

Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer
Gritty Faith
1 Samuel 1:1-28

Introduction: In 2023, we studied the Book of Joshua, and in it, we saw how God used Joshua to lead the nation of Israel to conquer and claim the land He had given them. By the time we get to the end of the book, Joshua has assigned every tribe their lands, given precise instructions to finish ridding the land of the Canaanites, and charged them to put away the foreign gods from among them and worship God alone. He gathered them together and told them to decide right now whom they are going to serve.

24 And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey." (Joshua 24:24)

However, the next book in the Bible tells us that the oath they swore that day in Shechem was short-lived. Not only did the Israelites not rid their lands of the Canaanites, but they also consistently involved themselves with the worship of their gods. As promised, God let the enemies of Israel overrun them as punishment for violating the Covenant He made with them. He told them if they obeyed Him, He would prosper them, but if they disobeyed Him and worshiped other gods, He would punish them. However, God also promised Abraham that He would form his descendants into a mighty nation and, through them, bring the one who would bless the world—Jesus (Genesis 12:1-3). So, in the book of Judges, we see the discipline of God that brings heavy consequences to Israel for their rebellion, but also the grace of God that would raise up a judge to rescue them from their enemies and call them to repentance.

Sadly, however, every time they experienced rescue from God and spiritual revival, they soon returned to idolatry. The further you enter the book of Judges, the darker the picture becomes. A nation that the God of the Universe chose and blessed beyond measure, refused the opportunity to live as no other nation. God had established them to be a free people under His rule. Every other nation on the earth was led by a human king who was just as depraved and limited as the ones they ruled. Furthermore, a king is a dictator who owns the lands, and all that's on the land, including the people. However, God, the only one who is indeed holy and righteous, the truly all-powerful One, the One who truly reigns over all, chose the Israelites to have no human king! Each Israelite had the opportunity to live in submission to Him on their land and, as such, prosper on that land in a way that could only be credited as a miraculous blessing from God. However, to do so, they had to submit to Him alone! He had made them His people, and they were to live that way.

By the time you get to the end of the book of Judges, you realize there is no way the Israelites will ever uphold their side of the Covenant. Because they refused to follow the sovereign, all-powerful King of the Universe, they were lost and leaderless. They had once wandered in the wilderness with no home, but now they were even more lost wandering around in their own homes. It's one thing to be lost in a land that's not your home, but it's an entirely different experience to be lost on your own land, in your own home!

But God was about to show His faithfulness once again in the darkness. As He had done on so many occasions already, God was going to prove the words of Abraham in Genesis 22 to be true - **“The LORD will provide” (Genesis 22:14)**. God had chosen Israel for a purpose, a purpose that He promised to fulfill, a purpose that He would raise up leaders to guide His people into, a purpose He would not abandon no matter if Israel abandoned Him or not.

So, after two hundred years of spiritual wandering; of Israel refusing to embrace its opportunity to be a free people living in a favored relationship with the creator and sustainer of all the Universe, God raised up a leader to give them one more chance. His name was Samuel. His mission was not to anoint earthly kings but to influence God’s people to trust and follow their eternal King. However, as you will see in the coming weeks of our study, the people refused. They demanded an earthly king that they could trust and follow, but unbeknownst to them, God was using their faithless and rebellious request to put things into motion that would lead the world straight to Jesus; the one who would do what had to be done so that you and I could genuinely live in glad submission to Him and bask in His glory! Unbeknownst to the Israelites, God would use their lack of faith to give us the most significant reason to have it!

So, let’s begin our study where the book starts. In a nation living in spiritual darkness, God uses the gritty faith of a woman named Hannah to bring forth one of the most outstanding leaders in redemptive history.

Proposition: There are three parts to the story of the birth of Samuel and the gritty faith of Hannah!

The first part of the story tells us about Hannah’s obscurity.

(1) Hannah could not get pregnant while being married to a “nobody” in an insignificant town. (1:1-2)

A. 1 There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.

1. “Elkanah’s description as an Ephraimite appears troublesome since Samuel served as a priest, an office reserved exclusively for Levites. However, Elkanah was a direct descendant of Levi (1 Chron. 6:33–38) and was therefore qualified to function in a priestly capacity. He was a Levite by lineage but an Ephraimite by residence.”¹
2. “Ramathaim-zophim is not a town of great importance in the Old Testament story so far. It was at this time a relatively obscure town in the hills of Ephraim. There is no obvious reason that we should be interested in “a

¹ Merrill, E. H. (1985). [1 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 432–433). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

certain man of Ramah.” Neither are the family connections of Elkanah striking in any way. Jeroham (his father), Elihu (his great-grandfather), Tohu (his grandfather), and his great-great-grandfather Zuph are all relatively “insignificant and obscure people.” The information in verse 1 tells us only that this man was, as we might say, a “nobody” in Israel. ... In the course of this book we will meet another Ephrathite who will make Bethlehem famous for all time. David was “the son of an Ephrathite” (1 Samuel 17:12), and Bethlehem is the town where his story began (1 Samuel 16:1–13). But he is still half a book away! About three centuries later, a prophet would say: *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. (Micah 5:2)* That very prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus (see the citation of Micah 5:2 in Matthew 2:6). Once again we are jumping ahead too quickly! There is much for us to learn by following the path that begins here with the obscure Elkanah the Ephrathite. At the time of 1 Samuel 1:1 a connection with Bethlehem was no claim to fame.”²

3. **“The very obscurity of the names and places in the opening sentence of the book is what should strike us. Their importance lies in their unimportance! In this case the obscurity is not a consequence of our being modern readers with little familiarity with the world of the Old Testament. These names were little known at the time referred to in 1 Samuel 1. ... This book is about a God who makes something out of nothing, life out of death, rich out of poor, somebody out of nobody.”³**

4. Verse two builds on this theme even further. The author writes,

B. 2 He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

1. So this no-name man, living in a no-name town, has two wives, and one of those wives, Hannah, isn’t fulfilling what would be considered her primary purpose as a wife—children.
2. I’m not suggesting that the primary purpose of a wife is to have children, but throughout most of human history, both men and women have seen a woman's primary role as having children. As you will see in a second, Hannah has the weight of the world sitting on her. There could be no more feeling of obscurity, of being unknown, of being unseen and even unneeded on this earth than for a married woman in ancient society to be barren. The pressure that would drive them into the shadows was enormous! In a world where your identity is based on the type and level of acceptance you receive

² Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (pp. 20–21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

³ Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (p. 21). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

because of the value you bring to society through how you perform, Hannah would naturally conclude her life didn't really amount to much!

3. On the other hand, if you know anything about the Bible, verse two has already queued you to what's coming. God has had a pattern of using barrenness for His glory!
 - a. In Genesis 11:30, we find out Abraham's wife, Sarah, was barren and old! But in Genesis 21, as God promised, 90-year Sarah had a son named Isaac, whom she conceived with her 100-year-old husband Abraham.
 - b. Later, that son would marry a woman named Rebekah, who also struggled with barrenness. In Genesis 21:21, Isaac prayed for God to end her barrenness. They were married for twenty years before they could have a child; in this case, she had twin boys—Jacob and Esau.
 - c. Continuing the theme, Jacob's wife, Rachel, the one he loved most, was also barren. Eventually, however, God opened her womb, and she had two sons, the first of whom was Joseph (Genesis 30:22-24).
 - d. Finally, in the book of Judges, another barren woman, whom we never learn the name of, was visited by an angel who told her that she and her husband would have a child and how they were to uniquely set that child apart for service to the Lord. She named that child Samson (Judges 13), and God used him in powerful ways to declare His glory to the people of Israel and the world!
4. So here we are again with a woman in a marriage who can't have children. Like Rachel, she is being further demoralized because her husband has another wife who has no problem providing him with children! Hannah lives in what she believes to be a right relationship with God but nonetheless feels as if she is separated from Him! She's in that place where we all find ourselves at times—forgotten by God. We haven't ignored Him but feel like He's forgotten us! So, what does she do? Will she walk away from God because she feels like God has left her?
5. Well, this takes us to the second part of Hannah's gritty faith story!

The second part of the story shows us how raw Hannah's faith was.

(2) Hannah prayed a faithless prayer for a faithful son. (1:3-18)

- A. **3 Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD.**

1. We can't say for sure when Elkanah took his family to Shiloh to worship the Lord but it's likely what we read about in Judges 21.

Note: **19 So they said, "Behold, there is the yearly feast of the LORD at Shiloh, which is north of Bethel, on the east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah." (Judges 21:19)**

2. The High Priest's name was Eli, and we learn about his two sons because they will unfortunately reenter the storyline in the next chapter in a highly disgraceful way. We will talk more about these guys in two weeks.
3. The more significant point here is that unlike many of the men in Israel who were living in total spiritual darkness, Hannah's husband wasn't one of them. He led his family well; as such, he took them with him every year to one of the required festivals that all the men of Israel were supposed to attend.
4. Spiritually, as dark as things had become in Israel, R.D. Philipps notes,
5. **"However little Elkanah knew of true religion at a time like this, he knew enough to come as a sinner, seeking grace from God by means of the shed blood of a sacrifice."**⁴
6. Of that sacrifice, the Bible says,

B. 4 On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.

1. "The offerer received back the greater part of the peace offerings, which he and his family or friends were accustomed to eat at a social feast before the Lord. (See on Le 3:3 and De 12:12). It was out of these consecrated viands Elkanah gave portions to all the members of his family; but "unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion"; that is, a larger choice, according to the Eastern fashion of showing regard to beloved or distinguished guests. (See on 1 Sa 9:24; also see on Ge 43:34)."⁵
2. "Elkanah did not give Hannah the most meat, since Peninnah and her children would have needed more, but he gave her the choice pieces. In other words, he did not give her a double portion, but "the first portion"

⁴ Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 8-9). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

⁵ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 1, p. 176). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

(מְנַה אַחַת, *manah achath*), consisting of “two nostrils.” This interpretation is supported by Tsumura (113–14 with n. 56), who cites Fleming’s observation that in Emar, the sheep’s head was the best portion of the animal’s meat, reserved for the king or other elite participants in a sacrifice. Tsumura also cites a study by D. C. van Zyl, whose findings he summarizes as follows: In nomadic societies, the head of a sheep is a special portion set apart for a special person or guest. Recently van Zyl supports Tg. “a choice portion” by reading the *mt* term as referring to “face or nose” of the sacrificial animal. He refers to South African practices of giving a special portion to a special person.”⁶

3. However, no matter how you translate the Hebrew, what can’t be missed is that Elkanah loved Hannah more than he loved Peninnah. In his love, he decided to make it public knowledge by demonstrating this favor at a very public festival! Now, it shouldn’t require a Ph.D. in psychology to know how this affected Peninnah, the wife who had already provided Elkanah with sons and daughters!

C. 6 And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7 So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat.

1. The timing of these attacks can’t be missed. They occurred when they went to worship the Lord; EVERY TIME, they went to worship the Lord! Peninnah verbally attacked Hannah at a time when Hannah was likely dumping her heart out to God about her barrenness. It’s not hard to imagine some of the things Peninnah may have said. Stuff like, “You must have some serious sin in your life, or God would be giving you children like me,” or “The reason you don’t have any children yet is because you just don’t have enough faith.” She may have even been saying accusatory stuff like, “This is God getting you back for convincing our husband to love you more than he loves me.” When you read the book of Job, his friends constantly try to convince him that all the calamities had happened because of some sin in his life or that he just didn’t love God as much as them!
2. Clearly, Peninnah’s plan to enact revenge on Hannah for being loved by their husband more was to try to destroy Hannah’s relationship with God! Maybe she thought that if Hannah forsook the Lord, Elkanah would forsake Hannah, but who knows? The sinister nature of Peninnah’s plan was terrible! Peninnah was hitting Hannah where it hurt most. Hannah was already carrying the massive burden of being barren, and Peninnah intentionally made it worse by jumping on top of it! And, if her point was to cause a rift

⁶ Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 1:4–5). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

between Hannah and Elkanah, by the time we get to the event of 1st Samuel chapter one, it had started working. Verse eight states,

D. 8 And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

1. Elkanah didn't understand why his clear favor and abundant love for Hannah wasn't satisfying her. "Am I not more to you than ten sons?" comes from the tension of feeling like he's loving her with all his heart, but it's not enough for her.
2. On the other side of that coin is the fact that Hannah is barren in a world that has no other purpose for a woman than childbirth and child-rearing. Meanwhile, Elkanah's other wife constantly attacks her over it, particularly when she's trying to worship the Lord!
3. So many couples end up in serious marital tension when they go through infertility. Husbands start feeling like their wife is more interested in having a child than they are in being with them. On the other hand, wives start feeling like their husbands don't understand how big of a deal having a child is to them and get angry when their husband feels pushed out by their desire to have a child.
4. Thousands of years ago, we see a marriage in the same type of tension. Hannah was so distraught by all this drama that she couldn't even eat. She's having to deal with a rival wife who is doing everything possible to get rid of her and a husband who seems disconnected from what's taking place and insensitive to how big of a deal it is that she's barren. So, as she sits there with either a double portion of meat or the choice cut (based on how you translate the Hebrew), either way, she can't bring herself to eat any of it. She's angry at Peninnah and frustrated with her husband, and I believe by this point, she's angry at God. So, when the feast is over, and she can leave, she heads straight for the tabernacle, which at this time was enough of a permanent structure that it was also referred to as a temple, even though it wasn't technically a temple structure as King David envisions and Solomon built.

**E. 9 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.
10 She 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."**

1. “This dedication of her son was a commitment to the Nazirite vow, described in Numbers 6:1–8. It was the same vow undertaken by the parents of Samson whom they dedicated to **the Lord** under nearly identical circumstances (Jud. 13:2–5).”⁷

2. **1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, 3 he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. 4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins. 5 "All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. 6 "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. 7 Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his separation to God is on his head. 8 All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD. (Number 6:1-8)**
 - a. “When either man or woman ... shall vow a vow of a Nazirite—that is, “a separated one,” from a *Hebrew* word, “to separate.” It was used to designate a class of persons who, under the impulse of extraordinary piety and with a view to higher degrees of religious improvement, voluntarily renounced the occupations and pleasures of the world to dedicate themselves unreservedly to the divine service.”⁸

 - b. **“6:2 a man or a woman** While the Nazirites depicted elsewhere in the Bible are all men, women could also take the vow. A woman needed permission from her husband or father, as was the case with other vows (30:3–16). **a Nazirite** The Hebrew term used here, *nazir*, means “devoted one.” The nature of the vow is described by the related Hebrew verb *nazar*, which denotes abstaining. It designates someone who took a vow to live distinctly from the rest of the community. The Nazirite did this by following certain distinctive customs (compare note on vv. 1–21). In nonreligious contexts it describes someone singled out from a group (see Gen 49:26).”⁹

⁷ Merrill, E. H. (1985). [1 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 433). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). [Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#) (Vol. 1, p. 98). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Nu 6:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- c. **“6:3 wine and fermented drink** That is, any fermented drink. Barley was also fermented into a beer-like substance in antiquity. **fresh or dry grapes** The Nazirite was not allowed to consume any beverage or food deriving from the grapevine. **6:4 All the days of his separation** The period of time one would live as a Nazirite was up to the individual. In the case of Samson and Samuel, their parents devoted them to Yahweh as lifelong Nazirites. **6:5 a razor will not pass over his head** Nazirites were not permitted to cut their hair. The treatment of the hair after the period of the vow ended (Num 6:13–21) suggests that uncut hair was central to the Nazirite vow. This is exemplified in the story of Samson, who loses his power when his hair is cut, but regains it when his hair grows back (Judg 16:15–31). **6:6 to a person who is dead** Nazirites were prohibited from touching corpses. Since death was the antithesis of life, contact with death resulted in ritual impurity and made all persons unfit for entering sacred space and approaching the life-giver, God. This prohibition resembles that of the high priest, who was prohibited from attending funerals (Lev 21:2–11). **6:9 on the seventh day he will shave it off** When Nazirites broke their vow through unintentional contact with a corpse, the vow would start again following procedures for purification.”¹⁰

F. **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."**

1. Hannah is at the tabernacle of the Lord, dumping her heart out to the Lord without making a sound but doing so with such brokenness and intensity that Eli assumes she drank too much at the festival and got drunk! The wine was a big part of the festival, but drunkenness was still considered foolish, sinful behavior. The Bible never condemns drinking alcohol, but it always condemns drunkenness. Hannah, however, hadn't drunk a thing. She hadn't poured out any wine, but she was pouring out her spirit!
2. Now this seems like a righteous prayer on the surface. But it's not. You say, well wait a minute! What about the fact that she committed her son to the Lord in a Nazirite vow? I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that at all. There's everything right about it! But listen, we can do the right things

¹⁰ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Nu 6:3–9). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

for the wrong reasons, and we can do the right things the wrong way. Do you remember the Scripture we looked at about prayer in Philippians a few weeks ago?

3. **4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)**
 4. We don't have to wonder how Hannah is postured in this prayer. She told Eli, "**I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.**" (1 Samuel 1:16). Hannah has no peace at all as she prays. It's because she's not rejoicing in the Lord or coming to Him with thanksgiving; instead, she's wallowing in the oppression of her rival and the brokenness of her barrenness! She's shattered by a husband who is seemingly offended that she's broken about being barren. She's crying out to God in desperation for a child, not in desperation to know Him. She can't see life as good without having a child, so she has nothing to be thankful for in her prayer, only desperate about it. Instead of laying her burden before the Lord and trusting Him with it, she's pleading with God to lift the burden of the life of not getting what she wants. She's not seeking God because He is who she wants; she's seeking God to do what she wants! Nonetheless, like Job, she may not truly be living in submission to God, but she's still running to Him!
 5. Eli, realizing she's not drunk, hearing the worthiness in her request, and realizing her need for encouragement, encourages Hannah's faith.
- G. **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.**
1. Eli is the Judge and High Priest of Israel, so it's a huge deal that he said to her, "Go in peace" (something she didn't have), "and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." Eli didn't have the authority to demand that God do anything, but as the High Priest, He officially represented the people before the Lord. Therefore, Hannah could now know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God had heard her prayer. Additionally, hearing the High Priest agree with her request would certainly bolster her confidence in how God may respond. The representative of the people before God had just said to the Father, I, too, want to see you give her a son.

2. Ironically, Eli didn't realize that he had just asked God for his replacement as the Judge of Israel. But to the point of the present text, the little encouragement that Eli gave her is all it took for Hannah to let go of her anxiety and trust the Lord. Was it to trust that God would provide her with a son or that whatever God decided would be good? We don't know. But either way, verse 18 seems to be a response to Eli not thinking of her as a drunken crazy woman but instead, as a woman who loves, follows, and trusts God, the type of person that was supposed to have the favor of the High Priest. Her anxiety subsided, and her appetite returned, which could now be fulfilled by the choice cuts of meat her husband had given her!

The third part of the story shows us Hannah's prayer may have been faithless, but her commitment to it wasn't.

(3) God gave Hannah a son (Samuel), and Hannah faithfully gave him to the Lord! (1:19-28)

A. 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."

1. It should be noted that it doesn't appear that Hannah got pregnant as soon as they got back. In our teaching team meeting, Terry Gregoire, one of Venture's pastors, noted a difference in God's calling and timing. Just because God has called you to do something doesn't mean He's called you to do it now! Even Jesus didn't launch into His entire ministry until the Father told Him it was time!
2. Nonetheless, God gave her a son, and it appears she named him based on the circumstances surrounding his conception. Some scholars suggest Hannah intended the meaning of Samuel to be understood by its most raw translation - "name of God." However, many other scholars note that the Hebrew spelling of his name would be a play on the words that sound like "heard of God" or "asked of God." The text proves that this is what she meant by the name - **for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."**
 - a. "1:19-20. Shortly after Hannah's return to **Ramah**, she **conceived** and in due **course** bore **a son** whom she **named ... Samuel**. Though the name technically means "his name is God" or something similar, **Hannah** may, by assonance, have understood the name to mean "asked of God." She had "asked" (*šā'al*) God for a son, and He had "heard"

(šāma') her. "Samuel," then, would be associated with šāmūa' 'ēl, "heard of God," because **she** had **asked the Lord for him.**"¹¹

b. "In verse 19 we see the family of Elkanah worshiping the Lord the next morning: "They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house (v. 20) In Hebrew "Samuel" sounds a little like "Asked for." About this lad we are going to hear very much more."¹²

3. Many of us have made a promise to the Lord, but then when He did what we asked, we decided we didn't really mean what we said! In my fourth of the five years of eligibility the NCAA gives you to be a college athlete, the day before we started summer football camp, a guy pulled a piece of sheet metal across my left wrist, and it cut the flexor tendon in half. Without going into the whole story, I had to have an emergency surgery, and the doctors said I would miss the entire season. I had just spent the previous season out with a shoulder injury that resulted in me having to have my left shoulder completely reconstructed. So, after my wrist surgery, I made a deal with God that if He would get me back in time to play that season, I would quit playing football and entirely focus on school and ministry. Miraculously, I returned to play the last few games but played terribly. I was out of shape, and in the rush to get back, I pulled the hip flexors in both hips! So, when the season finished, I reversed my commitment and kept playing. Four months after that season ended, during a Spring Practice on April 1, 1995, I destroyed my left knee and spent my entire final year of eligibility in physical therapy! I've now had eight surgeries on that knee. It didn't go so well for me to tell God I would do something, then not do it!

4. However, Hannah never hesitated, watch what happened.

B. 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

¹¹ Merrill, E. H. (1985). [1 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 433). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹² Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (p. 33). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

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.

Note: "At the next annual sacrifice Elkanah was prepared to offer *"his vow."* Unless repudiated by the husband, the vow of a wife became an obligation upon her husband. Hannah elected not to go to the sanctuary until she had weaned the child and could present him to the Lord. Under the Mosaic law a woman was not obligated to attend the annual festivals. Elkanah agreed that this would be the wisest course. He expressed aloud his prayer that the Lord would *"confirm his word,"* i.e., Yahweh would bring Hannah's vow to fruition (1:21–23). Eastern women nursed their babies up to three years. When the child was weaned, Hannah took him and a generous offering to the sanctuary. The family first offered their sacrifice. Then Hannah presented the young boy to Eli. She reminded the priest of the incident some three years earlier when he had mistaken her earnest petition as drunken gibberish. Since God had answered her prayer, Hannah dedicated the lad to the Lord for as long as he lived. In gratitude Eli bowed in worship (1:24–28)."¹³

Now, at this point in my sermon, you might wonder how Hannah's story fits into our theme of being a Godly influencer. Well, here's what you need to understand: there's no such thing as perfect faith, just faith in the one who is perfect.

Conclusion: Gritty faith is flawed faith that nonetheless keeps pressing forward! Hannah's faith is not a great example of faith, but her refusal to stop seeking the Lord is! More importantly, God's blessing to let Hannah be known as Samuel's mother, despite her weak faith, should remind us that God's salvation and blessings are not to the praise of our faith but to the glory of His grace!

Everywhere we go in the Bible, the "heroes" of the faith never got it all right. It's not an excuse for us to approve of, or justify our weak faith, but rather the motivation to press forward in obedience to Him, knowing that God will never quit on me even when I want to quit on Him!! For instance:

- (1) Abraham doubted God right after God saved Him, yet God still fulfilled His promise to Abraham. (Genesis 15)
- (2) Elijah ran and hid right after God had sent a fire that consumed the water-soaked altar. However, despite this lack of faith, God still used Elijah in unbelievable ways. (1 Kings 18 and 19, 2 Kings 1 and 2).

¹³ Smith, J. E. (1995). [*The Books of History*](#) (pp. 249–250). Joplin, MO: College Press.

- (3) Peter denied even knowing Jesus after saying he would die for Him, yet after the resurrection, Jesus went out of His way to reassure Peter of His love for him and that He wanted to use Peter in a significant way to lead and feed His sheep! (Luke 22:55-62, John 21:15-19)
- (4) The apostle Paul struggled with arrogance so much that God put some grit in his pants! Paul said the Lord put a thorn in his flesh to humble him (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)! God didn't quit using Paul because Paul's faith was flawed. Paul ended up writing most of the New Testament!

My point is not to give you an excuse to sin or be lazy in your faith but rather the exact opposite. Your faith is flawed; it doesn't meet God's standards; you fail, but keep pressing forward, knowing His love for you isn't flawed! His promise to save you, to grow you up, and sanctify you will not fail. No matter how weak your faith is, His life is there for you to have and experience if you will stop drowning yourself in your failure and start walking in His success!!!! It's why Paul wrote,

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12-14)

Don't give up because you don't understand why God isn't doing what you think He should do. Don't give up because you feel you'll never overcome that sin. Don't give up because you believe God has given up on you. Don't stop running to Him! Put some grit in your faith and press on, knowing HE WILL FINISH WHAT HE STARTED!

6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)