

Lesson 35

Hannah and Samuel

1 Samuel 1:1-28

1 Samuel 3:1-20



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

Contents:

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1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

2. Memory verse

Philippians 4 :6-7 (NIV)

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(bold part for younger children or the verse below)

1 Samuel 1:27 NIV

I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him.

3. Theme

God hears our prayers

4. Lesson introduction

How we can rejoice that God hears our prayers and answers them according to His perfect will! Nothing escapes His attention and for that we can be thankful.

Have you ever felt really sad about something or a situation in your life? Perhaps the situation seemed hopeless. Perhaps it seemed that there was no way that your pain or suffering could be removed? Hopefully, you have not had to face such a trial yet; but at some time, you may. The big questions are, "Who will you turn to when it happens and what will you do?"

Hannah was in such a situation. In her time of sorrow and hopelessness, she prayed; and God faithfully met her needs. God was faithful to Hannah. How will Hannah respond? Will she keep her promises? God is pleased when we do keep our promises. And God can use each one of us for His purposes if we will let Him. God has a special purpose for our lives.

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

1 Samuel 1:1-7

Elkanah was from the mountains of Ephraim and had two wives, one was named Hannah and the other named Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. In those days, having children, especially sons to pass on the family name was thought to be extremely important. To be childless was looked on as a curse. Women, who were barren in that day suffered from embarrassment and the rejection of those around them.

Perhaps, though Elkanah loved Hannah, he took Peninnah as his wife so she could bear children and carry on the family name. This action would have added to the great sadness and disgrace Hannah felt. Every year Elkanah and his family would travel 20 miles northeast of Jerusalem to Shiloh, the place of the house of the Lord, to worship and sacrifice to God. And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Hannah, Peninnah, and Peninnah's sons and daughters. The portion Hannah received was always double, because he loved her even though she had no children. Though Elkanah displayed his kindness in giving Hannah a double portion, Peninnah would mock her and provoke her because she had no children. This hurt Hannah very much, so much so that she wept and would not eat.

As Christians, we represent Jesus. We should never be guilty of mocking or putting a person down because he or she lacks a blessing we have been given. Instead, let us go out our way to comfort and encourage others. God's love will not harm another but seek to protect.

1 Samuel 1:8-11

Hannah was overwhelmed by her situation. She was so saddened because she could not have children that she had difficulty counting the other blessings God had given her. She continually wept and did not eat anything.

She arose and went into the tabernacle of the Lord and cried out to Him there. She poured out her soul to the Lord in prayer and asked God to give her a son. She made a promise to the Lord: If God would grant her request, she would dedicate the child to God, for God's service.

Hannah did what we should all do when we come up against a tough situation; she prayed and poured her heart out to God. God wants us to come to Him in every situation of our lives; perhaps someone is treating you unkindly at school; perhaps you are concerned with family problems or with those who do not know Jesus. God knows your concerns before you even ask. Whatever your burden, take it to the Lord in prayer. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you." The Lord hears our prayers to Him and answers them according to His perfect will. God hears our prayers.

1 Samuel 1:12-18

Eli the priest of the tabernacle was there and was watching Hannah pray silently before the Lord. But Eli did not know she was praying. He saw her lips moving but she was not making any noise, so he thought she may have been drunk and began to accuse her. Hannah quickly explained that she was not drunk but sad and that she was pouring her heart out to God. Eli knew that God heard her prayers and would do what was best for her, so he sent her away in peace. Hannah went her way and ate some food and her face was no longer sad. Hannah had left her request in God's hands!

The Bible says: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). And in 1 John 5:15, we read, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Hannah did not feel a need to worry or be saddened any longer, for her request was in God's hands; He would do what was best for her, even if that meant not having a son. When we come to the Lord in prayer, we leave our burdens in His hands. We can rest in God's peace knowing that He will do what is best for us even if it means saying no or not right now. God made us and knows our needs better than anyone else could; He will take care of us. We can rest in that confidence. God hears our prayers.

Suggested Activity: Prayer List for the Classroom

1 Samuel 1:20

God heard Hannah's prayer and Hannah conceived a son. In response to God's faithfulness, she named him Samuel, which means "heard of God," for she had asked God for a son and He "heard" her prayer.

God does not always answer our prayers the way we would like them to be answered. Sometimes, the answer is "no." Yet as we pray for His will to be done, just as Jesus taught us (Matthew 6:10), we can take comfort in knowing that God's perfect purpose will be accomplished in our life just as it was in Hannah's life. God works all things together for good in the life of a believer (Romans 8:28).

1 Samuel 1:21-23

It was a commandment for the people of Israel to bring a sacrifice to the house of the Lord (tabernacle) every year (Deuteronomy 12:11). Elkanah was faithful to perform this duty; in 1 Samuel 1:19, we read that Elkanah and his household rose early and worshipped before the Lord. Our commitment to fellowship with God should be a daily commitment—a way of life—as it was with Elkanah. May we begin our day, every day, with the Lord!

Elkanah went to Shiloh to offer the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow to the Lord (verse 3); but this time, Hannah would stay home to take care of baby Samuel who was not yet weaned. Hannah would take care of Samuel only until the time was right for Samuel to be given to the Lord for service. Samuel remained with his mother until he was about three years old.

As we observe Elkanah and Hannah, we note they did not live just for the here and now; they lived for eternity. They were heavenly minded. They knew that God was actively involved in their life, working out His purposes in them. Let us be "heavenly" minded as were Elkanah and Hannah.

1 Samuel 1:24-25

When the time was right, Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, presenting him to Eli to serve God in the tabernacle. Hannah expressed her faith in her faithful God. To follow through with her promise, she surrendered to the service of the Lord that which she had yearned for most—her son. Just as Hannah was faithful in her commitment to God, God is pleased when we keep our promises.

Hannah's heart is revealed in obedience to God. Her faith was living and active, and God blessed her for it. The believer, who is abiding in Christ through worship, meditation on His Word, prayer and service to Him, will have their prayers answered (John 15:7). God blesses those who live in obedience, giving them a joyful experience in our relationship with Him.

1 Samuel 1:26-28

Hannah reminds Eli that she was the woman who prayed for a child a few years ago and now stands before him with God's blessing. Here was a living testimony of God's faithfulness to prayer. Hannah had witnessed God's mercy and grace upon her life; with joy, she would follow through with her commitment to give back what God had given her. God is pleased when we keep our promises. As Christians, we must realize that God has given us a new life through His mercy and grace. In response to this, it is our reasonable service to give ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice unto Him (Romans 12:1). Like Hannah, we must realize that we belong to God—we are His possession; everything we have received is from Him. He wants us to offer ourselves completely, laying aside our own desires to follow Him.

Hannah would not forget her son. She would visit him regularly and each year she brought him a linen robe just like Eli's (2:19). In later years, Samuel lived in Ramah (7:17) to be in the hometown of his parents (1:19-20). Also, God greatly blessed Hannah in giving her five more children (2:21). God is awesome.

Hannah would experience the joy of watching her son serve the Lord as a great prophet of God. Even at an early age, Samuel worshipped God in the temple revealing a heart that loved the Lord. And because of his devotion, the Lord would use him in a mighty way, leading His people by revealing God's Word and His ways.

1 Samuel 3:1

In verse 1 we are told, "The boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli." Samuel is described as a boy. You may think that you are too young to be used by God in His work. Not true! God's calling is not dependent upon someone's age, but upon their willingness to minister (to serve) Him. God has a special purpose for our lives.

We also see that the Word of the Lord had become rare in Israel, and "prophecy was not widespread." While it is true that God had promised His people that He would send prophets to make known His will at all times, the unbelief and disobedience of the people meant that God withdrew from His people in communicating to them. They refused to obey His Word and worshipped idols, so God stopped speaking to them. May our hearts never become so hard that we do not listen to God's Word! What a sad condition for a nation to be living under when they could be so blessed. God so desires to love and bless His people; but He will not allow them to serve other Gods (idols).

1 Samuel 3:2-9

Here we have Samuel and Eli in bed for the night and God begins to speak. To whom does God speak? He does not speak to Eli, but to the boy, Samuel! Imagine God calling us by our names. Would that frighten you? God loves us very much. He knows all of us by name. When we listen for God, we will hear Him, for He always speaking to us! He may not speak to us in a voice that we hear with our ears, but He will speak through the Bible and His Holy Spirit. Let us pull aside from distractions and have daily quiet time with the Lord that we, too, may hear his voice.

Samuel heard his name being called. At first, Samuel thought that it was Eli who called him, so he went to Eli. Eli told him to go back to bed because he had not called him. This was repeated two more times. When Samuel came to Eli the third time, Eli realized that it was the Lord calling Samuel. If the call was repeated, he instructed, Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." Samuel would refer to himself as God's servant, ready to respond to God's bidding.

As Samuel did, may we listen for God to speak and be quick to reply, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." And, since obedience is a very important part of listening, may we then follow through with true servant hood demonstrated by our actions.

Suggested Activity: Fingerprint Match Game

1 Samuel 3:10-18

When Samuel lay down again, we are told, "The Lord came and stood and called as at other times." God stood before Samuel, so he knew it was not just a dream. Samuel was obedient to Eli's instructions in answering the Lord.

God announced to Samuel that he would carry out His judgment against the house of Eli. He did not discipline his sons for their sins. Because Eli took no action, the sins of his sons became his own sins. In verse 14, God says He would not revoke the sentence for He backed it with an oath; "I have sworn to the house of Eli;" and God will not go back from what He has sworn to do.

Now it seems that Samuel slept until the morning; and when he saw Eli, he was afraid to tell him of the message he received from God. He knew that it was a message of judgment and did not know how Eli might react. Samuel was finally called by Eli and asked about the divine revelation he had received. Samuel told him everything, without holding back anything. Eli bowed in resignation to God's will.

What Samuel told Eli only confirmed what God had already made known to him through a prophet. Eli's reply demonstrates his devotion to God, despite his weakness and indulgences towards his wicked sons. And, though Samuel loved Eli, Samuel had the courage and power to proclaim the Word of the Lord without fear. Obedience is important in serving the Lord.

1 Samuel 3:19-20

So now we see Samuel "grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground." In other words, God left no word unfulfilled that He spoke through Samuel. God honored Samuel and continued to reveal Himself to Samuel. Samuel had been faithful in delivering the first message that God had given him even though it was difficult. He was a true servant—available, listening, and obedient to God and God established him as a "prophet of the LORD."

God desires to use each and every one of us for His purposes. He calls us by name as He did Samuel. As He calls you, what will your response be? May we be quick to listen and quick to obey. God has great things in store. God has a special purpose for our lives.

Suggested activity: Uniqueness in God's Creation

6. Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for all His answered prayers in their lives and that the Lord has a special plan for their lives. Encourage the children to "pray without ceasing" and for help to keep all their promises. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

7. Attention Grabbers

What you will need:

- 1) "From Your Mouth to God's Ear" template, card stock or construction paper, a 36" piece of string, glue and a paperclip.
- 2) Prepare before class several small slips of paper with questions on them (see questions listed in activity below) and additional slips of paper with answers, keep them in two separate jars.

Carrying out the attention grabber:

1) From Your Mouth to God's Ear:

Glue the "God's ear" to a piece of stiff paper ("God's ear" template provided with curriculum), punch the hole and thread a 36" piece of string through the hole. Tie a paper clip on the end in front and knot the end that is in back.

Ask for some prayer requests from the kids (write them down for them if they cannot write yet). Holding up the ear with the string extended long in the front, have them stick the requests (maybe a few at a time) on the paper clip.

2) Questions and Answers:

There are few things more discouraging to a child's faith in God than to think that everyone else gets everything they pray for when they don't. To show that God's answer is always wise and fits our needs, play this silly "Q and A" game. Write various questions (make more than this) and then write the answers on separate slips of paper such as:

Questions:

- 1). What animal says "moo?"
- 2). What color is the grass?
- 3). What fruit is red?
- 4). What color are bananas?
- 5). How many ears do you have?
- 6). How many cats are in your Sunday school room?
- 7). Do you have an alligator in your home?
- 8). What is the answer to $2 + 1$?

- Answers: 1). Cow
2). Green
3). Apple or Pomegranate 4). Yellow
5). Two
6). None
7). No
8). Three

Put all questions and answers on separate pieces of paper; put questions in one jar and answers in another jar. Let one child pick and read a question and another child pick an answer. The answers in this game will not always fit the questions; in contrast, God's answers always fit exactly. In today's lesson, we will see how God answered the prayer of a godly woman by the name of Hannah.

3) Mirror Image:

Tell the class that today some of them are going to be mirrors. What this means is that they will do exactly the same thing as their partner. If they make any mistake, their turn is over. Have the children form pairs. Let each pair stand face-to-face about 3 or 4 feet apart. Let one lead for a few minutes, then switch. They must try to be "mirror images" and copy each other exactly. Have the child who is not the mirror do some different activities such as pretending to eat a hamburger, washing their face or combing their hair. Make up some fun and difficult ones.

After everyone has had a turn, gather the children together and ask them if it was hard to be the mirror. Let them comment on what it was like playing the game. Then explain that it is hard to be someone that you are not. God has made us exactly the way He wants us. He has a plan for our life just like Samuel. We should not try to be someone else but ask the Lord to show us who He wants us to be. God has a special purpose for our lives.

8. Activities:

What you will need:

- 1) A prayer list chart. You can use the one provided with the curriculum or create your own list using butcher paper.
- 2) Before class make two copies each of the fingerprints from one of your hands (two copies of a thumb print, two copies of an index finger print, etc.), paper, washable markers and/or ink stamp pads.
- 3) Several different types of leaves, a basket, paper and crayons

How to carry out the activities:

1) Prayer List for the Classroom

Use the chart provided with the curriculum or make your own prayer list for your class to pray for and watch for the Lord's answers. As an option you could get a large sheet of butcher paper and ask the children each week how the Lord has answered their prayers.

Remind the children that God always hears and He always answers but not always in our timing (which is usually “right now!”) and not always with the answer we desire.

Pray together as a class for the different needs indicated on the prayer list and watch what the Lord does.

2)Fingerprint Match Game

Before class, make two fingerprints of each finger from one hand onto a sheet of paper. You will have two thumbprints alike, two index finger prints, etc. Leave enough space in between so that you can enlarge them for the game. Enlarge the prints on a copy machine and make into 10 squares of equal size. Lay out the ten squares in the middle of the floor (fingerprint side down). Have everyone sit in a circle and take turns picking up just two cards. If a child makes a match, they can keep the cards.

After playing a couple of rounds of match game, allow the children to do their own fingerprints (using washable ink pads or markers) onto their activity sheets. Next, have the children compare fingerprints with the other children. Are any two alike? Fingerprints are so different that we use them to identify who we are. No two are alike. It is the same with us. God has created no two of us exactly the same. He wants to use us for His purposes and plans. God has a special purpose for our lives.

3)Uniqueness in God’s Creation

Gather leaves (a variety) and give children white paper and peeled crayons so they can color with the sides. Place leaves in a pretty basket in center of table. If you have a larger class you may need two or three baskets for the leaves and make smaller groups of five or six children.

Have the children pick out some leaves and place them under the white paper. Next, have them trace over the leaves using the side of the crayons. An image of the leaf will appear onto the paper.

Explain that God could have made all leaves the same, why did He not? He could have made us all alike too, but He did not! God has created each one of us uniquely with special abilities and gifts. God has a special purpose for our lives.

9. Bible text (NIV):

1 Samuel 1:1-28

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite[a] from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2 He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

3 Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the Lord. 4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb. 6 Because the Lord had closed Hannah’s womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. 7 This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. 8 Her husband Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Lord's house. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the Lord, weeping bitterly. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

12 As she kept on praying to the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine."

15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the Lord. 16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the Lord and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. 20 So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, [b] saying, "Because I asked the Lord for him."

Hannah Dedicates Samuel

21 When her husband Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfill his vow, 22 Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always." [c]

23 "Do what seems best to you," her husband Elkanah told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the Lord make good his[d] word." So, the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24 After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, [e] an ephah[f] of flour and a skin of wine and brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. 25 When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, 26 and she said to him, "Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the Lord. 27 I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. 28 So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there.

1 Samuel 3:1-20

The Lord Calls Samuel

3 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8 A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

11 And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. 12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, [a] and he failed to restrain them. 14 Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

15 Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16 but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

Samuel answered, "Here I am."

17 "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes."

19 The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. 21 The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.



**GOD HEARS OUR
PRAYERS**