

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 10, 2010

Passage: 1 Samuel 1:1-28

Memory Passage: 1 Samuel 1:27-28

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 1:1-3.** In three verses, the setting is presented to us for the beginning of Samuel's life. What people are mentioned in this passage (excluding the genealogy at the beginning)? What can we learn about these people from just a few sentences?

(b) In the Hebrew bible, 1 Samuel comes right after Judges. How does Judges end (Judges 21:25)? How does this help us to understand the setting that Samuel is born into? How is his dad, Elkanah, unique? Why is consistency in worshipping God so important? How could you be more consistent in worshipping the Lord?

(c) Whose story from Genesis does this story remind you of (Genesis 15:1-6; 16:1-4)? What are we to think about these polygamous marriages? What function does it seem that both of them served (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)? How does Genesis 2:24, Deuteronomy 17:17, and 1 Timothy 3:2, 12 address polygamous marriages? What is ideal?

(d) *Family:* Read Judges 21:25 and 1 Samuel 1:1-3. What was it like in Israel during this time period? Who are the people that we are introduced to in these verses and what are they like? What does the fact that Elkanah faithfully worships the Lord say about him? Why is consistency in worshipping God so important? How could you be more consistent in worshipping the Lord? Pray for each other in the ways in which you wish you could be more consistent in your worship of the Lord.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 1:4-8.** Many women have struggled with infertility. It is something that is painful and hard to deal with. Have you or someone you've known ever dealt with this? What was it like for them? Take a moment and pray for someone you know that has dealt with this issue and pray that they might respond in faith like Hannah.

(b) What kind of picture do we get of Hannah's home life in this section? How would Elkanah's love affect Hannah's perspective both positively and negatively?

(c) Who is responsible for Hannah's barrenness? How does Hannah respond to her relationship with God in spite of this suffering (v. 7)? How do you respond when difficulties come your way? What is it about hard times that cause us to cling to God even more?

(d) What kind of woman might Hannah have been if she had never been barren for so long? Trials never make us grow stronger, but it is what we do with trials when they come our way that make us stronger. How are you growing your faith right now? What steps of faith are you taking or do you need to take?

(e) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 1:4-8. What was Hannah's home life like? Why was Hannah barren? How does Hannah respond to her trials? What can we learn from Hannah's response? What can we learn from Elkanah's response to Hannah's sorrow? How are both of these people godly? Pray for someone you know who is going through a real trial right now that they might turn to God like Hannah does.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 1:9-11.** In this section, we have Hannah's response to years of suffering. A broken heart pouring forth with prayers to God. It is important to know that when you see the word "LORD" in your bible that it is the covenant name of God. It is a deeply personal name of God that shows Hannah's depth of relationship.

(b) Is Hannah "bargaining" with God in these verses? Is what she is doing good or bad? Does it show an abundance of faith or a lack of faith? What is different from her prayer here and Sarah's response to God's promise (Genesis 16:1-2) or Gideon's response to God's promise (Judges 6:36-40)? What would it have meant for Hannah to give up her first son?

(c) Hannah is the first person in the Bible to address God as "LORD of hosts." What does this title of God represent (Joshua 5:13-15; Isaiah 40:25-26)? Why is important for us to remember this name of God? How does a right understanding of God's character allow us to make such requests as Hannah does (James 4:1-10)?

(d) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 1:9-11 and James 4:1-10. How does Hannah's action compare to James' instruction for how we are to pray? How is Hannah's vow an expression of the faith that she has in God? How does God desire for us to come to Him in prayer? Have you ever prayed for humility? Pray for that today so that God might draw you close to Him.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 1:12-18.** In verse 9, we have our first description of Eli sitting in a place of honor because he is probably too old to serve as a priest (Numbers 8:23-26). In this passage, we have Eli misinterpreting Hannah's actions as drunkenness. What does this say about the spiritual nature of Eli that he is unable to distinguish a drunk from a fervent prayer? What does this say about the state of Israel that such a high religious figure would be so clueless?

(b) How does Hannah describe her prayer? Would you describe your own prayers in such a way? How does Hannah's model of prayer challenge your own perception of prayer?

(c) What is Eli's response to Hannah's defense? How does Eli refer to God and how does this compare with the way Hannah talks about God? Hannah takes Eli's response as confirmation that God has heard her prayers. She walks away believing that God has heard her.

(d) *Family:* Read 1 Samuel 1:12-18. How does Eli's spiritual awareness compare with Hannah's? How does Hannah describe her prayer? Would you describe your own prayers in such a way? How does Hannah's model of prayer challenge your own perception of prayer? Spend some time silently praying before God that He would give you the faith and humility that Hannah possesses.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read 1 Samuel 1:19-28.** We find that Hannah's prayers have been answered. God remembers Hannah and blesses her. What does it mean that God "remembered" Hannah (Genesis 8:1; Exodus 2:24)? What happens when God "remembers"? How are we commanded to remember (Jude 17-23)?

(b) Hannah is surely a great model for us to follow, but how does Elkanah respond to Hannah's vow and actions. Why would this be so important (Numbers 30:10-15)? What is Elkanah's chief concern in this passage? How does this passage show us how godly couples are to respect and relate to one another's spiritual lives?

(c) When Samuel was finally weaned (about 2 or 3 years old), Hannah brought him to be dedicated to the Lord. The sacrifice that she brings is quite substantial. What does this say about her desire to worship the Lord, that she goes beyond merely fulfilling the vow, but offers such great sacrifice?

(d) Hannah recognizes that Samuel is not hers but the Lord's. How do you see your own children? Could you do what Hannah has done? What would your response be if your child felt God calling him or her to be something outside of your comfort zone? Could you give them over to the Lord?

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. What is it that you have learned most from Hannah and Elkanah's example this week? How is your prayer life? What is it that you need to give over into God's hands? Does a broken and contrite heart describe you? Ask God that He would show you what is keeping you from being a man or woman of faith like Hannah.

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A Heart Poured Out

"Let your servant find favor in your eyes"