

The Story of Hannah – Purposeful Listening

I Samuel 1: 1-28

What does it mean to listen with purpose?

Listening with purpose is to have empathy. You are not only hearing what they say but trying to put yourself in their shoes. This is a skill that requires patience and practice.

Can you share a time in which you listened carefully with purpose?

Setting the Stage

At the opening of the 1 Samuel, it is important to understand that Israel has been under the guidance of judges for over 200 years. Research indicates that Eli and Samuel are the last of the judges. Samuel will grow up in the tabernacle as a priest-in-training under Eli. The nation is in deep disturbance and has fallen away from God. So, God is preparing Samuel to lead his people back to righteous living.

Elkanah lives in Ramah, the Region of Zuph in the hill country of Ephraim. Elkahah had two wives, Hannah and Pheninnah. Pheninnah had children, but not Hannah. Elkahah presented his sacrifice but would only give one choice portion to Hannah. He loved Hannah, but Pheninnah would make fun of her because she was barren. So, Hannah, deep in anguish, cried as she prayed to God.

Chapter 1: 9-11

- Hannah knew her husband loved her but could not keep from listening to Peninnah's jeers and hurtful words.
- Hannah trusted God and struck a bargain with God. She promised to dedicate the child to God all the days of his life.

Chapter 1: 15-16

- Hannah listened purposefully even in moments of anger and grief.
- She prayed out of great anger and sorrow.

Chapter 1: 17, 18, and 23

- Hannah's attitude changed in preparing to talk to God.
- Hannah received encouragement from Eli.
- She resolved to leave the problem with God.

Reflections on Purposeful Listening

Key verses: "Sir, do you remember me? 'Hannah asked. 'I am the woman who stood here several years ago praying to the Lord. I asked the Lord to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now, I am giving him to the Lord, and he will belong to the Lord his whole life.' And they worshiped the Lord there" (I Samuel 1:26-28).

1. How can listening to negative conversations impede your spiritual walk with God?

2. Have you ever tried to strike a barter with God? If so, what was the result?

3. When your prayers are answered how do you show gratitude to God?

Reflection at home: Read I Samuel 2: 1-11 – Hannah's Prayer of Praise

What is the meaning of Hannah's prayer?