

# LESSON 1

## HANNAH PRAYS FOR A SON

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### The Pilgrimage to Shiloh

The tabernacle, or the Tent of Meeting, was located at Shiloh, the religious center of the nation (see Josh 18:1). Three times a year, all Israelite men were required to attend a religious feast held at the tabernacle: the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Dt 16:16). Elkanah, Hannah's husband, made this pilgrimage regularly to fulfill God's commands. (See Ex 23:14-17 for the regulations concerning the pilgrimage.)

#### Hannah

Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, was mentioned in the books of Samuel. According to the Hebrew Bible, she was the mother of Samuel. The Hebrew word "Hannah" has many meanings and interpretations, including "beauty" and "passion." In her prayer, she asked God for a son, and in return, she vowed to give the son back to God for the service of the priests in Shiloh. She promised he would remain a Nazirite all the days of his life.

#### Nazirites

A person who was a Nazirite was under a "special vow, a vow of separation to the Lord" (Nu 6:2). During the period of this vow, the Nazirite was not to cut his hair, touch a dead body, drink any fermented beverage, or consume any product of the grapevine. (See Nu 6:1-21 for the requirements and procedures of this vow.) Nazirites usually took this vow for a specified time; however, there were those who were Nazirites for life, like Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist.

#### Elkanah

An Ephraimite, Elkanah was the father of Samuel (1 Sam 1:1-28; 2:11, 18-20). Of his two wives, the childless Hannah was his most beloved. At Shiloh, she received through Eli the promise of a son. Elkanah, with Hannah, took the young Samuel to Shiloh when he was weaned and left him with Eli as their offering to God. They were blessed with three other sons and two daughters.

### BIBLE TEXT

1 Samuel 1:1-28

### BIBLE TRUTH

God listens to our earnest prayers and He will answer according to His will.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To learn to bring everything before God in prayer.
2. To be a peacemaker at all times.
3. To learn to keep promises to God and to trust in Him always.

### MEMORY VERSE

"Continue earnestly in prayer."

(Colossians 4:2a)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, our Heavenly Father, for giving us this whole new quarter to learn more about You. We want to know how to live so that You can be proud of us. Please teach us to pray to You about our needs, our joys, and our sorrows, and to tell You "thanks" at all times. We know that You love us and care about what happens to us. Hallelujah! Amen.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Your students are learning to pray for themselves, but they still need to understand what prayer is, how we pray, and why we pray. Prayer is talking to God. When we talk to God, we can tell God how great He is. We can ask Him to forgive us when we do wrong. We can thank Him for all that He does for us and for others. We can talk to Him about the things that make us sad and the things that make us happy. We can ask Him to meet our needs and the needs of family members, friends, neighbors, pastors, and others. We can also praise and thank God for His goodness and confess our sins. A common problem your students may have is concentrating during prayer. How can we help them focus on prayer? One thing we can do is

teach them a sequence to their prayer. Help them learn to stay focused in prayer by providing them with a list of things to pray for. Then, teach them an order or a sequence to place these in. This way, they won't forget all their options when they are done praying over a certain subject, and they won't lose concentration.

Together, you and your students can brainstorm things to pray about. You can draw a diagram on the board with all of the students' suggestions. After doing this, you can make a classroom poster displaying the sequence to pray in. The students can create their own displays to keep at home. Hopefully, these things will help to keep the students focused in prayer.

### VOCABULARY

**sacrifice:** something special you give to God; people used to sacrifice animals to God to show they were sorry for their sins

**embarrass:** to cause someone to feel sad, annoyed, or painful

**distress:** anxiety or mental suffering

### BIBLE STORY

#### Introduction

[Before class begins, prepare small pieces of paper and write the following ideas on each piece of paper:

**Ask** for it; **Cry** for it; **Pout** for it; **Whine** for it; **Beg** for it; **Throw** a temper tantrum for it; and **Pray** for it.

Roll up the pieces of paper and put them in a small box.]

Dear students, have you ever really, really wanted something badly? It might be something from the store, something you want to do, or somewhere you want to go. When you really, really want something, what do you do to get what you want? [Have students take turns drawing a slip of paper from your box for you to read. Whisper what it says in their ear. They are to act out what it says and the other students are to guess what is written on the paper.]

In our Bible story today, we are going to learn about a special lady named Hannah who wanted something very badly from God. She asked for it, cried for it, begged for it, and most importantly, prayed for it. Hannah eventually learned to rely on God through her life experiences. She went to God when she felt sad and helpless. She was a woman with a prayerful heart.

#### Hannah Has No Children

Our story today took place a long time ago. It is about a

woman named Hannah. She was one of two wives married to a man named Elkanah. Hannah was sad all the time because she really wanted to have a child. Even though her husband Elkanah loved her dearly, Hannah was still sad in her spirit. In contrast to Hannah, Elkanah's other wife Peninnah had both sons and daughters. Instead of comforting Hannah for not being able to bear any children, Peninnah did exactly the opposite. Out of her jealousy, she found every opportunity possible to make fun of Hannah.

Each year, Elkanah would travel to the city of Shiloh in order to worship the Lord and offer sacrifices. Eli was the Lord's priest, and his two sons Hophni and Phinehas served with him as well. Whenever Elkanah would offer a sacrifice, he would give some of the meat to Peninnah and some to each of her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he would give even more, because he really loved her, even though the Lord had kept her from having children of her own. Peninnah, however, would try to make Hannah feel miserable. She would tease Hannah about her having no children.

#### Hannah Prays for a Son

Year after year, when they went to the house of the Lord, Peninnah would embarrass Hannah until she would cry and could not eat. But Elkanah would say, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why do you feel so bad? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" Hannah

was grateful for her husband's love. However, that wasn't enough to comfort her sorrow.

One day, she decided to pray to God. Hannah went to the temple alone by herself. Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the doorpost of the temple as Hannah prayed brokenheartedly to the Lord. She cried, wept, and prayed, "Lord, I am Your servant. Please think of me in my misery. If You will give me a son, I promise to dedicate him to You as long as he lives, and his hair will never be cut." [Have students open their Bible, and read **1 Samuel 1:10-17, 20** together to learn more about Hannah's prayer.]

While Hannah prayed silently to the Lord, her lips moved, but her voice could not be heard. Eli the priest thought she was drunk. He approached her and said, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine!"

Hannah said, "Sir, I am not drunk, and I have not had any wine or beer! But I do feel miserable, and I am pouring out my heart to the Lord. Please don't think badly of me. I have been praying in terrible distress and grief."

Eli replied, "You may go in peace! And may the God of Israel answer your prayer!"

Hannah said, "You are very kind to me, your servant." After this, she left, and when she had eaten, she looked much better.

### **Hannah Gives Birth to a Son**

Early the next morning, Elkanah and his family got up and after worshiping the Lord, they returned home to Ramah. Later, when the right time had come, the Lord blessed Hannah with a son. After many years of praying, God finally granted her a precious child, and she named him Samuel. The name means "I asked the Lord for him." It must have been tempting for her to want to keep her son, but she remembered her promise to God. She knew that she had to keep that promise.

Hannah stayed home the next time Elkanah and his family went to offer the sacrifice and the gift that he had promised the Lord. She had said to her husband, "When the boy is old enough for me to stop nursing him, I will give him to the Lord at Shiloh, and he can stay there forever."

### **Hannah Gives Her Son to the Lord**

Later, Hannah kept her promise and brought the boy with her to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. She brought Samuel to Eli and said to him, "I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord has given me what I asked. So, now I am giving him to the Lord. He will serve Him for as long as he lives." And Samuel worshiped the Lord there. Hannah kept her promise to return him to Shiloh to serve the Lord.

While Samuel was in Shiloh learning to worship and serve the Lord, Hannah did not forget about her child. In fact, he was on her mind all the time, and every year as he grew taller and taller, she went back and brought him a

robe that would be just the right size for him to show her love. Because of Hannah's faithfulness, God blessed her with MORE children: three more sons and two daughters.

### **Final Thoughts**

So what have we learned from Hannah's story? [Pause for a minute for students to think and answer. Encourage each student to say at least one thing that he/she learned from the story.] First of all, we are reminded that there is a God who cares. He cares about how we feel and shares our sorrow and pain. Our God knows how we need His comfort and love. This was the starting point of Hannah's prayer, and it can be the start of ours, too. God hears our prayer, and He heals and blesses when the time is right. We just have to be patient. [Ask students if they have prayer requests. Write them down on the board, and pray about them together in the concluding prayer.]

Secondly, we can learn that God loves to give good gifts to His children, but He also likes us to ask for them according to His will. Can you name one thing that is a good gift according to God's will? [Encourage students to answer. For example, having special talents to serve God more is a good gift.] Hannah's prayer was exactly in accordance with God's way. Therefore, her prayer was answered when the time was right.

Let's not forget that the God we believe in is a true and living God. No matter what kinds of difficulties we have in our life, He is here to help, to change, and to make things better. All we need to do is to kneel down and pray. Make our requests known to God, and tell Him how desperately we need His help. We will experience God's amazing grace and God's miraculous providence!

## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. **Why did Hannah feel sad in the beginning of this story?** She had no children.
2. **Where did Hannah's family go every year to offer sacrifices?** The house of the Lord at Shiloh.
3. **One year when Hannah was at the Lord's temple, what did she do?** She prayed to the Lord for a son.
4. **What did she promise to the Lord if He gave her a son?** She would give him to the Lord to serve Him.
5. **When she went home, what did the Lord give her?** A son.
6. **When Samuel grew old enough, where did Hannah bring him?** To the house of the Lord at Shiloh to give him to the Lord.
7. **Why do you think God wants us to pray to Him?** Answers may vary.
8. **Do you ever ask for anything in prayer?** Answers may vary.
9. **What kinds of things should we pray for?** Answers may vary.

## MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"Continue earnestly in prayer." (Colossians 4:2a)**

## SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

### 1. Be a peacemaker at all times.

As we learned from the story today, Hannah suffered a great deal from being made fun of by her husband's other wife, Peninnah. We can guess that Peninnah was very jealous of Hannah because Hannah was greatly loved by their husband Elkanah. When Hannah couldn't bear any children year after year, Peninnah took advantage of Hannah's pain and embarrassed her publicly whenever possible. Hannah was sad and felt miserable. However, she did not fight back against Peninnah's ridicules. She did not say any mean words about Peninnah in front of her husband. On the contrary, she was determined to be a peacemaker, and instead of crying to her husband, she went to God to pour her heart out in prayer.

Let's take some time to think about this with our students. What does God want us to do when conflicts arise at school, at home, or at church? When a troublemaker walks up to us wanting to make us feel sad, what should we do? In Matthew 5:9, our Lord says, "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God." How can we be a true peacemaker to solve conflicts among ourselves and our friends? Here are a few principles to think about:

#### 1. Blaming others only makes conflict worse.

In Hannah's case, she could have easily blamed everything on Peninnah since she was obviously the troublemaker here. However, Hannah didn't want to make things worse or bring more conflict to her family. She chose to stay quiet and didn't even say a word to her husband. [Have students reflect on any conflict(s) they have had in the past and if blaming others ever worked in making the situation better.]

#### 2. Conflict brings opportunities for us to glorify God.

By handling conflict in the right way, we get a chance to glorify God and become a better person. Out of Hannah's sorrow and pain, she knelt down and prayed to God. She glorified God by trusting that He would take away her pain and solve the problem for her. Because of her faith and undoubting trust, God eventually answered her prayer.

#### 3. Forgiveness is powerful.

By forgiving someone, we let go of our hurt and take in God's comfort wholeheartedly. During Hannah's prayer in the temple, she poured out all her sadness to God and let God comfort her heart. She was able to forgive and have a new start after her prayer. [Ask your students how they have solved their conflicts in the past, and how they can now learn from Hannah to forgive and glorify God.]

It is not easy to be a peacemaker all the time, but it's definitely worth our effort every day, as we want to be called "the sons of God!"

## 2. Learn to bring everything before God. Understand what makes an effective prayer.

God wants us to bring everything to Him. It is easy to understand the importance of prayer, but hard to make an effective prayer. The following show the essential ways to have an effective prayer:

### 1. Examine ourselves.

In Psalm 19:14 the psalmist said, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight." Therefore, in our prayers we must examine ourselves to see whether our motives and our hearts are pure and acceptable to Him.

### 2. Confess our sin.

In prayer, we acknowledge our faults. David acknowledged his sin and sought cleansing and special favor. If we have offended God in word or deed, we should pray to Him for forgiveness (1 Jn 1:9). We must beware of a hardness of heart and bear fruit that befits repentance (Mt 3:8), lest we commit the same wrongdoing again. Remember that God is not to be mocked.

### 3. Be humble.

"Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will prepare their heart; You will cause Your ear to hear" (Ps 10:17). Remember that the Lord Jesus commended humility in the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee (Lk 18:10-14). Indeed, He gives grace to the humble, but hides His face from those who exalt themselves.

### 4. Have a pure heart.

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22). We should offer our prayers with pure hearts. Our thoughts should be pure and free from hypocrisy or any evil thoughts. We need to continue this commitment in our daily life.

### 6. Pray according to God's will.

If we ask anything according to His will, He will grant our requests. Jesus Christ has given us a very good example in His prayer at the garden of Gethsemane: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42). Though we make requests to God in our prayers, we should abandon our own will and submit to His will. We must truly believe that whatever we receive from God will always be the best for us in the long run.

## HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. "Continue earnestly in prayer." (Colossians 4:2a)
2. B
3. A
4. A
5. Nazirite
6. Eli
7. False; her son would serve the Lord all of his life.
8. True
9. Story Telling Time
10. Answers may vary.

## ACTIVITIES

### 1 Telephone Game

**Objective:** To remind students that God hears our prayers.

#### Instructions

1. Have the students sit in a circle or around a table.
2. Starting with one student, whisper one of the phrases to the right into his or her ear.
3. Have that student whisper the same phrase to the student to his left, and continue around the circle until the last student has told the phrase.
4. Then, have the last student say out loud what he heard, and see how close it is to the original phrase.

#### Phrases

- God will always hear our prayers.
- It makes Jesus very happy when we pray.
- If we ask anything in Jesus' name, He will do it.
- We can pray anytime: morning, noon, or night.

Remind students that God hears and answers our prayers.

He loves prayers that come from our heart the most!

### 2 Prayer Log

**Objective:** To transfer our worries into prayer requests and make them known to God.

#### Materials

- Colored construction paper or regular white paper
- Pencils

#### Instructions

1. Take a piece of colored or white paper and fold it in half, and then take what you have and fold it in half again.
2. On the cover, have students write "[Student's name]'s Prayer Book".
3. In each of the four rectangle boxes inside, have students brainstorm and write down their prayer requests (one request per box). Remind them that these prayer requests can be for themselves or others who are in need of our prayers. After several days of praying, the students will record how God answered each prayer request. See examples below:

DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	HOW GOD ANSWERED
September 3	My aunt to get better from her cold	God helped my aunt feel better each day.
DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	HOW GOD ANSWERED
September 3	My anger problem	God helped me to be calm when my little sister scribbled on my homework.
DATE	PRAYER REQUEST	HOW GOD ANSWERED
September 3	My dad to come to church	No answer. Have to keep praying!

4. Students will brainstorm and write down their prayer requests in the classroom, and, later on during the week, record how God has answered their prayers. Remind them to bring this "Prayer Log" back the following week to share with the class.

E1 Year 2 Book 1 Lesson 1—Hannah Prays for a Son

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Truth:** God listens to our earnest prayers and will answer according to His will.

- Lesson Objectives:**
1. To learn to bring everything before God in prayer.
  2. To be a peacemaker at all times.
  3. To learn to keep promises to God and to trust in Him in always.

**Bible Reading:** Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a checkmark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

## Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Colossians 4:2a)

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## What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Homework Assignment

*Understanding What You Have Learned*

1. Write down the memory verse for this week.
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## Multiple Choice

2. \_\_\_\_\_ : What was Hannah unhappy and sad about?
- She lost all her jewelry.
  - She could not have any children.
  - Her husband didn't love her.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ : How did Hannah ask for God's help?
- She prayed with all her heart.
  - She threw a big tantrum to ask for a son.
  - She refused to eat anything to show her anger.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ : Hannah named her son "Samuel." What is the meaning of this name?
- I asked the Lord for him.
  - I prayed for courage.
  - God is great.

## Fill In the Blank

5. A Jew who vowed not to cut his hair, not to drink any wine, to keep himself holy, and to serve God with all his heart was called a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The name of the priest who thought Hannah was drunk in her prayer was \_\_\_\_\_.

## True or False

7. In her prayer, Hannah asked God to give her a son, and in return, she would let her son serve the Lord for 10 years of his life. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Eli blessed Hannah after he learned that she was not drunk at all, but praying with all her heart. \_\_\_\_\_

## Story Telling Time

9. Tell the story of how Hannah prayed for a son to a friend, a neighbor, or a family member. Once you finish telling the story, have that person check one of the boxes below and sign his/her name.

I really enjoyed listening to the story!

I only understood part of the story.

I didn't understand the story. Can you please tell it again?

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Story Listener's Signature



**Life Application**

10. (Draw pictures in the boxes below.) If you could ask God for three special talents to help serve Him more, such as a beautiful singing voice, the willingness to help others, being a peacemaker, etc., what would they be? How would you use these talents to do more for God?

Special Talent #1:  _____	Draw a picture to show how you can use this talent for God...
Special Talent #2:  _____	Draw a picture to show how you can use this talent for God...
Special Talent #3:  _____	Draw a picture to show how you can use this talent for God...