

Hannah

We know her for her **sorrow**. She longed for a son, but couldn't have children.

We know her for her **faithfulness**. She never gave up hope that God would hear her prayer.

We also know her for her **sacrifice**. She dedicated her baby Samuel to the Lord and left him at the temple to serve God *"all the days of his life"*

Hannah is one of the most recognizable women in Scripture for all these reasons.

Hannah's life had significant moments that stand out, but there are other facts about her we often overlook.

1. Hannah knew how to respond with grace, or not respond at all.

Hannah showed unmatched restraint with her words.

She not only knew the right things to say, but also when to say nothing.

For years Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, ridiculed Hannah for her infertility.

Yet instead of responding to her tormentor, she kept her mouth shut.

During one of the family's annual trips to the tabernacle, Hannah had enough of the ridicule.

She didn't lash out at Peninnah, but she knew it was time to do something.

She left the dinner table and went straight to God with her plea.

Her character was tested when Eli accused her of being drunk.

And once again Hannah demonstrated grace and humility through her words.

"Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

By describing herself as Eli's servant, she acknowledged his position of authority.

When she could have easily mouthed back at him, she chose to display proper respect.

2. Hannah took her desires to God, and received blessings and help from Eli.

Once Hannah explained herself to Eli, his heart softened.

He then reassured her of God's intention to answer her prayer for a son.

But that was just the first time Eli went to God on Hannah's behalf.

Eli was right. God answered her prayer. Hannah gave birth to Samuel.

Each year Elkanah and Hannah returned to the Temple, Eli asked God to give them more children because of their great sacrifice. Hannah had 5 more children after Samuel (3 sons, 2 daughters)

3. Hannah was the fourth woman in biblical history to suffer with infertility.

Before Hannah, three other women endured the despair of not being able to conceive.

Sarah was the first, followed by Rebekah and then Rachel.

However, Hannah accepted God's promise with unwavering faith. The other three did not.

Sarah laughed at the angel's proclamation that God would give her a child.

Rebekah questioned, "If all is well, why am I like this?" as her twins struggled in the womb.

Rachel gave the responsibility to her husband.

But Hannah trusted God without doubt or concern. Her reverent fear of the Lord was just one more quality of her godly character.

4. Hannah remained faithful to her promise.

As Hannah dedicated Samuel back to the Lord, she fulfilled her commitment. How hard this must have been for her as a mom! I wonder whether I would have been able to go through with it, but Hannah also praised God for her blessing. She thanked Him for His sovereignty.

These details of Hannah's life tell us a lot about her as a person – real, humble, passionate.

God was a part of her life, she believed, and was faithful to him, to the point of sacrificing the one thing she longed for!

HANNAH	ELIZABETH	MARY
30's	Old (of Priestly descent)	12-15
Married	Married	Single
Married to Elkanah (No 2 wife) Led a religious life	Married to a Priest Zechariah An 'upright man' Did not believe the angel	Engaged to a carpenter A 'righteous man' Believed the angel
Slept with Elkanah	'Knew a man'	Virgin
Barren	Barren	Virgin
Became pregnant	6 months pregnant	Just conceived
Pregnancy prayed for (both Hannan and Eli)	Pregnancy requested	Pregnancy not requested
Ridiculed by Wife No. 1	Understood social shame	Would face criticism
God answered their prayer	Miraculous human conception	Conceived by the Holy Spirit
Mother of Samuel (and 5 other children)	Mother of John (forerunner of Jesus)	Mother of Jesus Christ
Responded by honouring her commitment to return Samuel to the Temple for Eli to raise. Hannah's Song, begins with weeping and ends with song	Responded with praise	Responded with praise Mary's Song (Magnificat) a prayer of deep humility.
Faithful to God	Accepted God's plan	Accepted God's plan
Not intimidated Prays and gives voice to her desire	Devout and obedient to God	Mary felt unworthy Encouraged by Elizabeth
God used a very insignificant woman to accomplish very significant work.	God used a very insignificant woman to accomplish very significant work.	God used a very insignificant woman to accomplish very significant work.

Elizabeth was a great mentor because she had been taught to walk with the Lord.
Her lineage runs back to Aaron, the priestly lineage.
Elizabeth had been taught by her parents to walk with the Lord.
She followed God's guidance and ended up marrying a priest herself.
They were righteous before the Lord. They lived out the godly principles that they both had been taught.

Elizabeth was filled with the Lord's Holy Spirit.
Elizabeth had the Lord's wisdom, and as a result, recognized Mary's distress.

She jumped in to help by mentoring Mary in her time of need.
Right away she blesses Mary and the Baby in her womb.

She recognized the Lord's hand at work in this situation.
Elizabeth is an example for Mary.
She had experienced God's miracle in conceiving a child in her old age, well passed her childbearing age.
She knew the Lord and recognized Jesus as her Lord.

Elizabeth encourages Mary in her faith, that she trusted in the Word of God and encourages her to continue by showing her how to do it through her own example.

Elizabeth is quick to advise Mary, to encourage her, to strengthen her faith, and to help her through this difficult time in her life.

She has the experience that Mary lacks.
Mary is encouraged to bring the Son of God and Saviour of the world into the world for all humankind.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A MENTOR

1. Mutual Trust and Confidentiality

Journeying with another person requires sharing some of the deepest parts of your life—sharing your struggles, fears, and dreams. You need to have confidence in one another and mutual respect.

2. Spiritual Maturity

It almost goes without saying, but you need to seek out a mentor who practices what they preach.

Heb 13:7 says to “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”

If you are to model yourself on someone else’s actions, you need to agree with the example they are setting.

Do they attend a Bible study? Are they living with integrity? Do they put God first in the decisions they make? Are they generous, loving, and passionate about the gospel?

Are the spiritual fruits of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control evident in their lives Gal 5:22-23

If your potential mentors are not actively living out the faith they proclaim, cross them off your list.

3. Relationship Boundaries

It’s important to like and admire someone you spend one-on-one time with, but boundaries are important when it comes to choosing a mentor.

I would recommend choosing a mentor removed from your regular friend groups, someone who is able to look objectively into your life and provide sound advice.

If you feel you are limited in how much you can share with them, don’t chose them as your mentor.

4. A Good Listener

There is a well-known saying that God gave us one mouth and two ears for a reason.

We should be quick to listen and slow to speak Jam 1:19

While your mentor will no doubt have good advice for you along the way, it is also important that they listen to you and that you feel comfortable opening up to them.

When someone understands where you’re coming from, they can offer you the best kind of support.

As someone being mentored, you also need to hone your listening skills and be willing to grow.

And know that your mentor’s advice comes from a place of love.

However, bear in mind that a mentor is not necessarily an expert.

They may provide helpful advice and feedback, but they’re not infallible.

A good mentor will be aware of this and be open to rebuke.

You may also find that your mentor is able to learn new insights from spending time with you.

5. Someone Who Will Both Encourage and Challenge You

As disciples of Jesus, our faith cannot stay in a state of infancy.

We need to keep growing and developing as we expand our knowledge of God’s Word and deepen our walk with Him. We are encouraged to move from spiritual milk onto solid food—an active faith of substance 1 Cor 3:2-3.

Why not consider finding a mentor? There may be people within your church or workplace you could approach. You might like to meet someone for a coffee and get to know them a bit better first, before you decide whether you want to pursue an ongoing mentor/mentee relationship.

Jesus’ call in the Great Commission Matt 28:19 is not to make lukewarm fans, but *disciples* who actively imitate the life and teaching of Christ. The training of disciples also creates a multiplication effect as they are then able to train and invest in the lives of others.

Prov 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

Finding a mentor may be one of the best decisions you make as you grow in spiritual maturity and help others to do the same.

Think of the times when you wished you had a mentor and God came through.

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”. (John 14:26 NIV).

As Jesus tells his disciples that he is leaving, he shares news about a new mentor. Jesus announces that the Spirit of truth is coming to be with his followers forever.

The Spirit has many mentoring roles in the lives of believers. Among other things, the Spirit reminds us of what Christ has taught us. The Spirit produces fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). The Spirit convicts us of our sin (John 16:8). The Spirit testifies about Jesus and challenges us to testify also (John 15:26-27). God has placed his Spirit within us to focus us on the truth. The Spirit mentors us by reminding us of God’s teaching. We will be convicted of our sin by his instruction revealed to us in Scripture.

The Spirit mentors us day by day without our having to schedule an appointment. All we need to do is come with a willing heart to hear God’s Word. The Spirit will do the heavy lifting of convicting our hearts and reshaping our lives.

Are you allowing the Spirit to mentor you and shape your life? Is there someone in your life who could use some reminding of God’s truth in Scripture? Follow the Spirit’s lead to bear fruit and testify about Jesus, allowing the Spirit to do his transforming work in you and others.

Jesus’ call in the Great Commission, is not to make lukewarm fans, but *disciples* who actively imitate the life and teaching of Christ. The training of disciples also creates a multiplication effect as they are then able to train and invest in the lives of others, this is Kingdom building! The path to growing church communities!

What are you doing to do your bit for God?