

“The Model Mom”

1 Samuel 1-2

Pastor Jarrett Stephens

Well, we are beginning a new series today, and the goal is to take the next 8 weeks and talk about how we can cultivate and strengthen the relationships that are most important in life. This will be a series that covers:

- marriage and raising children...
- we'll talk about what our relationship with the Lord, the church and those that are lost and don't know Jesus should look like...
- included in this series is Father's Day and so we will talk about the role of the Dad...

And we start today of course with moms. I'm calling the message: **The Model Mom**

Now, what I can promise you I am NOT going to do is preach a message that piles on guilt. I think in our social media driven world where we only put our highlights out there for people to see, it's kind of created in moms today a sense of guilt because of the comparison that it can sometimes lead to.

Or for some, your time of raising children is over and you struggle with regrets – what could have been done or what should've been done. And you can come to a church service like this and we preach on the ideal mom...the model mom and you don't feel like you measured up, and you leave with even more of a burden than you had when you came in.

My goal is for this NOT to be the case today. I can assure you the goal of this message today, moms, is that you will be honored and held in high esteem.

Yes, we want to challenge you from God's Word, but we also want to come around you and answer how can we strengthen, fortify and make the most of our relationships with our mom. Now, I realize out of the gate, for some Mother's Day is a tough day because your mom is no longer presently here with you. My dad is 76 years old and from time to time, I'll hear him say, "I sure miss my mom."

Illus. Tender phone calls – “It doesn't matter how old you get, mom and dad will always be mom and dad.”

Moms leave an indelible mark on their children. And the reality is sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. For many with a strained relationship with your mom, I wish I could change that for you.

For those that are missing mom today or that have estranged relationships between mother and child...I can't imagine the pain of what that might feel like. Please just know that you are loved, and our heart is with you today.

Illus. Puzzles – My wife loves putting puzzles together. I think it helps lower her blood pressure – I tend to only help raise her blood pressure – she puts A LOT of puzzles together!

Just last weekend, her sister came in town and they worked on this puzzle. Now, as soon as I saw this, I checked out...too hard...my attention span couldn't take it! But they look at it, lay the pieces out and they keep this cover right in front of them the entire time.

Well, I want this sentence I am about to give you to be like the cover of this puzzle box. Because I imagine being a mom often feels like trying to put together a 1500 piece puzzle. There are a lot of pieces in the puzzle and I'm sure it's overwhelming at times trying to make sure everything fits.

But here is the cover. Keep this sentence in your mind and heart and if you do, I promise you when you look up, the pieces will have fit together, and it will be exactly what it was meant to be.

The model mom has a desire to know God and raises her children to know and love him.

This is it! This is the cover of the puzzle box. A model mom has a desire to know God and raises her children to know and love him.

You do this, mom and that's success! Your success as a mom has very little to do with:

- opportunities you give your kids...
- education they receive...
- privileges you hand down...
- dangers you protect them from...

But it has everything to do with you having a desire to know God and walking that out as you teach them to know and love God as well.

My scriptural example for this is a woman by the name of Hannah. Her name means “grace”...or “favor”. Yet when we first meet her, her name is not lining up with her lot in life. In fact, she thinks God has forgotten her, and let me tell you why.

Hannah is barren. She can't have children. And in the times and culture of the Bible, there was not a whole lot worse lot in life for a woman. To have children meant blessing, and to not have children was the opposite.

It was even permissible to divorce your wife if she could not have children. In Hannah's case, her husband took another wife so that his lineage could continue, and you have to remember in

this time, in the agrarian culture in which they lived, the more children you had, the more help you had.

Here Hannah isn't helping so to speak, and her heart was broken because of this. Let's read the text:

1 Samuel 1:1-7 – “**T**here was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. **2** He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. **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. **4** On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. **5** But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. (I guess you have to try and give it to Elkanah here – he's trying to help in his own way – “I know you can't have children, which what you really want, but how about an extra helping of mac and cheese!” Not helpful at all! And then add on top of this:) **6** And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb.”

The word “provoke” here means to thunder or to roar. One commentator noted it's the only place in the Bible this word is used to describe anything other than an actual storm.

This is straight out of a scene from the movie “Mean Girls”. Peninnah would rub it in – the fact that Hannah couldn't have children and she had multiple sons and daughters. It would upset Hannah so much that she couldn't even eat.

1 Samuel 1:7-8 – “**S**o 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. **8** And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?”

Okay, Elkanah definitely needed a relationship mentor! I mean at first, he thinks second helpings will do the trick and when that doesn't he tries reasoning like this?! “Hannah, you got me!”

Illus. Taking notes - Guys, if you are taking notes, just write this down - if your wife is ever having a hard time...a trying time...just write in the margins of your Bible, “never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never use this line right here! It's NOT going to score you any points!

Now, the scripture notes here (v. 6) that the Lord had closed her womb – it's a nod to the sovereign hand of God. The reality is, we don't know why God opens some wombs and closes others.

As a pastor, I always sense a weight on days like this. It's such a happy day, right? We have parents committing themselves to raise their children in a way that honors the Lord. And as we saw, these babies up here earlier, the service is just so full of life and joy! Grandparents and family members are all here together taking the day in.

Outside the church, we have these incredible places you can take a picture with mom today, and I hope you'll take advantage of them.

However, on these days we have these parent commitments, and we're talking about moms, I always sense this weight because I know there are some here today like Hannah. You desperately want a child and for purposes we may never understand, the cry of your heart has gone unanswered.

There is NOTHING I could say to make things better in this situation. I do want to remind you though that God knows you...sees you...hears you when you cry out. And I want to encourage you to KEEP crying out to God.

The scripture gives a lot of examples of women who were not able to have children and wanted to...and they cried out to God and he finally answered their prayers - women like Sarah and Rachel. Elizabeth in the New Testament.

We learn a lesson from Hannah here and we see that even in her brokenness she doesn't give up on God. No, her desire is to know him and so she leans in, rather than out!

Did you see there in (v. 3-5) that when Elkanah went to Shiloh to sacrifice, which was probably 3x a year. Well, Hannah was right there with him!

Scholars tell us that Shiloh was probably 20-25 miles from where Elkanah and Hannah lived. This would be about a two-day journey in their time. It took quite a commitment to make that journey at least 3x every single year!

They would go to the house of the Lord...bring their sacrifices with them and offer them to the Lord.

Now, we can say with confidence that Hannah had a desire to know God because she continued to do this in spite of her personal circumstances and in spite of the spiritual decay and darkness that surrounded Israel in this time.

Remember this is a time chaos! It is after the Patriarchs and before the kings. People are spiraling downward spiritually and every man doing what is right in their own eyes.

As a matter of fact the book of Judges closes with those very words in **Judges 21:25 – “In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”**

These were such dark and depressing times, look at how the “House of the Lord is being run!

1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-23 – “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.¹³ The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, ¹⁴ and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” ¹⁶

And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” ¹⁷ Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.”

This is who you have running the show at Shiloh. Hophni and Phineas are Eli, the Priest sons...they were responsible for right worship taking place and right sacrifices being offered. And (v. 12) says they were worthless!

How sad is that?! Can you imagine anything worse to say about your church leadership? Someone says, “You go to Champion Forest? I would but hear their leadership team is pretty worthless!”

That would be a horrible statement, but this was the context and setting Hannah was in!

The spiritual leadership is taking advantage of people and stealing from them! They are ripping off those that have traveled to make various sacrifices and offerings to the Lord. Not only that, but the Bible says they are out chasing and sleeping with the women who served at the entrance of the “house of the Lord”?

1 Samuel 2:22-23 – “Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³ And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people.”

You know, it would have been very easy for Hannah...for anyone else for that matter to throw her hands up in disgust and NOT make the trip to Shiloh each year!

She could have rightly used the excuse of hypocrisy and said, “I'm not going to church today...it's not worth it!

They don't care about me...they are taking advantage of my family”, but she didn't say any of those things...she didn't do any of those things.

No, she kept making the pilgrimage to Shiloh “year by year” (1:3)...she kept seeking the Lord. Why?

Because she was a woman of faith and had a deep desire to know God. She was going to the temple of the Lord to meet with him...that's what she focused on...that is what kept her going!

- She doesn't appear to get wrapped up in what the priests were doing or what they were not doing...
- She doesn't let her circumstances and the brokenness that came with her barrenness keep her away...

Instead, she presses on and presses in to know the Lord! What a model for us! Not just as a mother she will become, but someone we all can look up to and emulate!

Mom, how is your desire to know the Lord? Do your children know that your relationship with him is a priority? If you polled and asked your child/children what is MOST important to mom – would they be able without hesitation to say, “No doubt about it, it’s her relationship with Jesus.

This took center stage in Hannah’s life. You see it in her devotion to continue to go to Shiloh each year to worship and offer sacrifices. You especially see it in her prayer life!

I’m telling you, you study 1 Samuel 1-2 in detail and this is a MAJOR take-away. Hannah could pray!

1 Samuel 1:9-11 – “**A**fter 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.¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly.¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, “**O Lord of hosts** (interestingly, this is the first time in scripture this title for the Lord is ever used. It’s used in v. 3 and then again right here – this is a reference to the God of angel armies! He’s the Lord of the host of heaven! And don’t miss the faith Hannah exhibits here...there is a critical link that Hannah establishes here. She is expressing faith in this prayer – she is saying the God of Angel Armies – the Lord Almighty cares about me!), **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.**”

And so, Hannah as she is praying, commits her child – and keep in mind she isn’t pregnant, but she commits him right then and there to the Lord.

Notice her commitment! It’s if you give me a child, Lord – I’ll give him back to you. In other words, this child – she wasn’t even going to get to raise him! This Nazarite vow – what’s being referred to in this passage – is when you would give your child up to serve God as a priest.

This was a position that was reserved for those that were born as a Levite. The tribe of Levi was the priestly tribe!

And yet, here – Hannah is saying, “Lord, I don’t want a son just for me. I want a son for you, and I will “hand him over to you” to serve you all his days.

We symbolically due this with our parent commitment. What Hannah was promising to God wasn't symbolic. She was giving up her rights to raise that child, but instead to let him be fully dedicated to God.

We see in this she desired to know God and raise her child to know and love him as well. This is the cry of her heart.

1 Samuel 1:12-16 – “As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth.¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. (ever been so desperate for God to pray, you're just in your own world petitioning him, praying to him – this is Hannah and the priest, Eli, thinks she's hammered!) **Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman.** ¹⁴ And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.”¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.”

She is doing what Paul said to do, when we have worries and anxieties. Remember his words to the church in Philippi?

Phil. 4:6-7 – “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Moms, if you are worried about your children...anxious about what they are experiencing or going through...nervous about something going on in their life – do what Hannah did here, and take it to the Lord in prayer!

I was writing this sermon and it made me think of the hymn we sing, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*. Remember the lyrics:

**What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and grieves to bear
What a privilege it is to carry
Everything to God in prayer**

**Have we trials and temptations
Is there trouble anywhere
Our precious Savior
He is still our refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer**

**When we're weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care**

**We should never be discouraged
When we take it to the Lord in prayer**

**Oh what peace we often forfeit
Oh what needless pain we bear
We should never be discouraged when we
Take it to the Lord in prayer**

Hannah displays a strong desire to know the Lord and we see this in her dedication to worship and in her devotion to prayer. And notice what happens as she prays. God changes her entire outlook on life.

1 Samuel 1:17-18 – “Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.”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.”

One commentator I read pulled this truth out and I think it's worth mentioning here. You would think that Hannah would pray, get pregnant and THEN be joyful and her countenance change. But that's NOT what happens!

She prays and her circumstances haven't changed, but God has changed her through prayer and the process is: Hannah prays, she becomes joyful – she's no longer sad. THEN she gets pregnant!

Heath Thomas - “The order of events is not empty! Hannah found joy and deep faith as she found her deepest needs met in God. Faith-filled Hannah has found a source of joy and security greater than her hope of sons: God himself!”

She found this in and through prayer. Look at what scripture says next.

1 Samuel 1:19-20 – “They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her.²⁰ And in due time (doesn't say it happened right away! In due time!) Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the Lord.”

Samuel is born...the great prophet of God. He would be the one that would anoint Saul King of Israel. He would be the one that would have to confront Saul and tell him, the Lord has removed his anointing from him. He would go and anoint David.

In Samuel, we have one of the greatest prophets to ever live! And you can trace how God used him, back to a mother who prayed before he was ever born and consecrated him to God.

Illus. SCOTUS – I feel like I need to say this here, with what's been going on in the news this week regarding the Supreme Court and the potential overturning of Roe v Wade.

The Bible says in **Jeremiah 1:5** – “**Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.**”

One of the reasons we are pro-life is because of this verse right here. Human beings are made in the image of God. We believe verses like this and Psalm 139 – that God knits us together in our mother’s womb...that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

I say all this to underscore that we have an obligation as Christians to always fight for life and stand with those who do. And should Roe v Wade be overturned, it’s not a time to gloat but instead, it’s a time to step up like never before!

And we need to come alongside the work of pregnancy centers like CareNet that help those in crisis pregnancy and to lead the way in foster care and adoption.

This is what Christians do. We love, and we show the love of Jesus in action.

On this note, I called Nanda Kirkpatrick, Executive Director of CareNet this week and just asked how we as a church could be even more engaged in the work of the center.

She said they need an RN.....if you could email **LauraMartinez@carenetnw.com**. She's the Champions Center Director. The phone number is: **281.444.8036**.

While I'm in this area, let me stress this – This may be a tough Mother's Day because you have experienced an abortion. And if so, I want you to hear loud and clear from this pulpit what I can promise you, you get with God when you come to him with this, is grace and love and mercy, and I hope and pray you receive the same from this church – you should because there is not a one of us here that is without sin...not a one of us here that hasn't done something in the past what were ashamed of now.

And the good news is that ALL sin is covered by Jesus and NO burden is too big that he can't take away. And if you are struggling in any way with a previous decision you have made in regards to abortion, we have a wonderful ministry called H3 Helpline: it stands for help, hope and healing.

It's totally confidential. You can go to the website: **h3helpline.org**
or call: **866.721.7881** – It's free...it's confidential...it's available 24 hours...and it's for men and women because this is not just something that women are affected by.

Hannah...she keeps her word to the Lord, and after she has weaned Samuel, she takes him to Shiloh to the temple so he can serve God there.

1 Samuel 1:24-28a – “**And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young.** ²⁵ **Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli.** ²⁶ **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.** ²⁷ **For this child I**

prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. ²⁸Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord..."

Psychologists tell us that 90% of the child's personality is formed in the first few years of a child's life. One person said, "he (Samuel) became a great man in the arms of a great woman – his mother".

She poured her heart and soul into his life. And he becomes one of the greatest prophets to ever live. She's not sad when she does this, instead she worships!

1 Samuel 2...you should read the first part - it's a theological masterpiece! Much of Mary's prayer and song of praise in the New Testament – "The Magnificat" is modeled and can be paralleled to Hannah's prayer here.

She praises God as creator and judge of all the earth. She gives glory to the Lord and lifts him high. It's truly amazing. Her baby boy, Samuel had been born and now turned over to God and you read it - she's not bragging on Samuel...she's bragging on God!

She knows God and she wants her baby boy to know and love him. This is why I call Hannah the "Model Mom". It's not because she did everything right and never made mistakes, it's because deep within, she passed on what was most important in life, and that was her faith.

And listen...just like many of you. It doesn't matter how old you get, mom is always going to be mom. She stayed active in his life.

1 Samuel 2:18-21 – "Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. ¹⁹And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." So then they would return to their home. ²¹Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord."

Illus. "Hi, Mom football videos" – video camera on Samuel serving in the house of the Lord.

Moms, you all are incredible. And we love you and honor you today.

If you want a genuine connection with your kids...it starts with a genuine connection with God. Make sure your children know you love him and desire to know him, and you raise them to know and love him above all...and just like this puzzle, it'll fit together and be exactly what it was meant to be.

Let's pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.