



Honest to God

David: Profiles of an Authentic Life

Session 1 – Authentic Surrender

It has been said that troubles, prayed through honestly and with praise, will change your outlook. We notice this pattern all through David's prayers in the psalms. He holds nothing back in telling God his woes, but his prayers always come around to praise.

Our series on David's life begins with a prayer, but not his. It starts with the distressed plea of a childless woman named Hannah. She prayed to God for a son and promised to give him back to the Lord for a lifetime of service. Her part in God's plan is told in two chapters of the book that bears her son's name.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover Hannah's role in God's plan for giving Israel a king.
- Consider how God uses life's problems and our prayers to accomplish His plan.
- To examine our heart and allow God's Word to shape what we value.
- To pray honest prayers that lead to surrender and hold steady with hope.

Ice Breaker

Every society puts emphasis on what it values. How does our culture define the ideal life and what qualities are prized to achieve it? How would you define the ideal life?

Day One – The Big Picture

Read **1 Samuel 1:1-28** to get the overall picture. Follow the story line closely but without getting bogged down in details.

1. What is the central topic? State the main point of this passage in a sentence or two.
2. What insight does this chapter give you into God's ways and our relationship to Him?
3. The Bible shapes our core beliefs about God and our conduct toward others. Share one takeaway lesson from this chapter and how you can apply it to your life.

Day Two - Hannah's Problem

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-8

Hannah's family situation reflects the culture she lived in. Large families were vital for their way of life. Since having no heir was a major problem, taking a second wife to bear children was a commonly accepted solution. It appears that Elkanah married Peninnah because Hannah was unable to bear children.

Because children were a sign of the Lord's blessing (Deuteronomy 7:13, Psalm 127:3-5) the inability to bear children was viewed as personal punishment. In Hannah's day, the stigma of no children was on the woman. Being childless lowered a woman's standing within her own family and community; she could even be put away or divorced.

1. Consider Hannah's situation. Describe the pain she would have faced personally and socially.
 - a. How did Peninnah add to Hannah's misery? Why do you think she did this?

2. Hannah's barrenness did not diminish Elkanah's love for her. How did he demonstrate care and concern for Hannah?
 - b. What effect does this appear to have had on Hannah? What effect does it seem to have had on Peninnah?
 - c. Elkanah's attempt to console Hannah seems to fall short. His action shows that he dearly loves Hannah, but what do his "why" questions indicate is lacking?
 - d. In your observation, what was Elkanah trying to fix for Hannah and why was he unable to do so?

3. There will always be "Peninnahs" in life. By that, we mean cultural pressures that say, "if you don't do this or can't be that, you won't measure up." In what ways are you most likely to feel pressure to measure up? What pressures do you put on yourself?

4. Christians aren't immune to the pressures of society but we have God's Word on what matters most. What do we learn from the following scriptures?

1 Samuel 16:7

Romans 12:2

5. There will always be "Elkanahs" in life. By that, we mean the natural tendency to look to people or things to make us happy. We need each other but even our best efforts to love and be loved can fall short. Only God knows our deep needs and the ultimately good plan He has for us. What can we always count on God for in every situation?

Proverbs 3:5-6

Jeremiah 29:11

6. We are all confronted in life with situations we're powerless to fix on our own. Hannah's inability to have a child took her to the brink of brokenness. Men and women may differ in the way we process feelings of inadequacy, but we all have them. When we come to God in our weakness, what does He promise?

Psalms 73:25-26

2 Corinthians 12:9

Memory Verse

Write the verse and let it be part of your prayers every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to work it into your heart and mind.

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.

Psalm 62:5-6 NLT

Think it over . . .

What does the metaphor of a rock and a fortress show me about God's character and attributes?

Day Three – Hannah’s Prayer

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18

Hannah’s sorrow was more than she could bear. In vs. 9 we read that Hannah “rose up” after the meal. In the Hebrew narrative style, this indicates that she made a decision to take action.

1. Hannah’s prayer on this day was the culmination of many years of prayers, heartache and restless waiting. What had happened to Hannah’s heart to bring her to pray this prayer?

a. What was the direct result of her prayer, even though nothing had outwardly changed?

2. Maybe you relate to Hannah’s experience. Are you waiting for the answer to a prayer? Share what is God teaching you while you wait.

3. Waiting on the Lord in prayer means: (Check all that apply)

a. Life goes on hold until the prayer is answered. _____

b. We actively cultivate an attitude of trust. _____

c. We hand our personal worries and concerns over to God. _____

d. We go about whatever duties/responsibilities we must see to. _____

e. Add your own thought to the list _____

4. The devil will slow us to a dead stop by telling us we should wait until life is back to normal before we can serve, share the gospel, or take up daily responsibilities again. What does God’s Word tell us?

1 Peter 5:6-9

Psalm 37:3-7

5. The devil will use pain in a believer’s life to paralyze faith, but God chooses to strengthen our faith through pain. What does suffering according to God’s will accomplish?

Job 23:10

Romans 5:3-5

James 1:2-4

Memory Verse

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He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.
Psalm 62:5-6 NLT

Think it over . . .

What might God want to accomplish in me while I wait?

Day Four – Hannah’s Heart

Read 1 Samuel 1:19-28

When Hannah prayed for a son, she vowed to dedicate him back to the Lord all the days of his life. She named the answer to her prayers Samuel, which means *heard by God*.

1. Eli saw Hannah’s anguished praying and assumed she was drunk. Her humble response helped him realize his mistake and he blessed her. When you find yourself on the receiving end of a false impression or someone’s jump-to-conclusion, what is your natural response? What would you like it to be?

2. Hannah’s vow can be misunderstood too. Some see her making a deal with the Lord in order to get what she desperately desired. But Hannah wasn’t bargaining—she was praying from a heart that had come to a place of complete surrender.

Prayer has a way of refining our heart. We learn to pray, not just for right things, but also for right reasons. Give an example of how God used prayer to give you a change of heart.

3. “I have *lent* him to the Lord” (vs. 28). Hannah and her husband brought Samuel to Shiloh where he would grow up and be trained to serve God.
 - a. When you take inventory of what is precious to you (relationships, goals, possessions, work, time, health) what does dedicating it back to the Lord look like? Be as specific and practical as possible.

 - b. Which areas are most difficult for you to keep surrendered to the Lord?

**“In the act of offering,
we give up ownership
and control and
watch to see what
God will do with it.”**

**Eugene Peterson
Answering God**

Memory Verse

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Psalm 62:5-6 NLT

Think it over . . .

Take your answer from the previous question and lay it here for the Lord to speak to you.

Day Five – Hannah’s Hope

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Returning with Samuel to keep her promise to the Lord, Hannah was not the same woman she had been. Her prayer pours out of a praise-filled heart.

1. Hannah didn’t focus on the prospect of leaving her son, as difficult as that would be for her. As her praise unfolds, we get the sense that Hannah is looking back on all she has suffered with a greater understanding of God. She praises God for who He is and for what He does.
 - a. Looking back, how have you grown closer to God in a season of suffering? Briefly share one or two insights you gained about God.
 - b. Do you find yourself digging more into God’s Word when life is hard? Why or why not?
 - c. Share a favorite verse you go to when you need to draw strength from the Lord.

Hannah declares God’s power to turn crushing circumstances around to bring salvation to those who trust in Him. She rebukes the proud (including Peninnah) for boasting in their own strength.

2. Hannah goes beyond praising God for what He has done for her and prophetically praises God for what He *will* do for His people. Surely Hannah wasn’t aware how far-reaching her prayer was, but we see from the vantage point of history. At the time of her prayer, there was no king in Israel and never had been.
 - a. In due time, this promise would be partially fulfilled in David. How was Hannah’s son instrumental in God’s plan to give Israel a king? (see 1 Samuel 16:1)

b. The Hebrew word *anointed* in Hannah’s prayer (vs. 10) translates to *messiah* in English.

Read John 12:27-31. Trace the connection between Hannah’s prophetic prayer and how it was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah King.

“From heaven He will thunder against them.” –

“The Lord will judge the ends of the earth.” –

What if having a child had come easily for Hannah? God set His plans for Samuel in motion by first preparing his mother’s heart. She prayed her troubles and offered herself, circumstances and all, to God.

Memory Verse

Let all that I am wait quietly before God, for my hope is in Him.
He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.
Psalm 62:5-6 NLT

Think it over . . .

Sometimes affliction can be the bridge that allows us to walk into another hurting person’s world. What might God want to accomplish *through* me while I wait?

After His Heart

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.” 2 Chronicles 16:9 NLT

“God found in David a man who would stand in the gap, a man whose heart was fully committed to Him. Will He find that in you?”

Greg Laurie

For you personally, what has been the most important discovery or insight from this study?

How will you put living it into practice in the days ahead?

Prayer Requests
