

1. This morning I want to share a true story with you. It's found in the Old Testament book of **1 Samuel chapter 1**.
2. There was a man named Elkanah, and Elkanah had two wives.
3. As a side note, I'm not sure I fully understand the purpose of multiple wives. We know that today in our culture it is very taboo to think in such terms, but the reality is I have lived in other cultures overseas where it is absolutely normal and natural for a man to have as many wives as he can afford.
4. I personally can only afford one wife. And if you tell my wife who is visiting her mother this weekend that I said that I will deny it.
5. Anyway, back to the story. One of Elkanah's wives was named Hannah and the other Peninnah.
6. We don't know how many children Elkanah and Peninnah had together, but it must have been several.
7. But Elkanah and Hannah had no children together because Hannah could not have any children.
8. Each year, Elkanah would take his whole family to the city of Shiloh where the ark of the covenant was located to worship.
9. Each year, Elkanah would give Peninnah a portion of meat to offer as a sacrifice, but he would give double that amount to Hannah as a sign of his love for her, and I think to indicate that her inability to have children didn't matter to him.
10. But Peninnah, probably jealous of the favor Elkanah showed Hannah would provoke or irritate or aggravate Hannah to the point that she would cry so uncontrollably that she couldn't even eat.
11. So one year Hannah went to the house of the Lord to pray to ask the Lord to give her a child, and while there she was confronted by Eli the Priest, because Eli thought she was intoxicated.
12. When she finally convinced him that she wasn't, she told him why she was sad and praying, and as a result Eli spoke a word of prophecy over her.
13. Go in peace, he said, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.

14. And the lord touched Hannah. Her grief was almost immediately taken away, and they went back home.
15. So a few months later, Hannah becomes pregnant, and nine months later gives birth to a beautiful baby boy that she names Samuel.
16. So let's pick up reading...

TEXT: **1 Samuel 1:21-28** When her husband 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," her husband Elkanah 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. **24** 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 the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, **26** and she said to him, "Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, 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.

TITLE: **Godly Mothering (parenting)**

INTRO:

1. I inserted the word parenting to my title because, while we see the example of Godly parenting through the eyes of Hannah, a mother, the reality is the principles I will share with you apply to parents in general.
2. Moms, dads, and even spiritual parents can learn something from this story.
3. So, what did Hannah do with this wonderful child she had waited for, prayed for, hoped for, and cried for?
4. Well, the next year when it was time to go to Shiloh to worship, Hannah tells Elkanah of her intentions.
5. I'm not going up to worship this year, I am going to wait until Samuel has been weaned. Until he is no longer nursing from his mother.
6. Now, we don't know exactly what age this was. I am going to suggest that it was somewhere between 2.5 and 5 years of age.
7. When he is weaned, I am going to take Samuel to Shiloh and I am going to present or dedicate him to the Lord, and I am going to give

Samuel to the priest for the remainder of his life.

8. So, when Samuel was weaned, she took him and a 3-year-old bull as a sacrifice to the house of the Lord, sacrificed the bull, and then proceeded to remind Eli the priest who she was.
9. Then, she gave the boy to Eli to live and serve there in the house of the Lord for the rest of his life, and together they worshipped and praised the Lord.
10. And then Elkanah and Hannah went back home.
11. It's at this point I want to remind you of my use of the word parenting in my title. Because what we really see is three distinct people giving and receiving in this parenting roll.
12. Obviously, there was Hannah, and we will look at her more closely in a moment.
13. Then there was Elkanah. Elkanah's willingness to allow Hannah to literally give this child to the Lord was an amazing thing.
14. The firstborn, male child, symbolized, particularly to the father, strength, and power.
15. It signified the passing on of his family name.
16. It was the building of the family lineage, and therefore was of great significance. But Elkanah was willing to give Samuel to the lord as well. And that says a lot about his relationship with the Lord.
17. And then there was Eli the priest. Eli willingly accepted the role of being a spiritual father to little Samuel.
18. Samuel was not his biological child, Eli already had sons, but Samuel became his spiritual son. Eli trained him and formed him as Samuel learned to walk with the Lord.
19. So, all three of these adults had a part to play in the man Samuel would one day become. And that was significant.
20. But for the sake of the rest of this message we will focus on Hannah and Samuel.
21. I want us to look at two things Hannah did or didn't do, and then one thing that Samuel did.
22. So let's first look at Hannah.

Hannah gave the Lord a son, not a grandson.

1. Several months ago I began reading a book by Henry Cloud titled, Our Mothers Ourselves.
2. The book is essentially about how great an impact every mother has on her child, and how that impact carries over into our adult lives.
3. In the book he makes a couple of statements. Both of which I have heard before, but didn't quite grasp until he stated it so plainly.
4. In the kingdom of God, God doesn't have any grandchildren. He only has children.
5. God's desire is to relate to us as his child. Not the child of his child.
6. Meaning, the Lord desires a relationship with us in which he is the primary parent in our life. He is the heavenly father who is involved in our everyday life, and as such has the most impact and influence on us.
7. If a parent understands that, there is a really good chance that that child will grow to have a strong relationship with the Lord. But if the natural parent doesn't understand that, there is a high probability that that child's relationship with the Lord will be hindered.
8. So, because God's desire is to relate to every human being as his child, then the goal of Godly parents has to be to essentially raise our kids just until the point where they are ready to come under the authority of their heavenly father.
9. As a child is growing up, they are under the authority of the parent. (illustrate)
10. But the goal of the parent is to maintain that authority just as long as it takes for that child to be able to move out from under the authority of the parent, and instead live under the authority of their heavenly father.
11. In essence, what a Godly parent is working toward is the day where they can give up their parental authority, and literally hand that child over to the lord.
12. How many are still with me this morning?
13. What a powerful, real-life illustration of this goal.
14. Hannah was ahead of her time. She was setting the example for every Godly parent who would follow her.
15. Her intent was not to hang on to Samuel for the rest of his life and

forever relate to him as her child. To keep him under her thumb. To control him.

16. Her intent was to give him fully to the Lord as a sign that Samuel was a gift from the Lord in the first place.
17. Her intent was to have a relationship with Samuel in which they were both children of their heavenly father.
18. If you are here and you are a natural parent or a spiritual parent to someone, may I remind you today of the role God has called you to?
19. That child is God's child first and foremost. Your goal is not to raise that natural or spiritual child into your own image. Your goal is to raise that child into the image of his heavenly father.
20. And because children imitate those closest to them, that means you and I have to be committed to living out and being the physical image of Jesus Christ in this world.
21. Do you want to raise amazing kids? Let them see Jesus in you so they can see Jesus for themselves, and become like Jesus themselves.
22. Secondly...

Samuel was not Hannah's source of pride.

1. 1 Samuel 1:6-7 Because the LORD had closed Hannah's 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.
2. Not once. Not twice. Not a dozen times. But year after year, after year, Hannah was subject to ridicule and mockery and misery and the hands of her rival.
3. She as made fun of. Made to feel less than. Made to feel inferior.
4. The terrible treatment was relentless. It had been going on for so long that it was pushing Hannah to the breaking point.
5. She was so despondent that her husband wasn't able to console her anymore.
6. But then Samuel comes along. Samuel would have represented the end of her suffering. Not only her internal suffering, but the external pressure she was under in her own household.

7. When Samuel was born, Hannah could have easily placed this little baby boy on a prideful pedestal and paraded him around as her savior if you will.
8. She could have thought and acted as if this child made her somebody and made her complete.
9. She could have used this child to rub it in the face of this other woman who had tormented her for so long.
10. If she had, she would never have been able to give Samuel to the Lord and allow him to live in the house of the Lord at such a young age.
11. Her identity was not wrapped up in the baby, her identity was wrapped up in her personal relationship with God the father.
12. Allow me to give an example.
13. I have heard horror stories of pastor's kids who have grown up to reject the very God that their parents gave their life to serve.
14. And one of the reasons for that is unrealistic expectations.
15. Growing up, every time the child would make a mistake, sin, blow it, or miss the mark, those pastor parents, and sometimes people in the church would hold them to a higher standard and make statements like..
16. You're a pastor's kid. You should know better than to act like that. You're going to give your parents a bad name in the community if you act that way.
17. The message is this. The identity of the parent is wrapped up in the behavior of the child.
18. Can I tell you. Any child who grows up thinking they have to be perfect, when they know they are not perfect, stands a good chance of experiencing anxiety, depression, self-esteem issues and many other problems in adulthood.
19. One of the things my wife and I have bragged on the people of BFA for the past 15 years is that this body of believers has always supported our goal of never throwing the pastor kid card in our kid's faces.
20. We are blessed to have three pretty great adult children because never once did we or anyone in this church, that I'm aware of, act like

their normal, natural mistake ridden behavior was a reflection on anyone but themselves.

21. Hannah didn't live her life through, and gain her identity from her child. She gave up that right and she stood up on her own two feet and let Samuel be his own person.
22. What a great, Godly example.
23. And then finally let's look at Samuel.

Samuel had to choose the right path, and so do we.

1. If you move over into 1 Samuel chapter 2, the headings of each section give you a pretty clear picture of what kind of environment Samuel was living in.
2. Section 2. Eli's worthless sons. They were worthless because they were disgraceful priests who stole from people and had sexual relations with just about any woman they were around.
3. Eli their father rebuked them, but he didn't stop them.
4. And as a result, God rejects the household of Eli, and informs him that his family will no longer be priests. That the Lord will raise up another righteous person to take their place.
5. That person was the young boy, Samuel.
6. And in fact, Samuel did become a great man of God.
7. But Samuel had to choose to follow the Lord's ways in spite of the example that was in front of him.
8. When you have a chance read through 1 Samuel chapter 3. It is the account of the first time Samuel heard the voice of the Lord.
9. Samuel was trying to sleep, but in the middle of the night he hears a voice. Thinking it was Eli calling him, he runs to Eli to ask what he wants.
10. Eli said, it wasn't me calling. Go back to bed.
11. Then it happens again. Again, Samuel runs to Eli to ask what he wants. Again, Eli tells him he had not spoken to him.
12. But Eli realized it was the voice of the Lord and told Samuel, the next time you hear the voice say this.
13. 1 Samuel 3:9-11 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you,

say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." 11 And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle.

14. And from that point on, for the rest of his life, Samuel walked in an intimate relationship with his heavenly father.
15. God used him mightily.
16. Here's the application. Samuel had a terrible example of a spiritual father, but he still chose to obey and follow his heavenly father.
17. You and I have to choose for ourselves to follow our heavenly father, in spite of our natural parent's faults and failings.
18. Maybe you didn't have a parent who modeled for you what it looks like to live for the Lord.
19. Maybe you had a parent who tried to live through you and as a result put undue pressure on you to be perfect.
20. Maybe the example you have seen all your life has been anything but good.
21. But the reality is that you and I can't use that bad example as an excuse to not live for the Lord.
22. The faults and failures of those who influenced us will not be an acceptable excuse to the Lord for why we didn't choose Him.

Conclusion: Look at Teresa.

1. On judgment day, you and I will stand before the Lord, on our own. And we will have to give an account of what we have done with the truth that all our lives we have had a perfect heavenly father pursuing us with a perfect love that we cannot deny.
2. To do anything but stand on our own two feet makes us a second-class citizen. To be less than.
3. But you are not less than. The scripture tells us we can be more than conquerors through Christ who gives us strength.
4. Before I ask you to do something with the word you have heard today, let me assure you that this message is not meant to condemn.
5. Mainly because the one who has delivered it deserves much more condemnation than most.

6. I have made a lot of mistakes. But thankfully I have been loved by a gracious father.
7. Respond to this same father's grace and love.
8. Pray.
9. If you have children (grandchildren) give them to the Lord. Dedicate them to the Lord. Dedicate yourself to the Lord to be a living example to them of the image of your heavenly father.
10. Give those kids and grandkids grace for being less than perfect. Accept that their mistakes are a reflection of them and not you.
11. Choose the Lord for yourself. Stand on your own two feet.