

## **A Mother's Surrender**

1 Samuel 1

SERIES "Fight"

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We are beginning a new series today we're calling *Fight*. And for the next several weeks we are going to be addressing some subjects that we as believers must fight *for* and fight *against* and fight *through*.

The Christian life is referred to as a "fight" in scripture. Paul told Timothy to "fight the good fight". We're told we are in a battle, and this series we're going to talk about fighting for what matters most.

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. The fight is to surrender our children to the Lord. and we could NOT have a better example of what this looks like than what we do in the person of Hannah.

Now, let me give you some background on Hannah as we get going here. She's living in a time in the nation of Israel's history when the period of the Judges is coming to an end. If you remember how the book of Judges closes out, it wasn't a very pretty picture. This is literally the last verse in the chapter:

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

This wasn't just the case in the villages and towns that made up Israel, the rot of selfishness and greed and just a lack of spiritual desire for the Lord had made its way all the way to the tabernacle!

- We're told the priest's two sons (1 Sam. 2:12) were "worthless men who did not know the Lord" ...
- That they (1 Sam. 2:17) "treated the offering of the Lord with contempt".
- The scripture also tells us (1 Sam. 3:1) that "the word of the Lord was rare in those days and there was no frequent vision."

This was a time of spiritual darkness and decay. And Hannah, whose name means – get this: "grace" or "favor" ...the Bible tells us that she is from the hill country of Ephraim.

She's a country girl and as we are introduced to her in scripture, we see she has a lot going against her.

In fact, when we first meet Hannah, “grace and favor” is NOT what we think of...we read of her situation and we would think she has been wrongly named!

I’m going to outline our passage today like this. We’re going to look at Hannah’s problem – and there were many! We’re going to look at Hannah’s prayer. We will learn a lot from her prayer life. We’re going to look at the promise Hannah made to the Lord – a vow that she enters into, and we are going to see what her prayer and promise to the Lord produced. Let’s begin with:

## 1. The Problem

**1 Sam. 1:1-2 – “There 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. <sup>2</sup> 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.”**

So, problem number one Hannah is barren. She can’t have children. And in the times of the Bible not being able to have children was seen as divine disfavor.

In those times it was permissible to divorce your wife if you could not have children. So, this makes problem number two: Elkanah doesn’t divorce her, he just takes an additional wife that way the lineage could continue and remember – they are living in an agrarian culture – so the more children, the more help!

Bigtime social pressure here and in not being able to be a mom, Hannah no doubt felt like a failure AND it was made even worse by her husband taking another wife who was able to have children!

Let’s keep reading and we’ll see yet ANOTHER problem!

**1 Sam. 1:3-8 – “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. <sup>4</sup> 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. (underline that) <sup>6</sup> And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. (Now, this is the second time “the Lord closing the womb” has been highlighted! It’s a reminder that God is sovereign and in control. He works in ways we don’t always understand or even agree with. The writer tells us this twice because he wants us to know who the active agent is behind all that is going on. The word for “shut” here is the same word used when the Bible tells us that God “shut the door” to the ark – important to note: this was NOT punishment from God. He was guarding his future plans! God has divine purposes he is working out in our lives and we NEVER know what he is up to. Hannah could have never dreamed the story that God was scripting with her life, but that story – it involved pain and tears and heartache! This word “provoke” here means to “thunder” or “roar”! One commentator notes it’s the only time it’s ever used in the Bible to describe something different than a physical storm. And notice v. 7) <sup>7</sup> So it**

went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. (Can you imagine? This is a scene right out of mean girls! Who does this? My goodness!) Therefore, Hannah wept and would not eat. (Have you ever been there...so broken-hearted, depressed and discouraged you can't even eat! I have!) <sup>8</sup> 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...so problem number one – Hannah is barren.
- Problem number two – Elkanah marries another woman who is NOT a nice person!
- Problem number three – She is continuously and ruthlessly mocked, ridiculed, and taunted.
- Problem number four – Her husband appears to be a MAJOR knucklehead.

He thinks second helpings at dinner (v. 5) and reasoning like (v. 8) is going to do the trick! "Why are you sad, Hannah...you've got this!" He actually thought this would bring some comfort! Poor guy!

**Illus. Taking notes** – Guys, if you are taking notes, just write this down. If your wife is ever having a hard time or a trying time – just a little relationship advice here: NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, x100 NEVER use the line Elkanah uses here! NOT helpful!

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

Look, I have no idea what you may be dealing with today. Many of you may be wrestling with the Lord on something that is deeply personal.

- Like Hannah, it could be that you are waiting on a child. You desperately want to have a baby or another baby...
- Or it could be that there is a problem that is taunting you...there is an addiction that is bringing you down day after day after day...
- Or maybe as we will see in a moment you, like Hannah are being misunderstood and it's causing stress in your life...

I don't know what you are up against or what you are facing, but whatever problem you have in your life, you need to do what Hannah did with it and that is take it to the Lord in prayer.

Let's look at: **The Prayer**

Now, Hannah's prayer life shows us that she was a woman of faith. We're told that Shiloh was probably around 20-25 miles from where Elkanah and Hannah lived. This would probably be a two-day journey to get there, and the scripture says they went "year by year".

Hannah was right there by his side even though it must have killed her to go and all of Elkanah's and Peninnah's children with them.

I think it says something about her that she didn't throw in the towel and quit on God! She doesn't let her personal circumstances and trials keep her from going to the house of the Lord. She doesn't let the spiritual decay of the surrounding culture prevent her from going to meet with God. She doesn't even allow the riffraff that's taking place with the priests and spiritual leadership influence her away from the Lord.

NO WAY! She is set on staying committed to God – this says something about her, and when you look at her prayer as we will in just a minute it shows us what she believes about God.

Mom (Grandmom), I'll just pause here and ask the question:

- Can your family see in you someone that whole-heartedly committed to God?
- Do they see a woman of faith that will NOT allow life's challenges to keep them from worship?
- Do they see a woman whose eyes are steadfastly set on Christ no matter what the culture around them may be running after?

THIS is the greatest gift you could ever give your children. It's the gift of example – your kids and grandkids KNOWING “my mom” – “my grandmother” is a woman seeking after the Lord.

We see her heart come through in the expression of her prayer...and get this: we're calling this series, *FIGHT* – this is where the fight starts! On your knees in prayer!

**1 Sam. 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. <sup>10</sup> She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. <sup>11</sup> 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, and no razor shall touch his head.”**

This prayer right here is amazing. It's worth slowing down and really taking in.

Notice first HOW she addresses the Lord. She refers to him as “O Lord of hosts”. This is the first time this title of God appears anywhere in scripture!

We see it first in (v. 3) and then again here in (v. 11).

The “Lord of hosts” – it means “the God of angel armies”. It emphasizes the rule and reign and sovereignty of God over every power, over every dominion and over every realm – seen and unseen!

What a beautiful thought...as Hannah is praying, her stating this name – she is both clarifying AND stating by faith WHAT she believes about WHO she is praying to – she is clear: THIS God she is addressing is the ALL-Sovereign one. He’s the ruler and commander of the innumerable Angel Armies of heaven!

Come on...how would your prayers change if THIS picture was in your mind when you prayed?

And talk about fighting for our children in prayer. One GREAT place to start moms (and dads for that matter) – and if you are not a mom or a dad yet, the church is full of children of God, you can pray this over one another – get a list of the names of God – we should do a series on this sometime and just let the names of God direct the prayers you pray over your children. For example:

### **Illus. Experiencing God Names of God slide**

Her prayer is beautiful. It’s specific...that’s a good lesson for when we are praying. Be specific with the Lord!

**1 Sam. 1:11a – “And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant (How many of you know God sees!) and remember me and not forget your servant, (God hears...he sees...and here, Hannah is asking him to remember! This word “remember” though it’s not just recalling something, it’s recalling with the intention to act. This word was often used when invoking the language of covenant. Essentially, Hannah is speaking with the Lord and asking him to act on her behalf – “Lord, you are in a covenant with your people that you would be their God, and I am one of your people – remember me”. Act according to the covenant we are in together! This isn’t blind begging...this prayer is coming from someone who knows God! And then here is the specific ask) but will give to your servant a son...”**

Lord, remember me. Act...and act by giving me a son. All answered prayer begins with an “ask”.

Her prayer is passionate...it’s coming from the depths of her heart. This isn’t going through the motions.

(v. 10) – she is praying and “wept bitterly”.

**1 Sam. 1:12-16 – “As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. <sup>13</sup> Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli took her to be a drunken woman. <sup>14</sup> And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” <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.”**

This is called is a get a hold of the throne room of God prayer. (v. 13) in our English Bibles says she was “speaking in her heart”. The Hebrew reads she was “speaking onto her heart” – this is not perfunctory prayer. This is prayer at its deepest level.

Listen to me...all prayer works! I don't want to minimize any of it. Short prayers work, medium size prayers work. Pray the Bible. Pray what you desire. Pray the prayers of the saints of old. I've got a book called, *The Valley of Vision* that has incredible prayers from the Puritans. If you want to fight for your kids pray, and pray all the time!

But listen to me: While all prayer works, sometimes this “Hannah passion” type of prayer is the kind of prayer that you are going to enter into on behalf of your kids. It's how you fight for them!

Our kids are tempted with so much these days...the Enemy is out to steal, kill and destroy their soul. And sometimes:

- They may be engaging in something we don't approve of...
- Sometimes they are going to have influences that we don't like in their life...
- Even as they get older and leave home, mom and dad will always be mom and dad (isn't this true?) – we might not have the same voice in their life as we once did, but we can call on the same God on their behalf...

I've heard it said, “parents are only as happy as their saddest child”. And our kids are going to hurt and go through pain. What can we do? We can fight in prayer.

I've always been intrigued by this relatively obscure verse in Colossians about one of Paul's associates named “Epaphras”.

**Col. 4:12 – “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. “**

“struggling” there is a picture of hand-to-hand combat. The word means to “fight” ...to “struggle”...to “strive”.

Sometimes mom and dad...this is the kind of prayer that will be required of you on behalf of your children.

**Illus. Monica and Augustine** – There is a story from church history that is well known and worth mentioning here. Monica was a fourth-century North African woman whose son, Augustine (that Augustine – a bishop in the early church...wrote *City of God* and *Confessions* – well, he wasn't always a bishop!).

He spent his young adulthood drinking in and chasing secular philosophy, living with a mistress, and drifting further from the faith she had raised him in. She went to a bishop in desperation, with tears and begged him to confront her son. The bishop refused. But his response became one of the most famous lines in church history: “The son of these tears shall never perish.”

Monica kept praying. And for seventeen years she followed Augustine from Carthage to Rome to Milan - never manipulating, never forcing, just praying with tears. And at age thirty-three, Augustine was converted and baptized. He went on to become arguably the most influential theologian in Western Christianity. His mother witnessed his baptism and died nine days later. She had fought for her son for nearly two decades, and she lived just long enough to see the answer to her prayer.

Moms, fight for your kids in prayer.

We see the problem. We see the prayer. Let’s look now at: **The Promise**

**1 Sam. 1:11 - 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, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”**

Now this is where it gets really interesting because Hannah is not praying for a son to keep, but a son to give away...to give back to the Lord.

She KNOWS that if God answers her prayer and gives her a son, he is God’s in the first place on loan from him!

**Illus. Parent Commitment** – These children are on loan from the Lord!

And get this...this is another part of the fight right here. We fight in prayer, but you know what else will be a fight your entire life as a mom and a dad?

To release and surrender your child back to the Lord...and to do it every single day of their lives.

Look, many of us are getting ready to “release” another child in the world as they graduate high school and move on to college. For those of you that have done it, you know what a fight it is! You are releasing them into the world...BUT...this is our calling.

We can’t protect our kids from everything. We’ve got to let them make mistakes. We’ve got to let them when they leave their homework or book at the house get in trouble by their teacher at school. We’ve got to slowly but surely as we are forming them into arrows, understand and realize those arrows are meant to be released into the world.

Have you fully surrendered your kids back to the Lord?

**Illus. A.W. Tozer** – My favorite author is A.W. Tozer. His best-selling book, *The Pursuit of God* is the most influential book I've ever read. He has a chapter in the book called, *The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing*.

In his biography he speaks of his six sons he had...and he really wanted a daughter. He finally had little Rebecca – “Becky” they called her and he was so happy...she was just precious to him.

He was so captured by this little girl he felt in his heart that it was almost unhealthy from a spiritual standpoint. He felt as though it was a possessive love and he could not release her fully to the Lord. He agonized over it and ultimately, he went into his prayer closet one day and surrendered his baby girl to the Lord – she is yours.

And it was this event that inspired him to write the chapter, *The Blessedness of Possessing Nothing*.

Our children are the Lord's before they are ours. It's an awesome word study in the Hebrew. The word “asked” in (v. 20) is the same word in Hebrew as the word “lent” in (v. 28). The same word she used to “ask” is the same word she uses to give back.

It's why I'm calling this message “A Mother's Surrender” – because for Hannah asking and releasing/surrendering were one in the same!

She was asking the Lord for a son but was asking with open hands. She knew God's gift to her was always his – ALL of God's gifts to us are!

It's beautiful. God DOES answer her prayer for a son.

**1 Sam. 1:20** – “**And 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.”**”

And look at what she does! She made a promise to God! Does she keep it? Just read (v. 21-28). She nurses that little boy. And don't you know she was praying over him.

You know, Psychologists tell us that 90% of the child's personality is formed in the first few years of a child's life. One person I read said, “Samuel became a great man in the arms of a great woman – his mother.”

And then at age three she takes him back to the Tabernacle and fulfills her vow. She hands that little boy that she rocked to sleep and held so close, and literally gives him back to God.

Don't you know that was a fight for Hannah? But she did it! She released him to the Lord. And in releasing him to the Lord she offers up one of the most incredible prayers we have in scripture – this is 1 Samuel 2.

Interestingly, years later...another mom who would have to release and surrender her son to God – Mary the mother of Jesus – she must have soaked in this prayer of Hannah because in her

prayer at the birth of Jesus, the Magnificat – much of it is modeled and paralleled straight from this prayer off the lips of Hannah.

Which btw – just note this: worship followed release! We don't worship our kids and bow down to their schedules. We worship the Lord...and worship followed the surrender – it always does! She gave Samuel to the Lord, and then do you know what she did?

She'd come back and check on him year after year...and bring him a gift. Her release...her surrender didn't end the relationship, it transformed it!

**1 Sam. 2:18-19 – “Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup> 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.”**

That little robe – a gift...Samuel, you are loved. You are my little boy. But you are God's man. And was he ever God's man.

We've seen the problem. The prayer. The promise. Let's look at: **The Product**

Who was Samuel? Well, 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 confronted that king and ended up anointing Israel's greatest king – King David. Samuel was an incredible man that God used in a powerful way. He was the last judge of Israel and the first prophet of God. Trace the entire story of Israel's monarchy from David to Jesus – and it runs through Samuel who comes from a mother who fought for her child in prayer and fought to fully surrender him to the Lord.

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

This is for sure true in the case of Hannah.

Happy Mother's Day, moms. Keep fighting for your children. Fight for them in prayer. Fight to surrender them daily to the Lord.

It's worth it...and one day you'll look back and know like Hannah that God has done in your children more than you could have ever asked for or imagined. Will you pray with me?

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