults in the Lord. The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines exult as "feel or show triumphant elation or jubilation". I love that description because I am sure that is exactly the way Hannah felt. She was so full of joy she could hardly contain herself. 'My horn' is an expression that means my strength – she was acknowledging that her strength came from the Lord and she was experiencing joy with all of her strength. When have you experienced that kind of joy in the Lord? Have you ever shared it with someone else? Who might you share it with?

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<sup>2</sup> *"There is none holy like the Lord:  
for there is none besides you;  
there is no rock like our God.*

There is none holy like the Lord – amen! This reminds me of a verse in Isaiah 46:9

*remember the former things of old;  
for I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like me,*

1 Samuel 2:3-8

*<sup>3</sup>Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.  
<sup>4</sup>The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble bind on strength.  
<sup>5</sup>Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,  
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
<sup>6</sup>The Lord kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
<sup>7</sup>The Lord makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low and he exalts.  
<sup>8</sup>He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap  
to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,  
and on them he has set the world.*

According to The Expositor's Bible Commentary on 1 Samuel, "After describing God in his majesty and power, Hannah warns all who would vaunt themselves in their pride (including, of course Peninnah). In the light of all that God is and does, arrogance is both foolish and futile." Do you struggle with arrogance? Is pride an issue for you – remember that pride is thinking of yourself too much – whether you think you are better than others or whether you think you could never measure up. Ask the Lord to reveal to you areas of pride in your life.

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According to the Expositor's Bible Commentary on 1 Samuel, Hannah "presents a series of seven formal contrasts in verses 4-7: strong and weak, full and hungry, barren and fertile, dead and alive, sick and well, poor and rich and humble and exulted."

In verse 8 we see all that the Lord can do – He can completely reverse things – He can make the poor rich – there are many examples in Scripture where the Lord reverses fortunes.

*<sup>9</sup>"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,  
for not by might shall a man prevail.*



*<sup>10</sup> The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;  
against them he will thunder in heaven.  
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king  
and exalt the horn of his anointed."*

Through the Bible by J. Vernon McGee says this of verse 10, "This is one of the great verses of Scripture and the first one to use the name Messiah – the word anointed is the Hebrew word for Messiah. It is the title of the Lord Jesus. God is getting ready to set up a Kingdom in Israel. Since Israel has rejected the theocracy, God is going to appoint them a king."

J. Vernon McGee says, "Hannah lived in a day when she wanted a son, and she dedicated that son unto the Lord. On her cry, God built a kingdom." Ladies, my question for us to ponder as we end this week's lesson is, "What could God build on our cry?" "What could God build on your cry?"