

THE REVIVAL THAT STARTED WITH A MOTHER
Great Revivals
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Our scripture today is found in 1 Samuel 1. I want to read a phrase from this chapter to begin with. The theme today is the revival that started with a mother. The mother is Hanna. The phrase I want to read is found in 1 Samuel 1:27. "For this child I prayed."

All of us had a mother. None of us would be here except that we had. I realize that most of us have had mothers who have had a warm, good relationship with us. Maybe you're here today and as you look back there are things in your life which have not been positive in your relationship with your mother. I find it very difficult to preach a Mother's Day sermon because there are so many different kinds of mothers. And because also in my desiring to express truth and love and respect I want to avoid a gushy kind of sentimentalism on Mother's Day as well. And I don't want to neglect ministering to all the single persons who are here or the persons who are male or the persons that are here that are married but are not mothers.

I realize that even when it comes to mothers there are various classifications of mothers. How can it be that all the mothers can be ministered to by one sermon? There are mothers here who have grown children. Mothers here whose children have passed away. Mothers here whose children are very young. Mothers whose children are serving the Lord. Mothers here whose children are not serving the Lord. There are new mothers in the audience. There are mothers who are rearing their children alone without the aid of a husband because of separation or death or divorce. There are mothers here from spiritually divided homes. There are mothers here with good marriages and there are mothers here with damaged marriages.

Then there are all of the rest of us. How can the word of God really come effectively on this day? I realized as I was preparing this Mother's Day message that that's the same thing that goes on in my mind every Sunday or every time I stand up to minister the gospel that somehow I have to look beyond the limited topic which I have worked on or chosen and asked the Holy Spirit of God to take the words which are said and somehow disperse them, as Jesus broke the five loaves and two fishes, and make them applicable to each one of our lives so that while primarily today I may be speaking to mothers, you will not be left out if you are not a mother.

I want you to see today in the scripture a woman by the name of Hanna who I would like for all of us whether man or woman to become a representative person. In fact we must continually understand the scripture whether it's speaking to us about the people of the Bible, whether the Old or New Testament, whether male or female, that in presenting those persons to us we gain if we see that person as every man or every woman and if we see ourselves as somehow involved in that person facing the kinds of dilemmas and struggles perhaps in different shapes and different forms than Hanna experienced it but facing those struggles nevertheless. Letting a person's joys who is seen for us in the scripture being our joys, having an empathetic identification with each person whose lives are presented to us in this book. I think of Hanna or other persons as sort of a living statue, which has a very thin veneer or rock. When I come up to them I tap them like Moses tapped the rock. And all of a sudden out from that personality flows a river of blessing and understanding and well being that benefits my own life and heart as well. This will happen as we look at the woman who prayed: For this child I prayed.

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Let's get an understanding first of all of the child, which she prayed for. The end product of her prayer, the man Samuel whose name is attached to 1 and 2 Samuel, historical books in the Old Testament. When he came into being and began his ministry as a grown man he became, in Israel's history, one of its greatest men in three centuries. If you look back to the greatest man before him you will find it was none other than the person Moses. Moses we looked at in the book of Exodus. Like Moses Samuel was especially recognized by God as an outstanding leader of his people. For example when you to the prophet Jeremiah, 15:1, you'll find the Lord saying that in Jeremiah's time the people are so rebellious against him that even if Moses and Samuel were to intercede for them he would not listen to them. It's striking to find that when the Lord selects the two intercessors for Israel that he would be most likely to listen to he puts Samuel in the same league as a Moses.

Samuel arises at a time in his nation's history when there are complex political social and spiritual conditions. To really gain an understanding of the kind of revival that happens through him we need to look at some of these conditions.

The political conditions at the time in which Samuel lived are simply that he has brought into ascendancy in a time when his people have been successively overrun for three centuries. We in American have never been run over by a foreign power in the last two centuries of our experience so little can we gain a feel to what it must have been like to have lived under a people who were so subjected to a fear of an enemy that they lived in abject terror and near the status of slavery as well.

During this period of time from Moses until Samuel there were moments when Israel had resurgence. One was during a time when the situation was politically tumultuous and the prospects of this nation were not good.

The social conditions that he inherited likewise were not good. It seems like the moral fiber of a nation goes hand in hand with its political ascendancy. The moral condition of Israel at this particular time is described for us in the last verse of Judges – 21:25 – describing this whole period of time as “Everyone did right in his own eyes.” There's no obedience to higher law. There was little obedience to the laws of Moses, which had been given. Rather a kind of personal situational ethics that replaced any firm adherence to given and revealed truths.

The spiritual conditions of the time are especially noted for us in Samuel when Samuel in his adulthood will call the nation to prayer and to revival. One of the first things that they will need to do is put aside the foreign gods and the Asherah. The Asherah was the female consort goddess of the god Baal, the Canaanite God. Great immorality was attached to the worship of this goddess. Just the fact that revival could begin in Israel these four deities would need to be placed away signified something of the spiritual decline of the time, which Samuel arose in.

There was a corruption of true religion. Not only the presence of false religion but the people that were promulgating the true faith, the God of Israel themselves were subject to judgment. The priest of the time – Eli – was the man who had two sons Hophni and Phinehas. In the book of Samuel we are told the reprehensible character of these two young men. The godly old father who lost control of his sons and who did nothing to really rebuke them, just simply say to them lightly as he wrapped them on the knuckles “No, my boys. Don't do this.” But in fact Hophni and Phinehas and the two priests of God serving in the tabernacle when people would bring their

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sacrifices, the Mosaic law required that certain parts of the sacrifice be used in specific kinds of ways for the offering which was to be given. But the two sons of Eli would simply come along with their large forks, like a pitchfork, and jab the fork into the meat and whatever the good portion that they like they would take out irregardless of who it belonged to or what use it had in worship.

Furthermore their morals left much to be desired. Women who came to offer their sacrifices were prey for the immorality of Hophni and Phinehas. So that even the place that housed the Ark of the Covenant, the tent or tabernacle which Eli presided over, his two sons had bought the state of religion into a very low condition.

1 Samuel 3:1 tells us as well that in those days the word of the Lord was rare. We can well understand what this means. We know that at this particular moment in Israel's history probably the only scripture that was available to read was the Pentateuch. Possibly the book of Job. Very little of it was written. So the word of the Lord in terms of it's written form was rare but when that term was used it also means that there were no prophets. There was no one speaking God's message to the people and the visions were rare as well. Coming into this time of spiritual collapse and decay Samuel arises.

Samuel arises as the last of the judges, the persons who periodically resided over Israel. He becomes the first of the prophets and the person who brings his nation through an intense time of transition where as a loose confederated federated group of tribes they become united first under King Saul and then King David.

Samuel as his first act as a man of God after his adolescence and youth are past brings the nation together at Mizpah in 1 Samuel 7 and he leads the nation in a prayer of repentance. All of Samuel's experiences predicated upon this fact that Israel leave its idols and its false ways of relating to God. Samuel also throughout his life and accomplishment that he gains as a reversal to "Every man did that which is right in his own eyes," kept the law of God and was marked by great personal integrity. When it comes time for him to step aside and let the reins of leadership of the nation pass on to Saul in 1 Samuel 12:3 Samuel meets with the people and says to them "Here I am. Testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you.' They said to him, 'You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand.' He said to them, 'The Lord is witness against you and his anointed this day that you have not found anything in my hand.' And they said, 'He is witness.'"

A model of personal integrity. Particularly striking when in our nation today we're looking for leaders of integrity whose hands have not taken anything from the people, who have not reached into the public till, who have not used their influence unjustly or unwisely or crookedly. Samuel was such a man. Tremendous integrity. Under his leadership Saul is anointed and made king and when Saul has disobeyed God, Samuel is instrumental in being used of God to strip him of the kingdom and the young man David is anointed.

When Samuel's life is finished his whole accomplishment is that he has led a nation back to God and he has brought that nation through a tremendous time of transition safely.

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But all of Samuel's revival, all of his experience traces back to a desire that was in Hanna's heart for a child. That's where the focus of our message will be now for the rest of the time we have together. We are taught in scripture to "Never despise the day of small things." We must recognize that God's ways of working often begin in very small, insignificant places. That his greatest ways of working often begin in a lonely, isolated, hurting heart. Sometimes we are tempted to look at the work of God in Judges, we look at Numbers, at the success of a particular individual, look at what's happening there. Little do we realize that God in some lonely place may be shaping another person. Twenty to thirty years down the road that little shaping that he's doing now which none of us see will result in tremendous power and good.

Hanna is a person, which 1 Samuel 1 describes as a person who is hurting. In many cases the home is a place which affords refuge from our troubles and our trials. A place where we can return to find solace, comfort, and help when we have been hurt and wounded. But not so with Hanna. Hanna was a person whose home was the source of her trouble and her trials.

Look with me at 1 Samuel at the factors, which led to her hurt.

The first hurt in Hanna's life was her husband. Her husband got out of the will of God. It was the social custom of the time that if a man did not have children to carry on his name he somehow was incomplete. Evidently Elkanah, the husband of Hanna, had married Hanna first and she being childless Elkanah violated the word of God which had already been given to Moses and takes another wife Peninnah. And to Peninnah are born sons and daughters. Peninnah uses her influence of being a mother against Hanna. The whole thing becomes a source of great friction and hurt in Hanna's life.

Whether in Elkanah's time, the husband of Hanna, or today, disobeying God brings consequences in our life. People get hurt as a result of our disobedience. I'm absolutely amazed and astounded and yet see the word of God ratified over and over again in counseling situations and just being with people to find how when a person begins walking away from God and disobeying God another person, an innocent party if you will, gets hurt and wounded. Inevitably our disobedience to God creates not only consequences for ourselves but spills out in consequences toward other people. Elkanah brings this upon his wife Hanna.

Hanna took to weeping as they went up yearly to the house of the Lord at Eli's place. At one time Elkanah in verse 8, seeing his wife weeping said to her, "Why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?" Typical husband, not understanding what's really going on in his wife's heart. Trying to say, My love for you covers everything. The fact that you have hurt in your life should be smothered by the knowledge that me, the big brave, strong husband, am at your side now. This ought to cheer your grieving heart. Poor Elkanah was not the first husband to not read his wife correctly.

Hanna understood the social custom very well. That a man's identity was somehow incorporated in his children. That in biblical times a person's identity was not simply limited to his lifetime and himself as a personality. But he was known as incorporated in the children, which were his. Thus you never for example in the Old Testament think of Jacob without thinking of his children. It was Jacob manifesting his personality through his 12 sons so that that man became a family – Israel.

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So it is Hanna seeing the approbation that is brought against her as an individual is weeping over this. Hanna has been put in this position by a mate that is unresponsive to the will of God. And has simply opted out for an easy course of action instead of doing what was right.

Her second source of hurt, in addition to her husband was her rival. The other woman in the family, Peninnah. She used high moments of religious worship to throw barbs at Hanna. As they came yearly to the place of worship it is said in 1 Samuel 1:6 her rival used to provoke her sorely to irritate her because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year.

It's very striking this text is because it tells us that a person who is coming to a place of worship does not necessarily have right attitudes towards someone else. Peninnah was coming year after year and in the most sacred time of the year, she was using that as a time to throw her barbs at Hanna. We're not given in scripture the language, which was used. She discomfited Hanna sorely.

Peninnah appears to be the kind of woman that would destroy anybody's allusions about femininity. In the place where there should have been a soberness, a sacredness, a moment when she should have let up on her rival just for the sake of God if for nobody else's sake, she used that occasion of worship just to lacerate to the soul, Hanna. Hanna hurt.

Hanna was hurt not only by her husband and by her rival but she was hurt by a priest, Eli. Hanna becomes so lost in weeping and praying that she at the place of worship is mouthing her prayer without giving articulation to the prayer. It's simply a prayer of her heart. Her lips are moving but her voice is not speaking. Eli comes to her and says in verse 14, "Woman how long will you be drunken?" Evidently that describes something about the religious tenor of the times because Eli doesn't appear to be surprised to find a drunken woman at the place of worship. Misunderstood even by a man of God who should have had the perception to discern what were the issues of her heart.

What kind of responses did Hanna make to these hurts that were coming in on her?

I think if you look at the way she responded to hurt you'd see the proper way to respond to hurt in your own life. Whether it's the same kind of hurt as Hanna's or it's a different kind of hurt. Sooner or later all of us go through a time when we are hurt in life.

We've all been hurt. How we respond to the hurt is crucial. Look at the ways that Hanna did not respond to hurt.

She did not throw away her moral and spiritual values in the midst of her hurt. Simply because her husband violated the word of God was no excuse for her to go out and have a fling and violate the word of God herself. Simply because she was being thrown barbs in the place of worship did not mean that she should stay away from the place of worship. She was a person who keeps responding to doing what is right, to be doing what she knows to do rather than simply throwing it all away. She does not respond also with ugliness toward other people. We are never told of her trading insults with Peninnah her rival. Coming back with the kind of language which Peninnah used against her. We defeat ourselves if we attempt to get in a mud battle with someone else who is throwing mud at us.

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As our response to hurt, we might note that Hanna did not give up. She did not turn to a kind of allusion, which said, What is the use of my living any more? True she was deeply hurt. True, she wept. True, she wept bitterly. But never do we read in the text that she was at the point of saying I will throw away my life. She was going to somehow by the grace of God hang in there and respond to God and to her husband even in the midst of the hurt. A hurting person.

Look with me at some steps at Hanna's healing which reveal how she survived her hurt. Because she survived the hurt, came this child Samuel who was instrumental of being used by God to bring revival to his people. Hanna in the midst of her hurt looked to God in prayer. I think for anyone that has to be the first step in healing the hurts of life. Thus we find in 1:11 she vowed a vow and said, "Lord of hosts, if thou would indeed look on the affliction of thy maidservant and remember me and not forget thy maidservant but will give to thy maidservant a son then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and no razor shall touch his head."

Hanna prayed to the Lord. In regard to your hearth it may be that if you have hurts that are unresolved, conflicts that are unresolved, it may be that you have sought counseling help, psychological assistance. This is wise. I commend it. But I'd like to say that one of the things that really impedes the healing of a person's hurts is the absence of praying through the situation and praying for God to give resources to heal hurt and to do something about it. Too often in our life we seek human assistance before we seek the assistance of the Lord and thereby miss out on the great healing that God can give to us. I would encourage you. If there are unresolved hurts even as there were in Hanna's life for which you have not received a healing and release there is a praying that is done. And Hanna's prayer is not a cursory prayer. Hanna's praying is a praying that is desperate, serious, weeping, so overcome in her anxiety and prayer that even a priest mistakes her as being drunk kind of intensity which suggests the level of conflict that was in the prayer. She prayed. Her prayer was not a selfish prayer. She was not simply praying to have a child. She was praying that she might have a child in order that something might be done with that child. That the Lord might have the child.

I think we must disassociate Hanna from the kind of thing we see often in our culture in regard to unmarried teenage mothers who come from homes in which they have had a great deal of difficulty in relating to a mom and a dad, perhaps not having a mom and dad at all. Who see the opportunity of having a child that is presenting to them the occasion of kind of having a living doll. As one girl expressed it, I wanted a baby because I needed somebody to love me. That's a selfish desire, to have a baby to simply become a kind of plaything. The only problem with that is that the babies grow up. They are soon no longer playthings. They're real people with minds of their own. Instead of giving back the love, which the mother has wanted they're doing other things which are straining at the very roots of the mother's fiber spiritually and morally, intellectually.

Hanna was not saying, I want a baby because I need somebody to love me. Hanna was praying and in her prayer for a baby she was praying because she had a purposeful plan for that child. She had a destiny for that child. A destiny which somehow would take that child beyond the simple need of fulfilling Hanna's need and Hanna's dream but need for that child to bring that child to this nation, to this God, to mankind. She would see that child as having a place more than just in her circle but a place of responsibility and independence outside of her circle.

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Whether it's praying for a child, praying for anything, if the prayer is simply a selfish turned in prayer, it is not a wholesome prayer. Hanna has learned to pray for something, which benefits more than herself. She said to the Lord, "I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life and no razor shall touch his head." That phrase is also interesting because it shows us something of the ideals that Hanna wanted for this child. She had little of the written scripture as I've indicated. But in Number 6 we have a description of a person called a Nazarite, different than a Nazarene which Jesus was. A Nazarite was someone who was set aside in special consecration to God who did not drink strong drink and who let his hair grow. Most of the time in the Old Testament this kind of vow was taken by an adult for a limited period of time. Rarely was it pledged by a person for the totality of their lifetime. The exceptions were Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist.

Samson didn't live too many years before Hanna. While Samson had great weaknesses perhaps it was consciously in Hanna's prayer that she was thinking back, "If I could have a child let him be specially be marked as a child of God, specially set aside and consecrated." She matched up the characteristics of a godly man with the child that she wanted and she prayed.

Well do we learn her example in our prayers. Not only did she not pray a selfish prayer but her prayer expressed her deepest desire. She wanted that child.

I think there is something present in the world today that is so distressing. It's moms and dads who really do not want their children. This not wanting children, not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually. A feeling that somehow that that child is an interruption of your career. An interruption on your finances. An interruption for your plans for tranquility and togetherness. A kind of subtle, psychological rejection which says as you look at that child, This child was not a planned child. Every child is a plan of God. "This child is somehow an interruption. We would be so much further down the road today if we had not had this child." Such kinds of feelings are so destructive of human life and integrity and personal growth and development that there is probably no cancer that is deeper in our society than that kind of gut level and deep rooted rejection. It can only produce children who feel enormously disturbed.

God wants us, if you are parents, to deeply want your children. You may be a child who grew up sensing that you were an unwanted child. You were somehow an intrusion to your parents. You've known rejection. The only way I know for you to ever straddle that is to first of all do something which is very difficult. That is to simply ask God to forgive you for feeling the way you feel towards your parents for the way they may have rejected you. That the healing in your life does not begin with their changed attitude toward you. It begins with your changed attitude toward them. Now as you experience forgiveness, you who were once a child are now at the standpoint of being an adult even to them. And leading them in the pathway of forgiveness.

But if you yourself are a parent and relating to your child deeply want that child and let that child know that you want and desire him. Frequently love that child. Frequently accept that child by putting your arms around the child and embracing, hugging and kissing. There are more ways to show love. But that is such a deep sign by which we manifest our approval and affection toward our children.

Hanna wanted this child. Two terrible things for a child coming into the world. First, not to be wanted and therefore not loved. And secondly, not to be prayed for. Never to have a parent that

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prays for that child and sees a larger mission and destiny for that child. Sees that child as a special person of God.

Hanna prayed. She not only prayed but she had faith. When she was through with her praying Eli says to her in verse 17 “Go in peace and the God of Israel grant your petition, which you have made to him.’ And she said, ‘Let your maidservant find favor in your eyes.’ Then the woman went her way and ate and her countenance was no longer sad.” When she began her prayer she was weeping bitterly. But by the time she was through with her prayer she went away no longer sad. The reason was not that she had the child for the child had yet to be conceived. But she had exercised faith in God and therefore was confident that the issue was in God’s hands. Her prayer in verse 11 wasn’t, God you do this or I’m not going to serve you. Her prayer was, If you’ll do this, this child will serve you.

Her prayer however was a conditional prayer. It was a prayer that put the matter squarely on God’s side of the fence and left it up to God to exercise his options. God, you see that I’m barren. If you want that condition to remain then it’s you. But I have put this issue before you. If you want this mother to have a child then answer. She went away from that conditional prayer with I think a confidence in God, not necessarily that he’s going to hear and give me a child. But a basic resting. The issue was now in God’s hands. There was no need to be further sad.

I think a work of healing took place in her heart that day when she prayed. She went away exercising faith. She had begun her prayer with weeping. She wound up no longer sad.

The third element in her healing. Not only her prayer and her faith but when the child was born she kept her commitment to God. Her commitment had been that if this child were born she would give him to the Lord. And no razor would touch his head all the days of his life. We read in 1 Samuel 1:21 “Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice to pay his vow. But Hanna did not go up for she said to her husband ‘As soon as the child is weaned I will bring him that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and abide there forever.’ Elkanah her husband said to her, ‘Do what seems best to you. Wait until you’ve weaned him. Only may the Lord establish his word.’ So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. When she had weaned him she took up with her along with a three year old bull and flour and wine she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh and the child was young....[verse 28] Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives he is the Lord’s.” 1 Samuel 2:19 “The mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifices.” She kept her commitment.

It is always hard to keep commitments. Whether it’s the kind of commitment that Hanna made or whether it’s the commitment in marriage, commitment in business, commitment to the Lord. There are tests of that commitment to see whether or not we are going to follow through on our word. If there’s anything symptomatic in our day of moral decay is that people do not keep their word. Word is a very light thing. It can be easily broken and laid aside.

Not with Hanna. She said that she would give this child to the Lord and she did. It was not easy for Hanna to keep her commitment. We almost say to Hanna at this point, it would be all right if you would slip out of this commitment. It’s not reasonable to expect a mother to keep that. I agree with that. I think Hanna is an exception to the rule rather than the rule. Hanna had all

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kinds of reasons she could have used to get out of that commitment. She had a natural inclination of protective motherly love. Not only that but she had the very poor example of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. No family to be brought up in. What an influence that they would have on him.

Here however where that strange thing, that gift of faith comes. Not a human work which has to be totally something given by God and put in her heart. But a gift of faith for this child. Realizing that that was his destiny to be brought up under Eli's leadership. That he might be found in the place where he could hear the voice of God. To be brought up in the place where he could become familiar as a young priest with the things which pertained to God. Every year, Hanna kept that little contact of bringing a coat to Samuel. A little bigger than the year before. But year by year as the child grew she was there. Somehow in those few moments that she had with the child in the first 3 years patterns were laid in his life. Hanna in that first 2 or 3 years when Samuel was close to her, instills something in that child. In her annual visits instills something more and deeper so that that child grows up not a rebel, not a child lost to the welfare of his family and his nation and people, but a child which indeed is pleasing to the Lord. The same words that are used of our Lord are used of Samuel. That the child grew and increased in stature, in favor with God and with man.

What shall we say in putting this together for our own lives? We looked at three elements in Hanna's healing – prayer, faith, commitment. Prayer. If you've had hurts in your life don't dish back the hurt that someone else has given you or you're going to lose. If you have been hurt in the context of a family relationship which some of you may well have been and there are negative influences coming from your family. I've been praying this prayer in regard to persons that have expressed this: Lord, let the bad influence of the last generation, the generation which preceded me, let that bad influence be sealed off with me so that it never goes forth to the generation following me and on my children. Let there be a dam erected which keeps the bad waters of the past behind that dam so the kind of negative patterns that were related to me are not in turn passed on by me to someone else. We know this. Child abusers tend to be children of child abusers. And child abuse is passed on because people don't learn how to relate. All they can relate is what they've seen. When we come to Christ we're given a whole new sphere of relationships. We pray let the past and the sin be dammed. Let it not come forth into my life again so that it spring out into my children.

Hanna did not dish back the hurt. The hurt was stopped with her and Samuel grows up as a wholesome human being. Prayer, faith. Are you ready to accept like Hanna after prayer whatever answer comes from the Lord? You're committed it to him.

That's what Hanna does. She commits her cause to the Lord. With that faith in God there also comes a faith in her child. I believe that Hanna instills in this child something of a sense of mission and destiny. Something noble, worthwhile. Something that lets that child know that you believe in him or her. Faith. Commitment. Hanna brought her child to godly people. To the godly man Eli, a man for some inexplicable reason failed with his own children yet kept his own relationship with God. A very close affinity grows between Samuel and Eli. Samuel at a young age comes to hear the voice of God. For us more commonly the voice of God will be found in the reading of the scriptures as a child. I would say that a child has no trouble hearing the voice of God if that child has been conceived with prayer and reared in God's house. Among God's people, not simply in a building but among the people.

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Parents today like Hanna need to bring their children to others also for spiritual counsel and care. I would suggest that in regard to the training of your children that you establish regular priorities on their attendance of Sunday school, children's church. Those opportunities where those children are brought in contact with people who know and love the Lord. That you seek to have persons in your home who also know and love the Lord as your guests so they may come in contact with living persons who know Christ. Commitment. Keep your vows.

There is a high reward for commitment. Look at the reward of Hanna's commitment. A son Samuel. There is a high reward for commitment. But for anything for which there is a reward there is a high cost. Those kinds of children do not come easily. They come with parents who pay the price, who have a disciplined way of relating, a way of prayer.

What are you seeking? What are you praying for? What commitments are you making? The commitment that you make in your life, if it's a high commitment also extracts from you a rather high cost. But the end product is well worth the process that one goes through.

A revival started in the heart of a mother and a generation later it was felt in a nation may God use the disciplines in our own life to spill out so that a generation later the ebb of our influence has somehow become larger than we ever imagined it could be.

What a delight it is, Lord, to be warmed by the fire of your word, hear once more your voice speaking to us to hear as a Samuel your Spirit saying to the inward man, our name. And have the opportunity to say to you, "Here am I, O Lord." We want to thank you in this moment that we have heard your voice. We want to bring to you Lord this day and our needs...

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