

**Palmetto Baptist Church: May 10, 2020**  
**Dealing with Idolatry of the Heart: I Samuel 1:1-20**

Turn to I Samuel 1:1-20

The Story and Impact of Hannah:<sup>1</sup>

1 There was a man called Elkanah who had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.

2 Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.

3 Elkanah lived in Ramah. Every year he and his family would travel to Shiloh to worship God at the tabernacle.

4 An old man called Eli was High Priest at the Tabernacle but his two sons who were priests were both very disobedient.

5 While at the Tabernacle Peninnah, who had children, would make fun of Hannah and taunt her because she did not have children. This made Hannah so upset she could not eat

6 Her husband, Elkanah, tried to comfort her, 'Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me, isn't that better than having ten sons?'

7 After a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. She was in deep anguish. Eli was at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle.

8 Hannah wept and made a promise to God, 'O Lord if you give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord his hair will never be cut.

9 Eli saw Hannah's lips moving but heard no sound, and thought she had been drinking. 'Must you come here drunk?' he demanded. 'Throw away your wine!'

10 'I haven't been drinking, Hannah protested. 'I was pouring out my heart to the Lord in great anguish and sorrow.' 'In that case,' Eli replied, 'Go in peace! May God answer your prayer.' Hannah thanked Eli and went away comforted.

11 Soon after returning home, Hannah became pregnant and later gave birth to a baby boy. She and Elkanah named him Samuel, for she said, 'I asked the Lord for him.'

12 When Samuel was old enough Hannah kept her promise and came to the Tabernacle to give her boy to God and be trained to serve Him. 'I asked the Lord to give me this boy,' she declared. 'God has answered my prayer. Now I am giving him to the Lord and he will belong to Him his whole life.

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<sup>1</sup> [freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samuel-born/](http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samuel-born/)

**Mother's Day Illustration from Master Card:**

Flowers and a card for your mom = \$25... Gas to get to her house = \$50... Dinner at a nice restaurant = \$100... the smile on Mom's face when she finishes the meal and opens the card = priceless!

There are some things money cannot buy... for everything else there's Master Card.

**In Elkanah's case:**

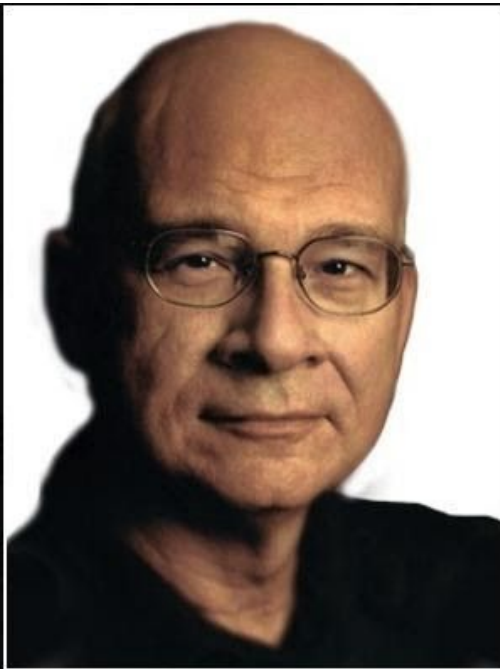
Animals for the yearly sacrifice = \$50... a single portion for his wife Peninnah = \$75... a double portion for his wife Hannah = \$125... food for the family to feast in Shiloh = \$200... A HAPPY WIFE = priceless!

**In Hannah's case:**

Earplugs to block out the comments made by Peninnah = \$5... a private room reserved for two hours to pour out your heart to God = \$50... a breathalyzer test to show Eli = \$75... the birth of her own child = dedication of the child to God for life... a close walk with the LORD = PRICELESS!

Proposition: Nothing can replace a close walk with Christ! A close walk with Christ is PRICELESS!  
Nothing can rob you of a close walk with Christ faster than idolatry of the heart.

Transition: This morning we will see how a close walk with the Lord radically impacts the way you handle pressure (and there is nothing like the pressure faced by mothers on a daily basis) and your opportunity to participate in God's broader plan.



The human heart is an idol factory that takes good things like a successful career, love, material possessions, even family, and turns them into ultimate things. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives, because, we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment, if we attain them.

— Timothy Keller —

AZ QUOTES

The idols in Hannah's heart:

- Family
- Freedom from conflict
- Acceptance by others
- Pride

The idols in your heart:

- Security
- Health
- Success
- \_\_\_\_\_?

**Root out your idols through honesty, humility, and clarity.**

## **I. Root out your idols through honesty.**

- A. Hannah expected God to bless her.
1. Hannah was married to a good man. (1, 8)
  2. Hannah wanted to be a good mom. (11)
  3. He was committed to a good God. (3, 7, 19)
- B. Life did not turn out the way she expected.
1. She was marginalized. (2)
  2. She was mistreated. (6-7)
  3. She was misunderstood. (13-16)

**Honestly evaluate your expectations:**

- How is your life currently going?
- Anything you wish you could change or do differently?
- How is your perspective on life impacting your interactions with others?

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## **II. Root out your idols through humility.**

- A. Hannah blamed God.
1. You won't change my situation. (8-9)
    - Vs. 8 – *heart sad*: hardness of heart (Deut. 15:9-11)

<sup>9</sup>Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, 'The seventh year, the year of release is near,' and your eye look grudgingly<sup>a</sup> on your poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin. <sup>10</sup>You shall give to him freely, **and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him**, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. <sup>11</sup>For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

2. You don't care about my condition. (10)
  - **Vs. 10 – deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly**
    - **Distressed:** nephesh... breath; the soul; the life
    - **Bitterly:** to weep; to cry freely and profusely from sadness or distress; mourn for; lament

### **Job 7:11**

“Therefore I will not restrain my mouth;  
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;  
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

### **Job 10:1**

“I loathe my life;  
I will give free utterance to my complaint;  
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

## **B. Hannah bartered with God.**

1. She made a vow to God. (11a)

**Question: "What does the Bible say about keeping your vows / oaths?"<sup>2</sup>**

**Answer:** There are about 30 biblical references to vows, most of which are from the Old Testament. The books of Leviticus and Numbers have several references to vows in relation to offerings and sacrifices. There were dire consequences for the Israelites who broke vows, especially vows to God.

**The story of Jephthah illustrates the foolishness of making vows without understanding the consequences.** Before leading the Israelites into battle against the Ammonites, Jephthah—described as a mighty man of valor—made a rash vow that he would give to the Lord whoever first came out of doors to meet him if he returned home as the victor. When the Lord granted him victory, the one who came out to meet him was his daughter. Jephthah remembered his vow and offered her to the Lord ([Judges 11:29-40](#)). Whether or not Jephthah should have kept this vow is dealt with in another [article](#). What this account shows is the foolishness of rash vows.

**Jesus taught concerning vows, “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” ([Matthew 5:33-37](#)).**

A little background information is helpful in understanding Jesus’ words here. The religious leaders of the day advocated keeping a vow *if* it was a public vow using God’s name; however, if the vow was made in the course of everyday conversation, referencing only “heaven” or “earth” or “Jerusalem,” it was not really binding. People had a loophole. They could lie or exaggerate in their conversations and lend themselves an air of credibility by saying, “I swear by heaven that this is true!” They could not be held to account because they did not specifically swear by God’s name and the vow was private. Jesus countered that idea. If you swear something, it had better be true, He says. In fact, all you need to say is “yes” or “no.” Your word should be good. There’s no need for overwrought expressions to bolster your case.

[Psalm 15:4](#) describes a righteous person as one “who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind.” Jesus’ teaching in [Matthew 5](#) supports this biblical principle. Oaths are binding, even when spoken frivolously or privately as part of everyday conversation. A promise is a promise, and there is no loophole in

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/vows-God.html>

God's eyes to allow a person to renege on an oath.

So, Jesus was not condemning all forms of promises, contracts, or agreements. Jesus was speaking of the kind of spontaneous vow made when a person says, "I cross my heart and hope to die" or "I swear on a stack of Bibles" or "I swear on my mother's life." Jesus warns against using those types of flippant oaths. His teaching in [Matthew 5](#) is not meant to discourage careful, thought-out promises, such as wedding vows or a legal contract.

The principle here is clear for Christians: be careful about making vows, either to the Lord or to one another. The fact that we are prone to errors in judgment means that we may make vows foolishly or out of immaturity. Further, the informal vows we make ("I swear by all the angels in heaven!") are completely unnecessary. Our word is our bond.

*B. Hannah bartered with God.*

1. *She made a vow to God. (11a)*
2. *She made a step toward God. (11b)*

**Indication of Hannah beginning to break away from selfishness:**

Changed from obsession over having a child for herself and transitioned into offering to dedicate the child to God.

She appears to be meditating on God's provision in the past –

<sup>11</sup>And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed **look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant**, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

**Opening Rachel's womb to provide Joseph (Gen. 30:22)**

<sup>22</sup>Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

**Reflecting on God's description of one who is totally consecrated to God. (Num. 6:1-8)**

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite,<sup>1a</sup> to separate himself to the LORD, <sup>3</sup>he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried.

<sup>4</sup>All the days of his separation<sup>1b</sup> he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

<sup>5</sup>"All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.

<sup>6</sup>"All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. <sup>7</sup>Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his separation to God is on his head. <sup>8</sup>All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.

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- B. Life did not turn out the way she expected.
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## **II. Root out your idols through humility.**

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- B. Hannah bartered with God.
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  - 2. She made a step toward God. (11b)

## **III. Root out your idols through clarity.**

- A. Rediscover God. (17; Psalm 20)
  - 1. God sees. (Psalm 20:1-3)
  - 2. God cares. (Psalm 20:4-6)
  - 3. God knows. (Psalm 20:7-9)
  
- B. Trust God.
  - 1. Enjoy good things as a gift from God. (18-19)
    - a. The gift of food (Ecclesiastes 9:7)

<sup>7</sup>Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

- b. The gift of worship. (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";

- c. The gift of marriage. (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

<sup>9</sup>Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain<sup>a</sup> life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.

- C. Brag on God. (20)

- Technically, the name Samuel means “his name is God.”
- By assonance (what a word sounds like), his name means “asked of God.”
  - She had asked (*sa'al*) God for a son, and he had (*sama'*) heard her.
  - “Samuel” then would be associated with *samua'el* (“heard of God”)

## Application:

The idols in Hannah’s heart:

- Family
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## Idolatry checklist:

- You will sacrifice for it.
- You will spend time on it.
- You will spend money on it.
- You will talk about it.
- You will protect it.
- You will think about it.
- You will build your schedule around it.

## **Patterns of idolatry in the heart:**

- Desire
  - “I wish”
- Demand
  - “I will”
- Need
  - “I must”
- Expectation
  - “You should”
- Disappointment
  - “You didn’t”
- Because you didn’t
  - “I will”
- Because you didn’t
  - “now I won’t”

## **Three questions to detect an idol of the heart:**

- Am I willing to sin to get it?
- Am I willing to sin if I think I’m going to lose it?
- Do I run to it for refuge instead of to God?

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