CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 14 2023

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 55 and 58.

prayer power



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"Hannah's prayer was granted; she received the gift for which she had so earnestly entreated. As she looked upon the child, she called him Samuel—'asked of God.' As soon as the little one was old enough to be separated from his mother, she fulfilled her vow. She loved her child with all the devotion of a mother's heart . . . but she had received him as a treasure consecrated to God, and she would not withhold from the Giver His own" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 570).

key text

"So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the LORD for him.' "

(1 Samuel 1:20, NIV)

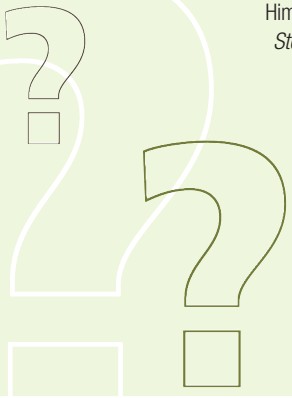
what do you think?

(T) True or (F) False:

____ You have been mocked for not having certain things that others have.
____ God answers your prayers every single time, although sometimes not in the way you expect.
____ God has spoken to you before. Even if it hasn't been a literal voice, you have heard His words in your heart.
____ You have prayed to the Lord that He would grant you something, and He has given you what you asked for.

did you know?

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 93.



INTO THE STORY

"There was a certain man from Ramathaim. . . . He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

"Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh. . . . 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. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. . . .

"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. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. 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.'

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

" '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. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.'

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

"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.

"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. So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I asked the LORD for him.' "

(1 Samuel 1:1-5, 9-20, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Why did Hannah want a child so badly?

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_____
_____
_____

What similarities exist between the covenant that Hannah makes with God concerning Samuel and the covenant Samson had with God (see last week's lesson)?

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Why did Eli think that Hannah was drunk when he found her in the temple?

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If a priest or pastor today were to find someone much like Hannah in their church or temple, do you think they would have treated her the same way Eli did? Why or why not?

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In what way does this story demonstrate the grace of Jesus Christ and the power of prayer?

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Read through the story again and write down some of the most important points and the parts that you think mean the most to you.

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punch lines

"Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelek, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again" **(Genesis 20:17, NIV).**

"LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you" **(2 Samuel 7:27, NIV).**

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full" **(Matthew 6:5, NIV).**

"But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God" **(Nehemiah 9:31, NIV).**

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" **(Philippians 4:6, NIV).**

further insight

"Our prayers are not to be a selfish asking, merely for our own benefit. We are to ask that we may give."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 142.

"We are to look upon every duty, however humble, as sacred because it is a part of God's service. Our daily prayer should be, 'Lord, help me to do my best. Teach me how to do better work. Give me energy and cheerfulness. Help me to bring into my service the loving ministry of the Saviour.' "—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 474.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Matthew 6:5.

In the *What Do You Think?* section, you were asked true or false questions about yourself. Most of them were about prayer. Do you think that prayer has the same effect on everybody? Do you think God answers everyone's prayers differently? God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her a child, but she also made a sacrifice by giving him back to God and letting him live in the tabernacle. Do you think you could give God something you cherished so much? Explain.

Try to see prayer in this perspective: if you had a friend who never gives of themselves to you, but expects you to give them your time, attention, and even things, how would that make you feel? It's the same with God. We can ask Him for things, but we must also thank Him and give of ourselves to Him in return.

Sunday

Read Philippians 4:6.

In *Into the Story* we see why Hannah experienced intense grief. She had birthed no children of her own, yet her husband's other wife, Peninnah, had birthed lots of children. This wounded Hannah and filled her with sorrow. In the *Out of the Story* section you were asked why Hannah wanted a child. It wasn't just because Peninnah had children, although that was part of it. She wanted something to love, and although she had the Lord and her husband, she ached for a child, and God granted her one.

Go to a concordance, look up the words "pray" and "prayer," and find other verses about prayers that were answered.

What can we learn from these stories of answered prayer?

Monday

Read 1 Samuel 1:20.

Refer to this week's *Key Text.* Hannah named her baby Samuel because it meant that he was something she had asked God for. Think about your life. What is something you asked God for and received? Is it something to which you could give a special name? Naming her son Samuel was one way Hannah showed God how thankful she was for His grace. She also praised God by dedicating him to work for God all his life. Have you dedicated yourself to work for God? If so, how?

Tuesday

Read Nehemiah 9:31.

The *Flashlight* quote leads us to think about how difficult it must have been for Hannah to give up her son. He was a cherished gift from God, and Ellen White says that "she loved her child with all the devotion of a mother's heart." Imagine giving up someone you love because of your greater love for God. Samuel was a treasure to Hannah, yet she would not "withhold from the Giver His own."

What do you think you would have done in Hannah's position? How willing are you to make even small sacrifices because of your love for God?

Wednesday

In the *Punch Lines* are four verses about prayer and one about mercy. In what way can you connect them together?

Thursday

Read Matthew 6:6 and Mark 11:24.

What are some different ways that we can pray to God? Are there right and wrong ways of asking God for something? What should be our attitude if our prayer is answered to our liking? What should be our attitude if our prayer is not answered to our liking?

When God doesn't answer our prayer the way in which we want, He often sends blessings to "cushion" us through the disappointment. Think back to times when your prayer was not answered the way you hoped for. Can you think of other events that happened around that time that might have been God's "cushions"?

Friday

Read Ephesians 6:18.

If you fervently prayed to God for something for a long time, and He finally granted it to you but asked that you dedicate it to Him in return, how would you react? What would your heart want—to honor God or to cherish and use His gift the way you wanted to? In what areas in your life might this scenario apply? A friendship? A talent? What might it look like to dedicate something back to God?

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 55 and 58.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.