

Living the Story

A Study through Scripture

Introduction:

Once again we find a section of text for our reading as a congregation far beyond what we could do during the limited time we have in groups, so we will focus on chapter 1 and the first half of 2 of 1 Samuel.

I want to make you aware of a situation that *may* pop up in some of your groups. There are some women—more than you would imagine—who wrestle with a desire to give birth to a child, but for some reason or another are unable to do so. Please do not assume that any couple that wants have a child will automatically be able to do so. Some cannot. Because this is the case, a conversation about Hannah can be a painful one. So, please use extreme grace and sensitivity when opening up a conversation about what is like to have a child and “giving” your child over to God. Some individuals would love to know what that is like!

The reality—and I hope I do it justice within this lesson—is that the story of Hannah can be seen from a perspective of something even more encompassing than offering a child for God’s service. It is actually a story about giving that which is most precious to us over to God for his use and glory. For some of us, it may be our children, but for others, it may be about our careers, our station in life, or even our talents and abilities.

I am reminded of a line from a Meatloaf song: “I would do anything for love, but I won’t do that.” (I would *not* recommend using the song for your devotional time. This also, I hope, will be the first and last time I use a Meatloaf song as a part of the curriculum!) What would you be willing to give up for God? Then, ask yourself: What is the last thing in your life you are willing to give over to God? You will give anything else, just please so not ask me for _____? How would you fill in that blank? In many ways, I think *this* is the thing that we can substitute for Samuel in the Hannah story. We may have many things we are content with using for God’s glory, but it is the things in the far corners of our lives, just out of reach from God, that we need to focus on.

Summary of the Text:

Samuel is one of the great leaders of the people of Israel. He leads them through the transition of being a people who did whatever they thought was right in their own eyes because they had no king (Judges 21.25) to having a king (even if this was not God’s first desire for his people). Even when they have a king, Samuel seems to serve as an advisor to King Saul. So, it is not insignificant to read how Samuel comes into being and the remarkable circumstances surrounding his life. But there is something more to his story than just historical background.

I am always impressed with Hannah’s willingness to let Samuel go live in the temple when she had struggled and prayed for so long to have that child in the first place. I think I would have wanted to withhold him and let him remain with me, because of my love for him. Surely God would understand the importance of this child to me! I think this is what makes the story of Samuel and Hannah so important: Hannah is willing to “give up” that which is most important to her. She is completely committed to God.

This is the part of this story I want us to focus on. We certainly could look at the ways that Samuel came into leadership, but for us, it may be more beneficial to think about what we are willing to allow God to use and the ways we allow him to do so. Is everything we have God’s ... as long as it does not cause us discomfort or is not to important to us?

LESSON #10

Date: 11/11/2012

Text: 1 Samuel 1.1-2.11

The Story: Chapter 10

The Big Picture: Hannah’s commitment to God shows us not only the remarkable way Samuel comes into a leadership role with the people of Israel, but also a life of complete faith in God. Everything Hannah has, even Samuel, is to be used for God’s glory.

Materials Needed: none

Preparing for the Group Time:

Spend some time thinking about those things that are most important to you. What is it in your life that you would have a difficult time handing over to God for his glory? Is this perhaps an indicator of a need for you to alter your priorities?

Living the Story
Lesson #10
Text: 1 Samuel 1.1-2.11

Lesson Outline:

If you gave your group an assignment for this week, be sure to take a few minutes to review how their week went.

For an icebreaker question this week, ask your group: If you woke up and realized your house was on fire, what one object would you grab on your way out? (We are going to assume that your family is already outside waiting for you.) Why did you pick that object? Did you have trouble deciding between this and something else?

Read 1 Samuel 1.

Spend some time going through the discussion questions below.

As you end your group time and transition into prayer time, read 1 Samuel 2.1-11 as a group to do so.

Close with a prayer or a time of blessing, as described below.

Discussion Questions:

What stands out to you as you read 1 Samuel 1? Is there anything unusual? Anything you had not seen in previous readings?

Why do you think it is important for the Biblical writer to tell us how Samuel came onto the scene, including the struggles his mother had and his unusual upbringing?

How would you describe Hannah (not physically)?

How difficult would it have been for you, if you were in the same situation as Hannah, to allow Samuel to move into the temple? Do you think it would have been different if Samuel had been one of six boys?

Why would Hannah choose to allow Samuel to live in the temple, given her struggles to have him in the first place?

In what ways do those things we are most attached to cause us to be better followers of Jesus? In what ways do those things pull us away from following Jesus?

What are some things we are most attached to that we may need to give over to God?

What does it look like for God to be in control of everything we have—including what we own, our jobs, our family, our thoughts, everything.

For the Children:

We have all seen children want to possess every toy they find near them, sometimes to the point they cannot even walk. At the same time, we have also seen children share the things they have in the most expected ways. This story is an excellent reminder of how valuable our children are, but also how important it is for all of us to give over to God the things we have.

I think it is always a good idea to reinforce the idea of letting God use us to our children, so look for a way that they can be included in your discussion time today.

Living the Story:

Your assignment this week is to use everything you have for God. You may need to be very intentional in your thinking and ask yourself: Rather than assume that God has control of this, how can I be sure I am using this for God's glory? You may also want to think of some things this evening that you may not have been using for God's glory and then decide on ways you can do so.

Prayer Time:

You may choose to use your prayer time as a time of blessing, particularly if you have several children in your group. Your prayers will be focused on expressing to God your love for the children in the group, as well as your desire—again, spoken to God—that they will be used for his glory. You may want to circle the children as a group as you pray for them.

What's Next:

Next week we will look at the life of David (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 10) or chapter 10 in *The Story*.