

Hannah: Portrait of a Godly Mother

1 Samuel 1-2

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Introduction

The Bible has much to say about motherhood. Raising children is the glory and crown of a woman. God has designed women for that role to nurture and care of children. One pastor said that no nation is greater than its mothers for they are makers of its men. Paul makes a statement that women are saved in childbearing.

1 Timothy 2:15 *But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety [or self-control].*

Paul is not talking about eternal salvation. What he is talking about is women's role. He had just explained to Timothy why he does not permit women to be leaders over men in church. This is not the woman's role. This is not her true design. Her true design is to bear children. This is God's intention for most women (because some women are chosen to be single, and for others God has closed their wombs for His purpose). This is the woman's contribution to creating godliness in society. Man influences society by the top down, and the woman influences from the bottom up. When they come together, they create a godly society, and it is all by God's design.

What does this godly mother look like? We see this portrait in Hannah, the mother of Samuel, Israel's greatest judge.

I. Hannah's Environment (1:1-8)

1 Samuel 1:1-8 *There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite 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 And because the LORD had closed her 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 Elkanah her husband 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?"*

- Time period
 - Period of judges
 - Samson last judge, when he died, people strayed from the Lord
 - The priests were corrupt and evil (Eli's two sons were exceedingly wicked)
 - The Lord had not spoken to them for a while

1 Samuel 3:1 *The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.*

- Elkanah
 - Levite
 - Had two wives
 - God did not approve of polygamy
 - Cultural accepted in those days
 - Probably married Peninnah because Hannah could not have children
 - Devout
 - He was a believer—he obeyed what God commanded
 - He went to Shiloh (where the Tent of Meetings were, before the Temple in Jerusalem)

- He was also not a perfect man
- Loved Hannah
 - He gave her double portion (honor) of sacrifice
 - There was close intimacy between the two in spite of absence of children
- Hannah's bitterness
 - No children
 - Peninnah's constant irritation
 - Despite her bitterness, she came to worship the Lord with her husband

II. Hannah's Character (1:9-20; 2:1-10)

1 Samuel 1:9-18 *Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple. 10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if You will only look upon 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 will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of 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 lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. 20 So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."*

- Hannah's prayer
 - She recognized that God was the only One who can cure of her sterility
 - She pours her heart out to God
- Hannah's desire
 - For a child
 - She wanted God's blessing, not for herself, but for God
- Hannah's promise
 - She would raise the child to the Lord
 - She invokes a Nazirite vow
 - Nazir means consecrated (holy or set apart)
 - A Nazirite means a person totally dedicated to God
- Hannah's faith
 - When she finished her prayer and Eli's statement
 - She went back to normal life—She trusted God
- Hannah's praise

1 Samuel 2:1-2 (3-10) *Then Hannah prayed and said: "My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in Your deliverance. 2 There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides You; there is no Rock like our God."*

- Hannah kept her promise

1 Samuel 1:24-28 *After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. 25 When they had slaughtered the bull, they brought the boy to Eli, 26 and she said to him, "As surely as you live, my lord, 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.*

- After the child was finished nursing, she gave him over to the service of the Lord

III. Hannah's Care (1:21-23; 2:19)

1 Samuel 1:21-23 *When the man 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." 23 "Do what seems best to you," Elkanah her husband told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good His word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.*

- Act of worship
 - She did not go and worship with her husband
 - The act of worship was that she took care of her child
 - She was totally dedicated to her child
- Continual care of Samuel

1 Samuel 2:19 *Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.*

- She continued to take care of Samuel when he was in the temple

Coram Deo—Hannah's Glory

All that Hannah did was she raised up a godly child. The Holy Spirit contrasted the character of Samuel and the characters of Eli's two sons. Eli's sons were wicked.

1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22, 25b *Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. 17 This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt. 22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 25b His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.*

What we learn from these two is that they had no parental supervision. Their mother is nowhere mentioned. Eli was a worthless father. However, we see such a difference in Samuel's character.

1 Samuel 2:11, 18, 21b, 26 *Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest. 18 But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod. 21b Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD. 26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.*

1 Samuel 3:19-21 *The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of his 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.*

Samuel had a godly mother. Samuel's character was not molded by Eli. Eli had nothing to do with the raising of Samuel. Hannah had much to do with Samuel's upbringing. For mothers, are you a godly mother? Have you given your children to God? Are you dedicating your children to the Lord? Are you raising your children to the admonition of the Lord?