

Happy Mother's Day

1 Samuel 1:10 ESV (Pg. 129) She (Hannah) was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. **11** 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." **12** As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. **13** Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. **14** And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." **15** But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. **16** Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." **17** Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." **18** And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. **19** They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. **20** And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord." **21** The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. **22** But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever." **23** Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. **24** And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young. **25** Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. **26** And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. **27** For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. **28** Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there.

- I. What a blessing it would be if we all had moms like Hannah. What a challenge to all moms to **be** a mother like Hannah. She understood the call and the privilege of motherhood very well. While mothers receive children as a blessing from the Lord, all godly parents must realize that our time with our kids is a temporary custodial assignment. Our goal is always to return them back to the care of the Lord.
 - A. This is what is pictured when we dedicate children to the Lord. We are publicly acknowledging that we are not simply raising up those who will carry on the family name, or make us proud, or give us grandchildren to compensate for all of the diapers and tantrums; on the contrary, we are making disciples for Christ.
 1. The parental role is first and foremost a **pastoral** one. It is one that we must approach soberly, intentionally considering the influence of our actions.

- a) No matter what else we want for our children, we must instill them with a love and reverence for Christ and his kingdom. This is not done best with lectures on morality, but with examples of grace and humility.
 - b) Pastor Dustin Bengtson once tweeted “There is a 0.0296% chance that your child will become a professional athlete. There is a 0.0086% chance that your child will become a famous celebrity. There is a 100% certainty that your child will stand before Jesus. What are you teaching your children?”¹
2. It is this thought that must be constantly before the Christian mom. we have to look beyond the burdens and tasks of today, and even past the hopes and dreams we may have for our child’s future. We must keep our ultimate goal in mind. “A parent’s main task is to receive a child as a charge from the Lord and then to dedicate the child to God’s ways.”-Rick Johnson²
- B. No one in the Old Testament exemplifies this better than Hannah. We learn in earlier verses that she was infertile, and heart-broken because of it. On top of that, Elkanah’s other wife, Peninnah had children. She would mock Hannah for her infertility and generally make her life miserable. Hannah’s distress even robbed Elkanah, who loved her very much, of peace in their marriage³.
- 1. So, being a woman who loved the God of Israel, she did what I hope all of us as parents do often and fervently: **she prayed**. She made her petition known to God, as the only one who could deliver her. Her prayer for children was so intense that Eli, the priest of God at Shiloh, thought she was drunk!
 - a) There is no way to calculate all that has been accomplished by the faith-filled prayers of a believing mother. They have brought healing to fevers, and protection from danger, war, and the folly of countless children.
 - b) But mostly, prayers have resulted in the salvation of sons and daughters throughout the ages of time. I recently read a testimony of a mother who prayed for 60 long years for the salvation of her rebellious son. She died with peace knowing that he had been saved by the grace of the Lord.
 - 2. Mom, no matter what sacrifices you make, or whatever else you do for your kids, there is no greater or more impactful gift than your prayers! Nothing can stop a kid with a praying mom, but may God help the kid without one!
- C. Hannah talks to God about her baby boy before he is born; before he is conceived! She even makes a vow to the Lord. If he grants her the joy of motherhood, she will dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life. He will literally grow up in the temple with Eli, and serve alongside him there.
- 1. She makes the comment that “no razor shall touch his head”. This was part of what was called the “Nazarite Vow”⁴ under the Old Covenant. This was a multi-faceted vow of devotion prescribed for Old Testament saints.
 - 2. Generally, the vow was for a limited time, like a fast. But Hannah implies that no razor will **ever** touch his head; meaning that his heightened devotion will last for his entire life, **and** Hannah is committing, before his birth, to doing everything within her power to ensure that is the case.
- D. I have read that near a church in Kansas, there can be seen in a cement sidewalk the prints of two baby feet with the toes pointing toward the church. It was said that some 60 years ago, when the sidewalk was being laid, a mother secured permission to stand her baby boy on the wet cement, and the tracks

- are seen today plainly. The mother symbolically wanted her little boy to start walking toward the truth as soon as he possible could.⁵
1. This is a word picture of what was in Hannah's heart. She wanted a child to love to soothe her aching heart. She also wanted to be vindicated in the eyes of her rival. But that was not her driving motivation...faith was.
 2. This is proven in that the best thing she can imagine doing with the child she was asking for, that she longed for, was to give it back to God. If God granted her request, the gift that God would give her would become her offering back to him! And that is the ultimate joy that comes from parenting.
- E. Like the mom in Kansas, we cement our kids into the truth of the Gospel so that they can belong to God when they are grown. **Proverbs 22:6 ESV Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.**
1. Dr. James Dobson once said, "According to the values which govern my life, my most important reason for living is to get the baton -the gospel- safely in the hands of my children."⁶ As Christians, when we set aside this day to honor moms, **this** is what we're celebrating - how our moms helped us to believe; the way they pushed us toward the truth of God found in the gospel; the way they kept us in church, prayed for us, and disciplined us in the truth.
 2. That doesn't mean that we all had moms that did it, or that any of our moms did it perfectly, but I would venture to guess that most of us who are serving the Lord had moms that did what they could to point us to Christ Jesus.
- II. Moms are great. They do so many great things. They work in our homes as teachers, managers, doctors, coaches, counselors, comforters and comediennees. But the most precious task they do is contribute a foundation for our spiritual lives.
- A. Martin Luther captured the significance of mothers when he wrote: **"When Eve was brought unto Adam, he became filled with the Holy Spirit, and gave her the most sanctified, the most glorious of appellations (designations). He called her Eva, that is to say, the Mother of All. He did not style her "wife", but simply mother, mother of all living creatures. In this consists the glory and the most precious ornament of woman."**⁷
- B. This important duty to form a spiritual foundation in children, modeled by Hannah, is carried out by Christian moms in at least three important ways:
1. First, moms serve as a **Prophet** to their children. In the Bible, a prophet speaks gives a clear vision of the future. Think about what moms do. They love to talk about the future! When no one believes in you, Mama will convince you that you are a potential Superman, Albert Einstein, Venus Williams, or Disney Princess. Moms are great a framing futures!
 - a) But when mom speaks to the **spiritual** future of their children, what they can be in Christ, that is truly powerful! Great saints like John Wesley and Charles Spurgeon testified to the influence their mothers had on them. Paul said the same about Timothy. **2 Timothy 1:5 ESV I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.**
 - b) That doesn't mean, of course, that all of our children are going to be great preachers or apostles, but rather that you moms can be the

architect of a great and hopeful future for your kids as genuine, faithful and courageous followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Secondly, moms serve as a **Preacher** to their children. Your child's Sunday school teacher has them for 90 minutes every Sunday. If they are in youth, we have them for another 90 minutes. But God has given you the time, the obligation and the privilege to teach them the Word of God in the much more "real-world" setting of your home and family. None of us will ever have that!
 - a) As you immerse yourselves in the Bible, you can answer their questions about God and life with clarity. You can proclaim God's truth to the problems and struggles that they will inevitably face every day.
 - b) This doesn't mean you have to put on an air of spirituality, or pretend that you have all answers when you don't. When you're stumped, admit it. Say, "Let's find the answer to that question or problem together." Then grab your Bible and search! Or call a mature Christian that you trust to help. Admitting that **you're** still learning is a great way to model humility.
 3. And speaking of **modeling**, great moms **Portray Christ** for their children. David Dalton tells this story: "It was a busy day in our Costa Mesa, California, home. But then with 10 children, and one on the way, every day was a bit hectic. On this particular day, however, I was having trouble doing even routine chores - all because of one little boy. / Len, who was 3 at the time, was on my heels no matter where I went. Whenever I stopped to do something and turned back around, I would trip over him. Several times, I patiently suggested fun activities to keep him occupied. "Wouldn't you like to play on the swing set?" I asked again. / But he simply smiled an innocent smile and said, "Oh, that's alright, Mommy. I'd rather be in here with you. Then he continued to bounce happily along behind me. / After stepping on his toes for the 5th time, I began to lose my patience and insisted that he go outside and play with the other children. When I asked him why he was acting this way, he looked up at me with sweet green eyes and said, "Well, Mommy, in Sunday School my teacher told me to walk in Jesus' footsteps, but I can't see him, so I'm walking in yours." / I gathered Len in my arms and held him close. Tears of love and humility spilled over from the prayer that grew in my heart - a prayer of thanks for the simple, yet beautiful perspective of a 3-year-old boy."⁸
 - a) You can prophesy a preferred future for your child. You can preach the Bible to them with power and clarity. But the most important element is **portrayal**. Like little Len, your child can't see Christ, but he or she **can** see you. Let your life scream out, "Son, Daughter, Jesus is like **this**..."
 - b) They are watching you carefully anyway! Watching to see what you trust in, and really believe; what throws you for a loop, and how you respond to success and failure; how consistent your walk is with your talk!
- III. I realize there are some of you here who are more discouraged than encouraged by that fact. But let me try and put all of this in perspective for those moms who are sinking under the weight of past failures or current responsibilities: **Lamentations**

3:22 ESV The steadfast love of the Lord *never* ceases; his mercies *never* come to an end; **23** they are *new every morning*; great is your faithfulness.

- A. What I truly hope you can begin to see this morning is that God is the power behind all of your legendary parenting successes, and the grace you need in all of your epic parenting fails. After raising 4 kids, I've discovered 3 things:
 - 1. ...that all parenting is a consistent mix of success and failure...
 - 2. ...that the any successes are directly attributable to the Lord's intervention, while the failures are directly attributable to my interference...
 - 3. ...that it's never too late to cry out to, and hope in, the Lord's love for, power in, and goodness towards my kids; no matter what my weaknesses or sins are or have been! His love never ceases! His mercies never end! Great is his faithfulness to weak and faltering moms and dads (like me!).
- B. So this morning I want to say to all of the moms, "Great Job! Thanks! We need you! We love you! Keep it up! Our success depends on you!"
 - 1. But more importantly I want you to know that the advance of the Kingdom of God depends on you! God has placed you on the front lines of of raising up and training for the next generation of disciples.
 - 2. Your actions are more important than any celebrity or CEO. You are building lives! Your words are more influential than any politician or preacher. Life and death are in the power of your tongue.
- C. If you've made mistakes, repent, humble yourself and apologize if necessary, but get back in the game! Your kids need you, whether they act like it or not.
 - 1. If they won't talk to you, pray for them! They can't stop you from doing that.
 - 2. **James 5:16b ESV** The prayer of a righteous person has *great power* as it is *working*. God is able to speak so they listen, and to act where you cannot.
- IV. In closing, I want to read an affirmation by an author named John Killinger that I stumbled upon. I thought it was beautiful, and I hope you feel the same as I read it over you. Can I have all the moms stand up, please?
 - A. "I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, who was born of the promise to a virgin named Mary. / I believe in the love Mary gave her Son, that caused her to follow him in his ministry and stand by his cross as he died. / I believe in the love of all mothers, and it's importance in the lives of the children they bear. / It is stronger than steel, softer than down, and more resilient than a green sapling on a hillside. / It closes wounds, melts disappointments, and enables the weakest child to stand tall and straight in the fields of adversity. / I believe that this love, even at its best, is only a shadow of the love of God, a dark reflection of all that we can expect of him, both in this life and in the next. / And I believe that one of the most beautiful sights in the world is a mother who lets this greater love flow through her to her child, blessing the world with the tenderness of her touch and the tears of her joy."⁹
 - B. (Prayer for the moms)
- V. **1 Corinthians 11:23 ESV** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **25** In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it,

in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

¹ <https://twitter.com/dustinbenge/status/1070660151038894080?lang=en>

² From “That’s My Son” © 2005; quoted in *Barbour’s Encyclopedia of Great Christian Quotes*, pg. 329; © 2016; Barbour Publishing, Inc.; Uhrichsville, Ohio

³ See 1 Samuel 1:1-8

⁴ See Numbers 6:1-21

⁵ from *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations* by Paul Tan Lee, pg. 844, #3628, “Baby’s Footprints Toward Church” © 1979; Assurance Publishers; Rockville, Maryland

⁶From “Straight Talk” © 1995; quoted in *Barbour’s Encyclopedia of Great Christian Quotes*, pg. 327; © 2016; Barbour Publishing, Inc.; Uhrichsville, Ohio

⁷ *The Life of Luther Written by Himself*; Martin Luther cited at books.google.com [here](#).

⁸ As told to JoEllen Johnson; from *Chicken Soup for the Christian Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Aubery & Nancy Mitchell, pp. 108-109; © 1997; Health Communications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, Florida.

⁹ From “Lost in Wonder, Love, and Praise”; quoted in *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, and Writers*, pp. 363-364; © 2002, 2007; Baker Books; Grand Rapids, Michigan