

# WHEN THINGS DON'T GET BETTER

November 16, 2020

**1 SAMUEL 1:12-17 NIV** - (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 are you going to stay drunk? Put away 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."

The story of Hannah is one that many of us can relate to. We're in a difficult situation, yet despite our persistent prayers, it doesn't get better. Hannah was one of two wives of Elkanah and couldn't conceive children, but Peninnah, the other wife, could. In biblical culture, bearing children for a woman was critical because they would be the ones to care for you. So not only did Hannah bear her own internal shame and pain, but Peninnah "would provoke her bitterly to irritate her" (1 Samuel 1:6). Hannah's pain drove her to tears—so much so that she was accused of being drunk at the temple when she was crying out to God for a child!

Hannah and Elkanah's yearly Shiloh trip to sacrifice to the Lord was most likely her saddest day. She worshiped the Lord even though her persistent problem worried and distressed her. She would watch as those around her enjoyed their children and rested securely in their futures. I suspect you've been in a position like this as well. The problem wasn't that the situation got worse—nothing changed for Hannah. Doubts most likely crept into her head if her husband would continue to love her. Can you appreciate how Hannah must have felt?

Even though her situation didn't change she put her trust, hope and belief in God. The point to this story is that Hannah persevered year after year—overcoming her worries through both prayer and worship. God knew her pain, and His silence must not be perceived as inattentiveness or lack of involvement.

God was bringing Hannah to the point where she was willing to give back to God the very thing she wanted most—her son Samuel. God had a special plan for him to be a great prophet. The only way Hannah would be moved to this place of surrender was through her painful barrenness. Hannah promised the Lord that she would give Him Samuel if He would open her womb. He did, and she kept her vow. And God blessed Hannah with five more children (1 Samuel 2:21).

Friend, if there is something specific that you are worried about, consider going to the Lord and willingly give it up or give it back to Him. Oftentimes, He is waiting for you to trust Him before He will move. It is far more important to Him to fulfill His purpose and plan in your life than to fulfill your urge.

**SCRIPTURE READING: JAMES 1:12**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:** Don't limit your challenges. Challenge your limits.

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"