

Hannah and Samuel

Unit 1: Promises Made, Promises Broken

LAST WEEK

God leads the people of Israel out of Egypt and gives them instructions on how to live God's way. But the people disobey right away by worshipping a statue of a calf (Exodus 32:1-14).

THIS WEEK

A woman named Hannah did not have children, but God promised to give her a son. That son, Samuel grows up to become a great leader (1 Samuel 1:9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10).

The Point

God hears the prayers of everyone.

Bible Nuts & Bolts

Ancient History

Today's story comes from the historical writings, found between the Torah and Wisdom literature, namely, the books from Joshua through Esther. While we may think of history as being only about the provable facts (names, places, events), the accounts shared here are focused on answering the important questions of who is God and what is God's relationship with the people of Israel, questions answered through the stories of people, places, and events. These books show God's love and faithfulness, despite how often the people reject God. These stories can give us hope that God loves us no matter what we do. That is the real purpose of history.

Story Summary

Hannah is loved by her husband but cannot have children, which brings her great sadness. She weeps and pours her heart out to God. She promises that if God gives her a son she would dedicate him to God's service. God heard Hannah's prayer and answered her request for a son, and she named him Samuel. After God answered her prayer, Hannah sings a song of praise. She praises God for the ways God remembers those who have nothing and for the ways God honors and lifts up people who are poor and forgotten.

Practice: Worship

Hannah worshipped God with a heartfelt song of praise when her prayers for a son were answered. Songs and poems can help us, individually and collectively, express the appreciation God is due. The Book of Psalms contains many songs of praise and thanksgiving. This week, try reading psalms of praise as a family before a meal. Some possibilities are Psalms 8, 23, 145, and 150.

NEXT WEEK

Samuel becomes a great leader and anoints David as king. David does many great things. When he wants to build a temple, God says "no," but promises that David's house would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:1-17).

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Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✞ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✞ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✞ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✞ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: *This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday –

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-11, 19-20; 2:1-10

God answered Hannah's prayers for a son.

- When is a time when you have felt like Hannah—alone or abandoned?
- When is a time when God answered a prayer request for you? What happened?

Monday – Read 1 Samuel 3:1-18

God gives an important message to Samuel.

- When have you heard God speak?
- How do you think Samuel felt about having to tell Eli about God's plan to punish him?

Tuesday – Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Samuel warns Israel about the realities of being ruled by a king.

- Why do you think Israel wanted a king? When did you want something that badly?
- When is a time when you tried to warn someone but they did not listen?

Wednesday –

Read 1 Samuel 9:27; 10:1-9

Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of Israel.

- How do you think Saul felt after hearing all of those instructions from Samuel?
- Have you ever received a sign from God or a reminder of God's presence? When?

Thursday – Read 1 Samuel 13:2-14

Threatened by the Philistine army, Saul goes against the Lord's commands.

- Can you relate to Saul's impatience?
- Why do you think Saul acted against Samuel's instructions?

Friday – Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel.

- What qualities and characteristics do you think makes someone a good leader?
- How does a shepherd boy match or conflict with your idea of a king?

Saturday –

Read 1 Samuel 24:4-12, 16-20

David honors God by showing Saul mercy.

- How is David's behavior like what you expect from leaders in our world today?
- What would it look like to show mercy to people who hate you?

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