

## Discouragements and Troubles in the Flesh, and How to Deal with Them

- I. Introduction
  - a. **(Job 14:1)** “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.”
- II. Story of Hannah (**1 Samuel 1:1-18**)
  - a. Extent of her discouragements
    - i. Could not conceive a child (**vs. 6**) “...the Lord had shut up her womb.” – feeling of worthlessness
      - 1. Some of us may feel barren in our own work
      - 2. Where’s my place in the whole scheme of things?
      - 3. We may feel that our efforts go fruitless!
        - a. Everyone needs a sense of worth
        - b. **(John 15:2)** “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”
        - c. **(John 15:8)** “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”
      - 4. We need to remember that our efforts can only be fruitful through Christ
        - a. **(John 15:4)** “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”
        - b. It is God that gives the increase
          - i. **(1 Cor 3:6)** “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”
        - c. We need to be worried about the work, the labor in the field, rather than the harvest – God’s job!
    - ii. Persecuted by those around her that could conceive children (**vs. 6**) “...her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret.”
      - 1. Some of us may feel persecuted by those around us because of work being barren
      - 2. Year by year this persecution continued
        - a. **(vs. 7)** “And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.”
    - iii. Couldn’t even turn to her loving husband for support – He could not help her
      - 1. **(vs. 5)** “But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah”
        - a. Elkanah deeply loved Hannah – wanted to help her
      - 2. **(vs. 8)** “Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?”

- a. Paraphrase: “Isn’t all this attention that I’m giving you better than the problem that tortures you? Can’t I help you in any way? “
      - 3. Some of us may not be able to be helped by our brethren or family
        - a. To correct the problem is not within the hands of our brethren or family
      - iv. Those ‘in the know’ judged her too fast and were rash and harsh to her (**vs. 14**) “And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.”
        - 1. Sometimes it may feel that no one around us can understand our problems
- III. Source of Discouragements and Troubles
  - a. Knowing these sources we will be better equipped to deal with them. They are as followed:
    - i. Going against God’s plan – persecutions – Greatest source of troubles
    - ii. Uncontrollable outside forces – sickness, ailments, barrenness
    - iii. Lack of Patience
  - b. Uncontrollable forces can lead to troubles and discouragements
    - i. These include:
      - 1. Sickness
      - 2. Ailments
      - 3. Barren
      - 4. Some other “thorn in the flesh”
    - ii. Sometimes these uncontrollable forces are added to us to strengthen us.
      - 1. Example of Paul:
        - a. (**2 Cor 12:7-10**) “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: (***He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear***) for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities (***Weaknesses, troubles, trials***), that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”
      - 2. “God’s strength is made perfect (complete) in weakness”

- a. Example of Christ – Through suffering on the cross of Calvary, he was raised to sit on the right hand of God.
  - iii. We need to realize that in whatever situation that we are in that we can still conquer through Christ
    - 1. **(Phil 4:13)** “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
- c. Going against God’s plans will lead to troubles and discouragements
  - i. **(1 Sam 1:2)** “And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.”
  - ii. Elkanah went against God’s original plan for the family
    - 1. God design of the family was one man for one wife – they became one flesh (family unit)
      - a. **(Gen 2:24)** “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”
      - b. Jesus added: **(Matt 19:6)** “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”
    - 2. Example of Abraham
      - a. Sarah thought she would help God out in His plan and gave Abraham her handmaiden
      - b. **(Gen 16:2-4)** “And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.”
      - c. Isaac was mistreated by Ishmael
        - i. **(Gen 21:9)** “And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.”
        - ii. Paul uses the term persecuted in Gal 4:29
- iii. Peninnah was spiteful, hateful, hurtful
  - 1. Today brethren need to be supportive of their brethren around them
    - a. **(Gal 6:1-3)** “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. **Bear ye one another's burdens,**

and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”

b. **(Job 6:14)** “To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.”

iv. Eli was rash and judgmental

1. Brethren need to listen before they speak

a. **(James 1:19-20)** “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

b. **(Prov 18:13)** “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

d. Lack of Patience will lead to troubles and discouragements

i. The presence of patience will deplete the strength of troubles and discouragement

1. **(James 1:2-4)** “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

IV. Dealing with our Discouragements and Troubles in the Flesh

a. She kept her peace – did not retaliate!

i. Turn the other cheek

1. **(Matt 5:38-39)** “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

b. Prayed to God

i. Recognized her discouragements and went to God in Prayer

1. **(1 Sam 1:10)** “And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.”

ii. She was not vague in her prayer

1. Prayers of the Bible are usually brief and always to the point

2. Specifically prayed for what she desired

a. Desire is not the same as Prayer

i. **(Rom 10:1)** “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”

b. Need to take the desire and form them into a verbal prayer.

i. **(1 Sam 1:13)** “Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard”

- ii. Must ask before we can receive
      - 1. **(Matt 7:7)** “Ask, and it shall be given you.”
      - 2. **(Matt 7:11)** “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
    - 3. God knows even before we ask – Why beat around the bush about what we want – just ask
      - a. **(Matt 6:8)** “Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.”
      - b. Even if we don’t have the perfect words, they sound perfect to God – Spirit intercedes
      - c. **(Rom 8:26)** “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”
  - iii. If you are a child of God – Christian you can come boldly unto the throne of God
    - 1. **(Heb 4:15-16)** “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
- c. Talked to someone that can help her with her problems and could join her in prayer
  - i. **(1 Sam 1:17-18)** “Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight.”
  - ii. Received prayers on her behalf
    - 1. **(James 5:16)** “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
  - iii. Received encouragement
    - 1. **(1 Thess 5:11)** “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”
  - iv. We as children of God need to be there for those in distress, especially for our brothers and sisters
- d. She left her discouragements with God
  - i. **(1 Sam 1:18)** “So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.”
  - ii. Went her way, did eat, her look was no more sad.

- iii. We need to leave our troubles with God -
- V. All of us Suffer from Discouragements and Troubles
  - a. Both Christian and Sinner go through troubles
  - b. Difference is that the Christian has the hope of an eternal home in heaven.
    - i. **(Rom 8:17)** “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”
    - ii. **(Rom 8:18)** “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”
    - iii. **(Rom 8:22-23)** “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”
  - c. The suffering that we go through today can not be compared to the glory that we will receive after this life