

40 DAYS OF DISCOVERY

SESSION 2 | DISCOVERING FAITH WHILE “STUCK”

1 SAMUEL 1, 2:1-10 | HANNAH

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt stuck? Have you ever felt like life was holding you back? Have you ever felt that all of the culture's expectations of output that were pertinent to you simply didn't manifest? This too can be a dark and frustrating time. Sadly, we have been conditioned to define our worth by our degree of productivity: What can I produce? Am I adding value to society? The economic and social fallout of the COVID-19 virus has caused an increase in anxiety and depression as many have not been able to produce and therefore measure up to both cultural and personal expectations of success.

What happens when we don't measure up? Or worse, what happens when we are unable to produce what is expected? What happens when we don't meet our own expectations? In this session, we encounter a woman who found faith while being unable to meet her cultural expectations. It was there that God met her and also stands ready to meet us.

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 1

Background: Judges

Key Verses: 1 Samuel 6,10-11,
18,20, 2:9

Supporting Scripture: Prov. 13:12

LET'S DISCOVER!

At times, _____ allows seasons of unfruitfulness (v.2,6)

"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." v.2

"And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb." v.6

As with Hannah's barrenness, God can allow seasons of life where we are unable to produce our desired outcomes.

In dark times, _____ and _____ can manifest even in the life of the believer (v.7,10)

"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." v.7

"She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly." v.10

Depression and anxiety are real, even among people of Faith. How we respond to them in times of darkness is critically important.

Bring your _____ to the Lord: Be _____ with God! (v.10-15)

"She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 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.'" v.10-11

We must bring all of our pain and vexation to the God of all comfort: Lay it all on the line! Be real with God.

We must _____ the Word of the Lord (vv.17-18)

"Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." 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." vv.17-18

The blessing and the promise of the Lord can restore our faith if we believe.



Your _____ comes ultimately from the Lord (v.19-20)

"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. 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." vv.19-20

No matter the circumstances, it is God who rescues us from our affliction.

Respond with _____ and _____ to the Lord (2:1-10)

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail." 2:9

Hannah responded to the Lord's faithfulness with obedience and worship.

CONCLUSION

For Hannah and the women of her day, the primary expectation of society (and much of their communal worth) was tied to their ability to bear sons for their husbands. For many women today, that standard has expanded to a multitude of expectations: Attain a college education, maintain a successful and meaningful career, obtain a great salary, get married, make a significant impact on society, and of course, become a mother and maintain a home. Men today would echo some of the same expectations as indicators of a fruitful and productive life. Hannah's story reminds us that we can pour our hearts out to God and trust Him for deliverance when these expectations seem overwhelming or impossible.

QUESTIONS FOR EXPLORATION

1. Are there any areas of your life that seem “stuck?” Or unproductive? List them.

2. Have you, or anyone you know battled depression? What were the signs? How did it affect you (them)?

3. When was the last time you poured your heart out to God for a desired outcome? What was the result?

4. Reflect on a time when the Word of God restored or encouraged your faith?

5. In what specific ways have you seen the Lord deliver you? Please share with your study partner or group.

6. Is there vow or promise that remains unpaid to the Lord for a previous answer to prayer? What is your first step in fulfilling it?



APPLICATION

- In a prayer journal or diary, take a moment to pour your heart out to God: Every worry, concern, stressor, and fear as an act of surrender.
- Do you know someone who battles depression or anxiety? Send them hand-written encouragement this week as a blessing.
- Write a song of praise or a prayer of gratitude to the Lord for something He's recently provided.

