

A silhouette of a woman with long hair, kneeling on the ground with her hands clasped in prayer, set against a dramatic sunset sky with wispy clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow.

Faith to Pray

The story of Hannah

1 Samuel 1-2

Hannah's problem

- Why was Hannah distressed?
 - A childless woman was seen as inferior
 - A childless woman lacked favor
 - A childless woman was vulnerable

Hannah's prayers were
going unanswered



Hannah's problem

■ Hannah's new approach

- V. 11 – “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.”
- Was this a rash vow?

Hannah poured out her
soul before the Lord, v. 15



Hannah's problem

■ Eli's response

- Why did Eli respond so harshly?
- Hannah's character is expressed in her response
- Why did her outlook change? Because she knew that she had been heard!
- The Lord answered Hannah's prayers beyond what she had requested, 2:18-21, 1-10



Hannah's
example in
prayer

- We ought to pray, and not lose heart
 - Luke 18:1-8: “When the son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”
 - God demands patience, willingness to wait (James 5:10-11) – but is that message always helpful?

How can we keep
praying in the face of
discouragement?



Pray like a
servant,
not a
customer

- Whose “good” am I truly seeking?
 - Rom. 8:27-31 (see 35-37), 1 John 5:14-15
 - A life in Christ is not a life without hardship! (1 Peter 5:9-10)
- What I need? Or what I want?
 - Mtt. 6:25-33 - am I focused on my true need?
 - Prayer with contentment, Phil. 4:10-13, Heb. 13:5-6, 1 Tim. 6:6-11
- “Solve my problems, but spare my pigs,”
Mark 5:1-17
 - Am I living a life worthy of prayer? 1 John 3:20-22, James 4:2-4

Are we submitting our
will to God first?



Pray like
it's my
only hope

- Is my prayer truly focused and reverent?
 - Prayers described as “striving” (Rom. 15:30), “pleading” (2 Cor. 12:8), “watchful” (Col. 4:2)
 - Jesus heard “because of his reverence”, “learned obedience” (Heb. 5:7-8)
- Is my service “conditional” on whether God does what I want? Or do I have a “Plan B?”
 - Trials teach us to depend on God, Deut. 8:1-4, Ex. 15:22-24, 2 Cor. 1:9

Are we praying with a
true sense of urgency?



Pray like
I'm praying
to a good
God

- Do I really believe that God listened?
 - How are we unlike the widow? Eph. 2:4-7
 - Do I trust God to define what is good? Mtt. 7:11, 1 Peter 5:6
- Do I really believe God can help my situation?
 - Phil. 4:5-7 – What is our attitude when we ask God for help in faith? (Eph. 3:20-21)
 - Has God saved us only to abandon us? Mark 4:35-40, 1 Cor. 1:7-9

How confident are we in
God's providence?



Pray like I
have my
own
personal Eli

- In Christ, I have assurance that my prayers will be heard
 - My sin doesn't have to separate me from God, Heb. 10:19-22
 - I have an advocate before the throne of God, Heb. 4:14-16
 - "...he is not ashamed to call them brothers," Heb. 2:10-12, 14-18



How often do I visit
my high priest?



■ James 5:13-16 – “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. **And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.** And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.**”



Praying a prayer
of faith

“There is none
holy like the Lord:
for there is none
besides you; there
is no rock like our
God.”

(1 Samuel 2:2)

- When we don't think our prayers are having an effect:
 - Remember that you're the servant
 - Pray for what you truly need, like you really need it
 - Remember you're praying to a just and good God
 - Remember what He has already given for you