

ARM Prison Outreach International

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"Hannah: Principles for Godly Mothers"

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the 5th email message of 2008 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christian workers around the world. It is a potential Mothers Day sermon; we first sent this three years ago and many have joined our list since then. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

A New Website for Preachers, Teachers, Chaplains, etc.

www.thechristianwarehouse.com

An ARM supporter/subscriber has recommended a new "resource" web site. Here's his note:

Please understand that the site is just in its beginning stages! I realize that there is MUCH more to do but at least it's up and running. I'd ask you to do a few things for me...

1. Please check out the site. Registration is free and allows you to upload and download material.
2. Upload some of your sermons, lessons, etc. to the site. It works best if you first convert your document to a PDF file but can be uploaded in other formats too.
3. Download a thing or two and see how it works.
4. Go to the "classifieds" area and see what you think too. My goal is to have a place where Christian individuals and churches can advertise all sorts of things.
5. And most importantly - please give me any suggestions, criticisms and ideas that you believe would be helpful. I want this to evolve into a great resource for Christians.

Thanks for your help! I look forward to your input. I also look forward to seeing what kinds of lessons, sermons, devotions, meditations, etc. you upload to the site because, after all, I'm always looking for good ideas!

In Christ, Bob Leinbaugh

"Hannah: Principles for Godly Mothers"

1 Samuel 1:1-22

One afternoon a man came home from work to find total mayhem in his house. His three children were outside, still in their pajamas, playing in the mud, with empty food boxes and wrappers strewn all around the front yard. The door of his wife's car was open, as was the front door to the house. Proceeding into the entry, he found an even bigger mess. A lamp had been knocked over, and the throw rug was wadded against one wall. In the front room the TV was loudly blaring as a kids' video played, and the family room was cluttered with toys and various items of clothing. In the kitchen, dishes filled the sink, breakfast food was spilled on the

counter, dog food was spilled on the floor, a broken glass lay under the table, and a small pile of sand was spread by the back door. He quickly headed up the stairs, stepping over toys and more piles of clothes, looking for his wife. He was worried she may be ill, or that something serious had happened. He found her lounging in the bedroom, still curled in the bed in her pajamas, reading a novel. She looked up at him, smiled, and asked how his day went. He looked at her bewildered and asked, "What happened here today?" She again smiled and answered, "You know every day when you come home from work and ask me what in the world I did today?" "Yes," was his incredulous reply. She answered, "Well, today I didn't do it."

It is Mothers Day and we are paying tribute to the special role that Moms play in all our lives. How they labor! How they love! How they lead! How they serve! It was my privilege recently to visit with my parents after working with my sister and brother in getting Dad back home with Mom following Dad's surgery, hospitalization, and rehab in a nursing home. In a few days, they'll have been married 64 years. I'm still trying to abide by the fourth command: "Honor thy father and thy mother..." That loving instruction from our Heavenly Father is just as important for grown adults as is it for kids. We may not obey anymore, in the sense we did as children, but we must continue to honor our parents.

Let's take a brief look at some principles of Godly motherhood from the Word of God -- I believe you'll find they ought to apply to each of us:

1 Sam 1:1-22

1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

2 He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

3 Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.

5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb.

6 And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.

7 This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat.

8 Elkanah her husband would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.

10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD.

11 And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

12 As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk

14 and said to her, "How long will you keep on getting drunk? Get rid of your wine."

15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD.

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

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

20 So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

21 When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow,

22 Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always." (NIV)

Three basic rules for living that we ought to learn from Hannah, Godly mother:

1. The first and foremost goal in life is to be pleasing to God.

3 Year after year this man and his family went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

When Elkanah went to worship, it was a family affair. Hannah was a devout follower of her Creator. We can tell from the intensity of her desire for a son to be raised in the Lord that she was a devout worshiper of God. We can tell from the intensity of her prayer to the Lord that she was a devoted follower of Israel's God.

At the root of every family deficiency is a failure to be submitted to the will of God. When any mom or dad fails to lay a foundation --in marriage and parenthood --that is rooted in the Will of God and the Word of God, the success and true joy of that family is immediately in question. Fatherhood success and fulfillment starts with

God and His Word. Motherhood success and fulfillment starts with God and His Word.

Look at other clues in the passage: "to the house of the Lord year after year." These folks were faithful in the ordinances of the Lord. They were faithful to the annual feasts held at the Tabernacle, and faithful to the Sabbath and other ordinances of the Lord. It is so parallel with the description of the woman the Heavenly Father chose to be the mother of the Messiah. Listen to this description of Mary as the mother of our Lord:

Luke 2:39-41

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. (NIV)

Moms...and Girls, too: You can't take any bigger step toward joy and fulfillment as a wife and mother than to follow in the steps of these devout women of the Bible!

Also, verses 10 and 11 tell us she was eloquent in prayer and well acquainted with the vow system of the Law of Moses. She was no novice when it came to the Word of God and the laws of God and the lifestyle of the Godly. Those verses lead us to this point:

2. When in distress, realize your answers lie with the Lord, your Creator.

10 In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..."

Where do you turn when in distress? When things go wrong and you have a sickness and pain in your soul, to whom do you turn? Hannah turned to the Lord. She poured out her heart unto her God.

What a passionate prayer! What a powerful outpouring of emotion? How her heart ached for a child that she could raise in the ways of the Lord!

So many options exist for us these days in terms of whom we can turn to in times of distress. There are government and private agencies. There are counselors and psychologists galore. But have we forgotten to turn to the Lord and His Word? Have we forgotten where to get Wonderful Counseling? Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (NIV)

3. When God comes thru, keep your promise!

20 So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

21 When the man Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow,

22 Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always."

Samuel became a great leader for God. While not taking the credit away from his own choices to follow the Lord, it is clear that Hannah's role was foundational. God kept His word, to her as delivered thru Eli, and she kept her word to the Lord.

How many times we've promised the Lord we'll do such and such if He will get us thru the current predicament, or rescue us out of a particularly difficult situation. But how soon we forget.

One delinquent church member was seriously ill with a high fever and called for the preacher. Upon his arrival, the preacher dutifully prayed for the businessman. He didn't reprimand him for his absence from church or his neglect of his tithes and offerings. After the prayer, the man, who was somewhat wealthy, volunteered to make amends. "Preacher," said he, "If I get over this horrible fever and sickness, I'll make a large contribution to our church." Said the preacher, "I didn't come to collect money, Harry, but I hope the Lord restores your health and you get involved again in the church." A few days later Harry comes by the church office to thank the preacher. Harry says, "I am so delighted with my recovery. So glad to be over that horrible fever!" "That's great," says the minister. "I thank God that you've been restored so soon. By the way," he added with some hesitancy, "Do you think you could make that large contribution soon, we are having some pretty tough times here lately." "Big contribution?" asked Harry. "Yes, don't you remember that you promised to catch up on your offerings with a big contribution?" "Oh," said Harry, "Surely you won't hold me responsible for what I might have said when I was delirious with a fever!"

How many times have you reneged on your promise to the Lord? Have you ever bargained with God and failed to keep your part of the bargain? Could it be that if your mother were able to be here today, she would remind you to keep any and every promise you've made to the Lord? Might she be saying I can teach you about Jesus, but I cannot make Jesus your Lord. It's your decision.

I gave you life, but cannot live it for you.

I can teach you things, but I cannot make you learn. That's your decision.

I can give you directions, but I cannot be there to lead you.

I can take you to church, but I cannot make you believe. That's your decision.

I can teach you right from wrong, but I cannot always decide for you.

I can buy you beautiful clothes, but I cannot make you beautiful inside.

I can teach you to share, but I cannot make you unselfish. That's your decision.

I can teach you respect, but I cannot force you to show honor.

I can advise you about friends, but cannot choose them for you. That's your decision.

I can advise you about sex, but I cannot keep you pure. That's your decision.

I can tell you the facts of life, but I can't build your reputation.

I can tell you about the dangers of drink, but I can't say "no" for you. It's your decision.

I can warn you about drugs, but I can't prevent you from using them.

I can tell you about lofty goals, but I can't achieve them for you.

I can teach you about kindness, but I can't force you to be gracious. It's your decision.

I can warn you about sins, but I cannot make you moral.

I can love you as a child, but I cannot place you in God's family. It's your decision.

I can tell you how to live, but I cannot give you eternal life. You must receive it from Jesus. I can love you with unconditional love all of my life . . . and I will!

I can pray for you, but I cannot make you walk with God. It's your decision.

It is your decision. Will you walk with God? Is there any other way to please your mother and your Creator?

"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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In 2007, ARM donated over 5.28 MILLION DaySpring Greeting cards to prisons!**