

LOVE GOD, DEDICATE YOUR BEST

MAY 12, 2024

WORSHIP

In Jesus' Name, Anchor of Our Lives, Land of the Living, Battle Belongs, Goodness of God

WELCOME

What do you consider to be the best things in your life?

WORD

1 SAMUEL 1:1-11

(READ THE ENTIRE CHAPTER 1)

¹ Now there was a man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. ³ Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of armies in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there. ⁴ When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; ⁵ but to Hannah he would give a double portion, because he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ Her rival, moreover, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. ⁷ And it happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, that she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Then Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why do you weep, and why do you not eat, and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" ⁹ Then Hannah got up after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰ She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she made a vow and said, "LORD of armies, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your bond-servant and remember me, and not forget Your bond-servant, but will give Your bond-servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

The central passage of the first five books of the Bible is "to love the LORD...with all your heart, soul and strength..." (**Deuteronomy 6:5**). So, how do we love God more than our earthly desires? Earthly desires are not necessarily wrong, but they can become more important to us than God. Some of these desires that tend to occupy our heart may be money, career, dreams, comfort, relationships, family. To dedicate our best to God is to protect our hearts from lusts, worries and idols (ex. Abel in **Genesis 4:4-5**). When we offer our best to the Lord, we also have His sufficient provision (**Proverbs 3:9-10, Matthew 6:33**). Today, we will learn from a mother in the Bible, Hannah, how to dedicate our best to God as she did.

BE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

We can't dedicate something important to us to someone we don't know. That's why we need to know God, be in His presence constantly. If you don't know God, you won't trust Him but if you know God, then the rest will follow. This is what happened to Hannah (**1 Samuel 1:2**). Both Hannah and her husband Elkanah were devoted to the Lord (**v 3**). Yet Hannah was childless because the Lord has prevented her from bearing children (**v. 5**). She was also bitterly provoked by Elkanah's second wife, Peninah who had children (**vv. 6-8**). You too may have felt the pressure of relatives at family reunions, or from social media about still being single, or childless. If we don't learn how to love God more than our desires, the pressures of the world will push us to idolatry. When Hannah was greatly distressed, she went to the Lord (**vv.9-11**). She poured out her heart to Him (**vv. 12-16**). Peace, comfort, and clarity can only be found in the presence of God who knows you intimately, your struggles, what's good for you, the decisions you need to make (**Psalms 139:1-3**).

SET YOUR JOY IN GOD

Our tendency is to set our joy on our desires---marriage, career, money, health. You can have joy even if you don't get the desires of your heart (**1 Samuel 1:17-18**). Hannah made a vow to give her child to the Lord (**v. 11**). She worshipped God even before her prayer was answered (**v. 19**). It's one thing to make a vow, but another thing to fulfill it. But not so with Hannah---she made good on her word (**vv. 21-22**). Elkanah also worshipped God by dedicating their son to the Lord (**v. 23**).

Imagine Hannah's worries for her young son as she entrusts him to Eli the priest! Yet Hannah was willing to not see Samuel for most of her life, as she has dedicated him to the Lord for the rest of his life (**vv. 24-28**). The more we fix our eyes on our desires, the more they become idols; but the more we focus on Jesus, the more we

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can dedicate those things to the Lord (**Hebrews 12:1**). The presence of God ultimately satisfies our greatest need and our greatest longing! When we realize that, then we can dedicate our best to the Lord.

THANK HIM ALWAYS

Thank God always, for that is what worship is: gratefulness to God no matter how He answers our prayers. We still do our part, but if God says “no”, we will still thank Him. That’s what Hannah did, she “exulted” in the Lord and affirmed the Lord’s holiness and knowledge because He knows better than we do (**1 Samuel 2:1-3, Isaiah 55:8-9**). Hannah gave examples of how God’s ways are better than ours (**1 Samuel 2:5-6**).

Even if we get what we want on our own, we are still miserable when we are not in the presence of God and are not willing to dedicate our best to the Lord (**1 Samuel 2:7-8**). If you are worshipping the Lord, He will keep you secure, but those who go against the Lord will be “shattered” (**1 Samuel 2:9-10**). God was preparing Samuel (and Hannah) for what he will do in the future---to anoint the first two kings of Israel including king David. Hannah did not know this when she prayed (latter part of verse 10)! That’s why we need to be men and women who will thank God for who He is and not just for what He will do for us. That is worship!

God blessed Hannah by allowing her to visit Samuel every year (**1 Samuel 2:18-19**). Eli the priest would pray for Hannah and God gave her other children even if Hannah probably did not expect that to happen (**vv.20-21**). Lastly, Hannah was blessed through Samuel, who became a most respected prophet in all of Israel (**1 Samuel 3:19-20**)! We dedicate our best to God because of Who He is, what He has done, and what He can do in and through us. And remember, God did the greatest act of dedication---He gave Jesus His Son to save us from our sins. As a grateful response, let us love God and dedicate your best to Him!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Is there someone or something in your life that you love more than God? Why?

2. Setting It Right.

What do you think are the reasons why we need to dedicate our best to the Lord?

3. Living It Out.

What do we need to do to start dedicating our best to the Lord?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the mothers in your life to follow Hannah’s example in loving God and dedicating her children to God. Share to others how God gave His best to save us---His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God’s help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists’ attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, dleaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends..

MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 1:28

“So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.