

A Mother's Surrender

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FIGHT - For What Matters Most | May 10, 2026 | 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 1 Samuel 2:1; Colossians 4:12; Judges 21:25

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

If you have your Bibles, I want to invite you to grab them and turn to 1 Samuel chapter 1.

We're beginning a new series today that we are calling FIGHT. For the next several weeks, we're going to be looking at subjects that we need to address, that believers should be fighting for, fighting against, and fighting through.

The Christian life is referred to in Scripture as a fight. Paul told Timothy, "I've fought the good fight." And so, over the course of the next several weeks, we're going to look at these subjects that we need to be fighting for - fighting for what matters most in life.

With it being Mother's Day, we begin by talking about what it means to fight for our children. I'm calling the message today "A Mother's Surrender." This is the fight when it comes to parenting: to surrender our children and release our children to the Lord. We couldn't have a better example of how to do this than the example that we find in the person of Hannah.

I want to give you some background and cultural context for what's taking place when Hannah comes on the scene. We're introduced to her in 1 Samuel chapter 1. This is a time when the nation of Israel is in darkness and decay. Spiritually speaking, there's not a lot going on in the sense of people seeking after the Lord.

This is the time at the end of the judges. If you remember the last chapter of the book of Judges, Judges 21:25 says this: "In those days, there was no king in Israel, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

This wasn't just happening in the villages and towns surrounding Israel. This spiritual rot, if you will, had made its way all the way to the tabernacle, to the temple. In fact, Eli, the major priest, had two sons who were priests as well. The Bible says in 1 Samuel chapter 2 that they were worthless men who did not know God. First Samuel 2:17 says that they treated the Lord's offering with contempt.

This was a dark time, spiritually bleak. First Samuel chapter 3 says that the word of the Lord was rare in those days and there was no frequent vision.

It's in this context and setting that Hannah comes on the scene. Her name is interesting because, when we're introduced to her, her name means grace or favor. But when we see her situation, it sure doesn't look very favored.

We're going to outline the passage today like this: We're going to see the problem Hannah is dealing with, and there are multiple problems she's facing. We're going to see the prayer that she prayed, and we can learn a lot

from Hannah's prayer life. We're going to see the promise she makes to God and whether or not she keeps the promise she made to God. Then we're going to see the product of her life in the person of Samuel.

The Problem

Let's look at it together. We'll begin with the problem. This is 1 Samuel chapter 1, starting in verse 1:

"There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite."

All right, that's a mouthful right there. Let's move on to verse 2:

"He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other was Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children."

Problem number one: Hannah is barren. She can't have any kids. In Bible times, this was seen as sort of divine disfavor, if you will. It was permissible in these times that if your wife couldn't have children, you could divorce her. This was to keep the lineage going, right? It's an agrarian culture, and you needed children. The more children, the more help.

This really brings in problem number two for Hannah: Her husband doesn't divorce her. He just takes an additional wife and brings her into the picture.

So you've got big-time social pressure right here. Hannah's feeling like a failure because she can't have children. Her husband takes another wife who is able to have children, and Hannah's problems just continue.

Let's keep reading. Verse 3:

"Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah, his wife, and to all her sons and daughters."

So she had multiple children.

"But to Hannah, he gave a double portion because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb."

Now, if you take notes in your Bible, just underline that phrase, "closed her womb."

Verse 6:

"And her rival, Peninnah, used to provoke her grievously to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb."

Two times here, the Scripture highlights the fact that the Lord had closed Hannah's womb. It's a reminder that God is sovereign and in control. God works in ways that we do not understand.

I want to make a statement here and highlight this because, again, what this writer is suggesting is that God is the active agent behind the closing of Hannah's womb. This was not punishment. This is God scripting a story with Hannah's life that she couldn't understand.

I just want to put an exclamation point on this statement right here: Listen to me. God can be trusted.

Even when you don't understand what's going on, even when there's hurt, even when there's pain, even when there are tears, God is working. He is behind the scenes doing something that we might not even be aware of.

Hannah had no idea of the story that God was scripting with her life. But that story was going to involve heartache and tears and trials and a lot of years of not understanding what God was up to.

The Bible says here that they went year after year to make their sacrifices. As often as they went up to the house, verse 7, Peninnah would provoke Hannah. Again, she would grievously irritate her, the Scripture says.

This is a scene right out of Mean Girls, all right? This is bad, what's going on here.

"And therefore Hannah wept and would not eat."

You ever been there? I mean, so discouraged, so depressed, so down by whatever has gotten you to that place in life that you can't even eat. You've lost your appetite. I've been there.

Verse 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. Problem number one: Hannah's barren.

Problem number two: Her husband takes another wife, who is mean - mean as a rattlesnake.

Problem number three: The woman he takes as his wife, who's mean as a rattlesnake, constantly ridicules, mocks, and taunts Hannah.

Problem number four: From all that we see here, Elkanah, her husband, appears to be a major knucklehead, all right?

I mean, in verse 5, he thinks second helpings at dinner are going to do the trick, all right? He thinks reasoning like verse 8 is going to help: "Why are you sad, Hannah? Look at what you've got."

I mean, this guy's amazing.

Men, I want to get very practical today, okay? If your wife's ever down or discouraged, having a bad day, never, never, never, never, never, never, times a hundred, never do what Elkanah does here, all right? Just keep your mouth shut.

So we see the problem Hannah's dealing with here, and it's no small thing.

Now, look, I have no idea what your problems may be here today. We walk in and we've got all different problems of all different sizes here.

You may be like Hannah. We mentioned earlier that you may be without a child, and you desperately want a child, and you're just not understanding why that hasn't been able to happen yet.

Or maybe you have a problem, an addiction. You talk about something taunting you day after day. You can't kick this addiction or this problem.

Or maybe, as we'll see in a moment, you're like Hannah. She's going to be misunderstood by a spiritual authority, and you're being misunderstood by someone who's important in your life. You're just not understanding.

I don't know what you're up against or what you're facing, but whatever problem you've got going on, whatever it is that's causing you stress or distress, I want to tell you this: We need to do what Hannah did and take our problems to the Lord in prayer.

That's what she does.

The Prayer

We see the problem. Now let's look at the prayer, because what we're going to see in Hannah's prayer life shows us that she is a woman of faith.

First of all, she goes with Elkanah and Peninnah up to Shiloh year after year. That's about a 20- to 25-mile trek. It's probably two days. They're going with all of Elkanah and Peninnah's kids in tow.

Can you imagine how tough that was for Hannah to make that trip? All the kids are there. She's being mocked and ridiculed by Peninnah, and yet she continues to make this trip year after year after year to make her sacrifices and give her offerings to the Lord.

I think it says something about her life that she doesn't quit and throw in the towel when her circumstances are wrong. She doesn't say no to God. She didn't let her personal circumstances and trials keep her from going to the house of the Lord. She didn't let the spiritual decay of the culture around her, or even the riffraff going on in the church, prevent her or steal from her the opportunity to go

and meet with God.

No way. She was going to stay committed to the Lord.

It says something about her. It's a good place to just pause and ask this question: Moms, grandmoms, can your family see in you someone who is wholeheartedly seeking after the Lord? Do they look at you as a woman of faith and say, "I know something about my mom. I know something about my grandmother. She will not allow life's challenges to keep her from meeting with God"?

Do they see a woman whose eyes are steadfastly set on Christ, no matter what the culture is running after?

This is the greatest gift you could give to your children and grandchildren - the gift of having them know, "This woman in my life, this mom, this grandmother, she's walking with God. She's seeking after God."

We see Hannah's heart come through. It's expressed in her prayer.

Now, we're calling this series FIGHT, and this is where it begins. It begins by fighting for your children in prayer.

Listen to Hannah's prayer. First Samuel 1:9-11:

"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, and she was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, '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.'"

This is a beautiful prayer right here. It's worth slowing down and just taking in.

First of all, notice how she addresses the Lord: "O Lord of hosts."

We know in Scripture God taught us about Himself, His character, and His ways through different names in Scripture. This is the first time, in 1 Samuel 1, that the name of God, "Lord of hosts," is used. It's used twice - in verse 3 and then again right here in verse 11.

It means God of angel armies. That's what the name means. It's a term used to describe His sovereignty. It emphasizes His rule and His reign, that God is over every power, over every rule, over every realm, seen and unseen.

Think about Hannah's faith as she makes this clarifying statement when she begins her prayer. She is saying, "This is who I am praying to. He is the all-sovereign One. He is the God of angel armies."

Now, think about how your prayer would change if that was in your mind as you began to address your prayers:

"God, I'm coming before the all-sovereign, ruling One. You rule both what is seen and unseen. You are the God of the innumerable angel armies."

That's a big God.

Incidentally, if you want to pray for your kids, this is a good place to start. You could look at the names of God as they're revealed in Scripture and pray the names of God over your children.

Many of us just got through taking Experiencing God. We met right here on Wednesday nights. In the back of our Experiencing God book, they give a whole list of the names of the triune God in Scripture.

I brought a list for you to see. I had to make it really small to fit it on one slide so you could take a picture of it or go back and look at it. There are names of God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit - just descriptions of Him in Scripture. You've got names, titles, and descriptions.

You could take this list right here and pray it over your kids. I mean, are you kidding me?

"God, You are God, my rock. My children need a rock. Lord, would You be their rock? Would You be what is so constant and true and strong in their lives?

"Lord, would You be their advocate? We know You're sitting at the right hand of the throne of God. Lord, it's one thing for us to pray for our kids, but Jesus, would You pray for my kid?"

And you bring their names before the Lord.

"Jesus, You're the Chief Shepherd. My kids need a shepherd in their lives. I don't know what all they're doing every day of their lives, every minute of their lives, but You do. Would You guide them?"

You just use the names of the Lord to pray over your children.

Hannah's prayer is beautiful. It's specific. That's a good lesson to learn when we're praying. You pray specific prayers, and you get specific answers.

I've been praying for the last month a specific prayer. It's been like number one, two, or three on my prayer list for the past month. This past week, God answered it specifically. It was a glory, hallelujah moment. I mean, it's amazing.

You pray specific prayers, you'll get specific answers, and you'll know God answered that prayer.

Look at what Hannah prayed. She's specific with the Lord. The first part of verse 11 says:

"She vowed a vow and said, 'O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant.'"

Hannah says, "Lord, would You remember me?"

Now, that word "remember" there isn't like recalling something to memory, like a thought we have. This is a recalling with the intention to act.

The Bible says that when Noah was shut up in the ark, God remembered Noah. He knew exactly what He was going to do.

This language is spoken in covenant language in the Bible. In other words, what Hannah is praying is, "God, You know that we, Your people Israel, are in a covenant with You. As we're in a covenant with You, You promised to be our God and we would be Your people."

Essentially, this is what Hannah is saying: "God, I'm one of Your children. Remember me. Don't forget me. I'm in a covenant with You. Act on my behalf."

Then she makes her specific ask: "But will You give to Your servant a son?"

"Remember me, God." Specific ask.

Listen to me: All answered prayer begins with an ask. What did James say? "You have not because you ask not." All answered prayer begins with an ask.

Hannah's prayer here is passionate. She's not going through the motions. She's giving it everything she's got. Verse 10 says she's praying and weeping bitterly. Verse 12 says she continued praying. So this isn't just throwing up the prayer, "Oh Lord, bless them."

No, she's getting after it here, and she's continuing to get after it.

Verse 12 says:

"And Eli, the priest, observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard, and therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman."

I told you, these were spiritually discerning times, and this priest doesn't have a clue.

Look at verse 14:

"And Eli said to her, 'How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.' 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.'"

This is what we call getting ahold of the throne room of God in prayer. This is Jacob-wrestling-with-God type of prayer: "I will not let go unless You bless me."

This is desperate. You ever been there?

All sorts of prayer work. The English translation says she was speaking "in her heart." The Hebrew reads that she was speaking "onto her heart." Again, this is prayer at its deepest level.

All prayer works. Short prayers work. Long prayers work. Medium-sized prayers work. Praying the Bible works. Praying your desires works.

I have a book in my library called The Valley of Vision. It's a book of prayers by some old Puritans who just spoke differently, man. They lived in a different realm than I did, and their language is so deep. I read their prayers from time to time, and it's amazing.

All prayer works. But listen to me: When it comes to fighting for our kids, sometimes the prayer that's going to work is this Hannah-passion, getting-after-God type of prayer.

This is how you fight for them.

Think about what our kids are dealing with and going through in today's culture, what they're up against - the enemy who's out to steal, kill, and destroy. I take that as literal.

Look, we can't be everywhere they are all the time. Just think about some of what they're dealing with: the influences in their lives that sometimes we don't like, and them engaging in things that we don't approve of.

Even as they get older and start to leave the house, isn't it true, moms and dads who have kids who have left the house, that you're always going to be Mom and Dad? While your voice in their lives may be different, you calling on the same God on their behalf never changes.

We can fight for our kids in prayer.

I'm intrigued by this verse in Colossians 4:12. Paul has an associate named Epaphras, and it's just this obscure verse in Colossians where he's thanking his associates. Listen to what he says about Epaphras:

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you."

Then look at what he says:

"Always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature, fully assured in the will of God."

"Struggling on your behalf in his prayers." It's a picture of hand-to-hand combat. That's what prayer is sometimes.

Sometimes it's that warring type of prayer, where you're fighting, where you're struggling, that you're going to have to do on behalf of your kids and your grandkids. This is the kind of prayer that Hannah was praying.

Church history tells the story of a mom by the name of Monica. She had a son named Augustine. That's Augustine, the one who wrote Confessions and The City of God, one of the greatest theologians to ever live. But he wasn't always a theologian. He wasn't always a bishop.

In fact, in his teenage years and his early twenties, he was a hellion. His mom went to the bishop and said, "Would you please confront my son? He's not living the way that I raised him."

The bishop refused. The quote he's said to have given has been made famous in church history. He said, "The son of these tears shall never perish."

So this mom took that to heart, and she said, "I'm going to war in prayer for my son."

Wherever Augustine went, she went. Not as a helicopter mom, but she just wanted to be part of his life, and she was committed to praying for him.

For two decades, she prayed, until one day Augustine got miraculously saved. He was baptized. Nine days after his baptism, his mother died, but she lived to see his conversion.

The prayers of that sweet woman catapulted this young hellion to be one of the foremost theologians in history.

Moms, never stop fighting for your kids in prayer. You never know what God is up to as you seek Him in prayer.

The Promise

We see the problem, and we see the prayer. Now let's look at the promise.

Verse 11:

"And she vowed a vow and said, '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.'"

Here's the promise:

"Then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

This is where we get the Nazirite vow from.

This is where it gets interesting, because what Hannah prays for in a son is amazing. She doesn't pray for a son to keep. She prays for a son to give.

She knows, "God, if You answer this prayer, this son is on loan from You. He's Yours."

Last service, at our parent commitment, 12 or 13 kids were committed to the Lord. This is what we're saying to these moms and dads who are presenting their kids before the church, saying, "We're going to raise these kids in a way that knows Christ and honors Christ."

What are they doing? They're visibly saying - it's a real-life illustration - "God, these kids are not ours. They are Yours, first and foremost. You have given them to us, and we're just giving them back to You."

Isn't this a fight right here, moms and dads, to surrender our children to the Lord? I mean, they're our heart, and yet God calls us to be open-handed with our children. It's a fight to daily release them and surrender them to the Lord.

Look, I'm getting ready to release another one into the world, like many of you who have seniors graduating. We raised them for this purpose, but that doesn't mean it's easy. It's a fight.

"God, we've shaped them. We've sharpened them. We've molded them to the best of our ability. Now we release them into this world."

But again, what is that action? It's coming true on a promise that we made years ago when we said, "God, this child's Yours."

It's a struggle. It's a fight. We can't protect our kids from everything. You've got to let them make their mistakes.

Have you fully surrendered your kids to the Lord?

A.W. Tozer is my favorite author. The most influential book I've ever read outside of the Bible is *The Pursuit of God* by A.W. Tozer. I love authors who make me want to spend time with Jesus. That's how I gauge whether you're a good author or not. If I get through reading you and I want to spend time alone with the Lord, that's a good author. Nobody does that like Tozer.

Tozer had six sons, and he wanted a girl so badly. They went for that seventh child, and God granted him a little girl. They named her Rebecca. He called her little Becky.

That little girl had his heart.

I was talking to some parents earlier who have these little baby girls, and I was like, "They are going to own you, all right? From day one." There's something about those little girls.

Tozer realized early on that it wasn't a healthy love. Spiritually, he couldn't bring himself to fully release her to the Lord like we're talking about today, and it bothered him. He knew he was holding on to her, making her almost an idol.

So he went to his prayer room and just had it out with the Lord. When he came out, he felt like he had fully released his daughter to the Lord.

In his book *The Pursuit of God*, he has a chapter called "The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing." It was that act of spiritually letting go of that little girl that inspired this chapter, "The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing."

Essentially, what he was saying is that until you let go, you can't really worship, because you're holding on to something besides the Lord. In his case, he was holding on to his daughter.

So he released her.

Our children are the Lord's before they're ours.

It's an interesting study. In the Hebrew, the word "asked" there in verse 20 is the same word as the word "lent" in verse 28. It's the exact same word: asked and lent.

That's why I'm calling this message "A Mother's Surrender," because Hannah asking and releasing, for her, were one and the same. Her will was totally aligned with the Lord's. Open hands. It's beautiful.

Hannah knew, "God, what You give me is Yours."

It's like what we say when we give an offering. We're not giving to God. Are you kidding me? We're returning to Him what is rightfully His. He owns everything.

When He gives us our children, it's only right to return to Him what is His.

Look at verse 20 of 1 Samuel 1. God answers her prayer for a son:

"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.'"

So she makes a promise to God. God answers her prayer. Does she keep it?

You read verses 21 through 28. She keeps her word. She nurses that little boy. Don't you know she was praying over him as she would hold him in her arms, so thankful that God had blessed her?

Psychologists tell us that 90 percent of a child's personality is formed in the first few years of a child's life. One commentator I read this week said, "Samuel became a great man in the arms of a great woman, his mother."

I think that's true. I think that little boy was covered in prayer.

Then, at age three or four, she keeps her promise. She fulfills her vow. She goes back to Shiloh and drops the little boy off to serve the Lord.

Can you imagine this? That little boy whom she had rocked to sleep, she gives over in service of the Lord. She literally gives him back to God.

It couldn't have been easy. There had to be a fight internally to surrender, to release. But she did it.

Upon releasing him to the Lord, we don't have time to look at it, but when you read 1 Samuel chapter 2, she prays one of the most amazing prayers in all of Scripture.

It's so amazing that years later, another mom would come along who had to release her son. When she prayed, she prayed almost the exact same prayer as Hannah. She was modeling Hannah's prayer.

Do you know who that mother was? Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Read the Magnificat. It almost mirrors Hannah's prayer here in 1 Samuel chapter 2.

Interesting. Worship follows release.

We said that. If you want to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, with open hands and a clean conscience, you've got to release.

We're talking today in the context of releasing your kids back to the Lord, but it goes for anything in life that you're holding on to besides the Lord. If you want true freedom, you've got to release it.

Hannah did that with Samuel. She'd come back and check on him year after year after year and bring him a gift. Her release didn't end the relationship. It transformed it.

Look at verses 18 and 19 of 1 Samuel 2:

"Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod."

That's just clothing that a priest would wear.

"And 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."

Isn't that awesome? Every year, Mom would come back. She'd have a gift, a little robe for her little boy. She'd say, "Samuel, you're my little boy. You're always going to be my little boy, but you're God's man."

And boy, was he ever.

The Product

The problem, the prayer, the promise. Look at the product. This is Samuel.

Who was he? He turned out to be one of the most influential and consequential leaders in the nation of Israel's history.

He anointed Israel's first king. He ended up rebuking that king and anointing Israel's favorite king, King David.

You trace the entire story of Israel's monarchy from David to Jesus, and it begins with Samuel anointing

David as the king of Israel. Then you trace it further back from there, and it goes back to a mom who was committed to praying for her boy and fully surrendering him.

Author and professor David Mathis said, "If you follow the greatest men of God back to their beginnings, you will often find a mother kneeling to pray."

This is certainly the case with Hannah.

So, moms, happy Mother's Day. Keep fighting for your kids in prayer. You grab hold of the throne room of God, and you don't let go on their behalf.

Keep fighting to release them to the Lord. It's a fight you're probably going to have every single day.

"God, they're Yours, not mine."

As you do that, I think, like Hannah, you'll be surprised to see what God can do with your children. He'll do more than you could ever ask, think, or imagine.

Amen.