

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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Would you find First Samuel chapter 1. And when you've found it, look up here, and I want to make a statement to you. And I believe this statement to be true. And here is the statement: Mothers are perhaps the most powerful and influential force on the face of the earth. Let me say it again. Mothers perhaps, are the most powerful and influential class of persons upon the face of the earth.

Now we are in difficulty today in America, and the problem in America is that we're like a ship lost at sea without a rudder, without a compass, on a dark and stormy night. The anchor is gone. What is the anchor? What holds the home? It is motherhood, and there is a war against motherhood in America. The result: immorality, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, militant feminism, juvenile delinquency, all of this can be traced back to the homicide of the home that comes by the neglect of motherhood. It is true that the head of the home is the father, but it is equally true that the heart of the home is the mother.

Now, we are going to look at a mother. I introduce you to a wonderful woman. Her name is Hannah, Hannah. As a matter of fact, if your name is: Ann, Annie, Anna, you're named after this woman. Her name means gracious, and she was a gracious lady.

Now, Hannah didn't have it easy. She lived at a time when things were very, very difficult, and don't get the idea that she was a maximum mother because she had an easy life. As a matter of fact, polygamy was tolerated in Hannah's day. And her husband had more than one wife, and Hannah was barren. She didn't have any children. The other wife mocked her and scorned her and put her down because she was barren. Her heart cried out to God that she might have a baby, and she wanted a preacher boy. She wanted a baby that she could raise for God and give back to God. And I believe that she is a picture for all of us today of a maximum mother.

And I want to give you some principles from God's Word, and if you're a mama today, or a grandmama, or want to be a momma one of these days, I want to give you five principles. And I pray God that these principles will be written upon your heart because they come out of the life of Hannah. But they also come out of the Word of God.

And I want to say another word. You say, "Well, Pastor, I am not a mother nor will I ever be a mother because I am a man." All right, the principles will apply to you. They will apply to a man, a woman, and they will apply, not only to being a maximum mom, but being a maximum anything, a maximum anything if you're going to be something for God.

But particularly today, we want to think about these principles as they apply to motherhood and as they give us some guidelines for raising in this generation, godly kids. Are you ready for these principles?

Principle number one is **the principle of priority**, the principle of priority. Hannah had her priorities right. The desire of her heart was that she would have a child. Look if you will in chapter 1 verse 10. It speaks of her as she's praying. And it says, *"And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, 'O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me and not forget Thine handmaid but wilt give unto Thy handmaid a man child.'" "Oh God! I want a baby. Oh*

God, this is the desire of my heart.” She had a God-given instinct to have a child, and that instinct was put in her heart by Almighty God because she knew what the Bible teaches over and over again: that children are a blessing and an unmistakable gift from God.

Put in your margin Psalm 127 and verse 3, *“Lo, children are the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward.”* A blessing, not a burden. Notice how God describes the husband in Psalm 128 verses 3 and 4, *“Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.”*

Let me tell you something. There is something basically wrong in America when little children are looked upon as burdens rather than blessings. Burdens rather than blessings! And not only is there something basically wrong, but friend, there is something drastically wrong when little babies are being put to death in their mother’s womb. That breaks my heart. The womb ought to be the safest place on earth, and now for many babies it is becoming the most dangerous place on earth.

Now, let me say clearly that my heart goes out to those of you who would love to have children and cannot, for whatever reason. God knows your heart, and God knows that you would love to have children if you could. But to those of you who can and refuse because you want more of this world’s goods, you want more freedom, oh, I want to tell you, you are missing an incredible blessing. But you say, “Pastor, I might have to quit my job. We might have to sell one of our automobiles. We might not be able to take the vacation that we want to take. If we had children, those children would make us poor.” Listen carefully. Children don’t make rich people poor; they make poor people rich, they make poor people rich. That is a blessing!

What made Hannah such a great woman is that she had a priority. She did not think it was less than the best to be a mother. But this was the prayer of her heart. And so the principle is of a magnificent priority. That’s the first principle.

Second principle, **the principle of magnificent prayer**, because when you get your priorities lined up, then your prayers line up behind those priorities. And notice in verse 10, *“And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord.”* The first principle, priority; the second principle: prayer.

When do you begin to raise your children? When do you begin to pray for your children? Not after they’re born, before they’re born. Not after they’re conceived. Before they are conceived. Children ought to come in an answer to prayer. Here is Hannah. She is praying with all of her heart. Look in verse 10, *“And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed unto the Lord.”* She’s saying, “Oh God, I must have a child.” She is desperate for a child.

I was studying and thinking about all of the women in the Bible who were barren. And God took these barren women, and in grace God gave them a child, and their child blessed and changed the world. Sarah was barren until she was 90 years of age, but she met the Lord and God blessed her, and she had a son, and that son’s name was Isaac, and he has blessed the world.

Rachel prayed and she said, “Lord, give me children or I die!” And God heard her prayer! And God gave her a son. His name was Joseph. You want a blessing? Read the story of Joseph, a child that was born in answer to prayer.

Ruth, who was barren, wanted a child, found mercy and God gave her a child. His name was Obed. And Obed was the grandfather of King David, from whose line the Messiah came, in answer to prayer.

Elizabeth did not have a child, and Elizabeth prayed and said, “Oh God, I want a child,” and God answered her prayer and God gave her John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus, the one of whom Jesus said, *“Of those born of woman, not a greater is John the Baptist.”* What a blessing that God gave Elizabeth John the Baptist.

And now we come to Hannah who prayed, and God gave to Hannah little Samuel, little Samuel, the greatest individual in the Old Testament between Moses and King David, because she prayed and said, “God, I want a baby that I can give back to You.” There is the principle of prayer. Oh friend, would you not agree that we need more children in this world that are born in answer to prayer and then given back to God in prayer before they’re born? Would you not agree that that is true? Oh, the tragedy of unwanted children, the tragedy.

What would the world be like without Isaac? What would the world be like without Joseph? What would the world have been like without John the Baptist? What would the world have been like without Samuel?

I wonder. We’re praying, “God, give us an answer to cancer.” We’re saying, “God, give us some cure for the dread disease AIDS. Oh God, help us in this problem and that problem.” How do you know but what God sent that answer, and that little life was snuffed out in his mother’s womb? How do you know but what God had some great world leader, some person, some great prophet, another Billy Graham, but that little baby was unwanted, non-conceived, or obliterated?

Now, here’s the third principle. What’s the first principle? Priority. The second principle is prayer because your prayers line up with your priority. She was a magnificent mom, and she had a magnificent priority, and she had a magnificent prayer. Now watch. She had a **magnificent purpose**.

You see, your prayer and your priorities determine your purpose. And so notice what her purpose was. Look in verse 11, *“And she vowed a vow and said, ‘O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget Thine handmaid, but will give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.’”* What does that mean, *“No razor come upon his head?”* Well, you have to understand the Old Testament. That meant that she was going to give him to be a Nazarite.

Now, the Nazarites were a special group of persons who had been given over to God in a very special way. You might put in your margin Numbers chapter 6 and verse 5. It speaks of how these Nazarites were to be raised. And the Bible says, *“All the days of the vow of his*

separation, there shall no razor come upon his head until the days be fulfilled in which he separateth himself unto the Lord. He shall be holy, and let the locks of the hair grow down,” or let the hair of his head, *“the locks of the hair of his head grow.”* Now, what was she saying in effect? “I want a holy child. I want a child separated unto the Lord.”

What is the principle? If the child is a gift of God, if the child has come from God, then that child must be given back to God. Did God hear her prayer? Hannah said, “Lord, if You will give him to me I’ll give him back to You.” That prayer must have been in the will of God. That prayer must have been put in the heart of Hannah, because God heard that prayer and God answered that prayer. Now, if you pray and ask God to give you a child, then your prayers must follow that child and you must have a purpose for your child.

Do you know why so many prayers are unanswered? People say, “Well, I pray for my child, and God just doesn’t seem to hear my prayer for my child.” Well, let me ask you a question. What are you praying? What are you praying for your child? What is your desire for your children? Now, you think about it. What do you want out of your child? What do you want for your child? What are you praying for? Health? Success? Popularity? Fame? Is that what you want for your child? I hope your child has those things. But is that your priority for your child?

Did you know that there are many people who feel it would be a tragedy if God were to make a missionary out of their child? A tragedy! They feel like it would be a waste if God were to call that child into the ministry. I can remember people, talking to my parents, trying to encourage my parents to encourage me not to go into the ministry because they said, “It’ll be a waste, it’ll be a waste.” “I mean, why he could be something! He could do something! Ah, you know, don’t, don’t let him just squander his life.” How many of you are praying, “God make my son important. Make my daughter famous?” Oh, we have such twisted priorities.

Do you know what my desire is for my children? My desire, my prayer for my children, and Joyce joins me in this, is found in Third John verse 4, *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.”* That’s it. *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.”* I have chosen as a life’s verse, *“The generation of the upright shall be blessed and his seed shall be mighty upon the earth.”*

Rather than asking that your children be rich, rather than asking that your children be famous, rather than asking that your children achieve, let me give you a prayer to pray for your children. Now, you’ll find it right in the Word of God. It’s an incredible thing to pray out of the Bible because you know your prayer is in the will of God if it comes out of the Word of God. Here’s a great prayer that anybody can pray for their child. If you want to know how to pray for your child, I’m going to read it to you. Put it down in the margin Ephesians 3 verses 14 through 21. Here was Paul’s prayer for the church at Ephesus, but what a prayer for a dad or a mom to pray for a child. *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you,”* Steve, *“that He would grant you,”* Gail, *“that He would grant you,”* Janice, *“that He would grant you,”* David, *“according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and*

height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” Isn’t that a good prayer to pray for your children?

You see, the reason that so many times our prayers are not answered for our children is, we’re just not praying the right prayers for them. And James says, *“Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss that you might consume it upon your lust.”* Hannah had a purpose! Her purpose was, *“God, I want a child that will serve You.”*

Now, you can’t make your child serve God. Joyce and I have goals for ourselves; we have desires for our children. What is the difference between a goal and a desire? Never set a goal for somebody else. You’ll make a big mistake if you set a goal for somebody else. The only person you can ever set a goal for is you. You have desires for others.

Our desire is for godly children. Our goal is to be godly parents. You see that? I cannot say that my children will be godly. I pray that my children will be godly. I say that and pray that I will be a godly dad. Have desires for your children. Have goals for yourself. Say, *“By God’s grace I will be a magnificent mom like Hannah was, a woman of grace.”* And so, here is what she prayed, *“Lord, I want him to serve You, I want him to serve You.”*

Let me say a word to you mommas, *“Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious, give of thy wealth to speed them on their way, pour out your souls for them in prayer victorious, and all that thou spendest Jesus will repay.”*

First principle, priority; *“God give me a child.”* Second principle, prayer; he was prayed for before he was born, after he was born. Third principle, purpose; *“I want him to serve You, God, I want him to be separated unto You.”*

Fourth principle; **persistence**, persistence. Begin now reading in verse 12, *“And it came to pass as she,”* what? *“continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought that she’d been drunken. And Eli said unto her,”* now, Eli was the priest, *“Eli said unto her, ‘How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.’ And Hannah answered and said, ‘No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hither to.’ 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.’ So the woman went her way and did eat and her countenance was no more sad. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah, and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife and the Lord remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bear a son and called his name Samuel, saying, ‘Because I have asked him of the Lord.’”*

Now, not only did she pray for him before he was born, but she continued to pray for him after he was born in dark days. What is the principle? Here’s the principle. No matter how dark, how desolate, how difficult, pray and keep on praying. I’ve seen that precious girl that I’m married to called Joyce pray our children through so many things. I have seen her pray with

unwavering determination and wait on God and ask God. Over and over again, we're told to wait on God. That's persistence. Isaiah 40 verse 31, *"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."* Psalm 37 and verse 7, *"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him."* Psalm 27 verse 14, *"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage."* Over and over again we're told in God's Word to wait upon the Lord. Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 18, *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance."* You've got to keep on praying.

Now, let me say this. Because of her perseverance, her sorrow was turned to gladness. Now, if you've been praying for a child and you say, "Pastor, you're not preaching to me this morning. I want a baby. I can't have a baby. We've been to the fertility doctors. We've done all we can do. I want a baby. And this sermon is doing nothing but breaking my heart and making me feel guilty." Well, I don't want to do that because it may be indeed that God has another plan for you, and if God does, you just persist in prayer till you know God's will for your life. But pray. Keep on persisting.

Some of the most godly people in the Bible were not able to have children, but God gave to this woman, because of her persistence, a little baby boy. Do you know what she named him? Samuel. Do you know what Samuel means? It means: asked of the Lord. He is my little answer to prayer. And Joyce and I have continued to pray for our children after they were born. If you want to see something of Hannah's prayer life for him after he was born, just read the second chapter. I don't have time to do it because time is running out, but just read the second chapter and you'll find out that she was a mighty mother, a magnificent mother, because she knew, she knew the power of priority, she knew the power of prayer, she knew the power of purpose, she knew the power of persistence.

Now, here's the fifth one. By the way, listen, this'll all apply to dads. This will all apply to any godly person in any godly situation. You take those things and they apply everywhere, so this sermon is for everybody, but here's the fifth of these principles that made this woman a magnificent mother. Are you ready for it? It is **the principle of persuasion**, persuasion. Now, you pray with all of your heart, you get your priority right, you get your prayer right, you get your purpose right, you get your persistence right, and then you began to do what you alone can do to persuade that child for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look if you will in First Samuel 1, beginning in verse 21. And the Bible says, *"And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. But Hannah went not up, for she said unto her husband, 'I will not go up until the child be weaned.'" You see what she's doing here? She's saying, "Now look, there are some things that people think are very important but I've got something more important." "And then I will bring him that he may appear before the Lord and there abide forever."*

And then look if you will in verse 23, *"And Elkanah her husband said unto her, 'Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word.' So the woman abode and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord."* Wasn't she a wise woman, to have such priority, to

make sacrifices, to bring him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh? *“And the child was young. And they slew a bullock and brought the child to Eli. And she said, ‘O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I have asked of Him. Therefore have I lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord.’ And he worshipped the Lord there.”*

Who worshipped the Lord there? That baby has now become a child. She has built into this child. She said to her husband, “All right, go if you’re going, but I’m staying with this baby, I’m staying with this baby. This is my baby. I am giving this baby nursing and suckling. I am taking care of this child. Now I am bringing my child to the house of God, and I’m teaching my child “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so,” and I’m not going to let anybody else do it, and I’m not going to let anything else keep me from doing it. This is my baby. I’m going to persuade this child.” And then when she had this little baby, she treasured every moment that she had, because these were tender years and these were formative years.

I thought of the verse in the New Testament when Paul talked to a young man named Timothy, and he said to him in Second Timothy 1:5, *“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother, Lois, and in thy mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also.”* Timothy had a grandmother who had a little girl named Eunice. And she would rock that little girl, Eunice, and say, “Eunice, Jesus loves you, Eunice, Jesus loves you.” And Eunice had a little boy named Timothy. “Timothy, Jesus loves you.” They may not have called Him Jesus until they knew the Old Testament fulfillment, but they talked to Him about Jehovah God, and Jesus is Jehovah. It wasn’t easy. She had to work.

A father has influence on a child, but the deepest impression is made by a mother, and she was so persuasive, this woman, that she changed, listen, Hannah, listen, Hannah changed the course of history. You know something that eats my lunch, makes me very hot? You ask a woman, “What do you do? Well, I’m a so-da-da-da-da-da-da.” You ask another woman, “I’m just a housewife and a mother.” Just a housewife and mother? Did I hear you? Just a housewife, a homemaker, and a mother? Don’t you dare let these feminists take that out of your heart! There is nothing greater than to raise a baby for Jesus Christ. Oh, they’ve done a job on us today. Never underestimate the power of a mother.

Abraham Lincoln said, “All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.” I talked and prayed with the past President of the United States, George H. W. Bush, talked to him about his personal salvation, his relationship to Christ, and prayed with him about that, and he looked me in the eyes and he said, “I want to tell you, my mother, my mother was the most godly person I’ve ever known,” and told me about the influence that his mother had upon his life. Augustine, that great believer and theologian, was a renegade boy, but he could not escape the prayers of his mother, Monica. John and Charles Wesley, out of whose hearts and minds came the Methodist church, had a mother whose name was Susanna! If you want to know who the Mother of Methodism is, it was Susanna! Susanna; who raised those children for Jesus Christ. I’ve read what Dr. Billy Graham had to say about his godly mother! Oh, the power of persuasion.

I wish I had more time, but I want to tell you a true story, and I’m finished. A boy had a

mother. This mother, this a true story, she was a dominating mother. She had no time or love for anyone else but herself. She was married three times. Her second husband divorced her, listen, because she abused him. This little boy when he was a child never experienced love, he never experienced discipline, he was neglected, shoved around, and overlooked. His mother told him, "Don't you ever bother me when I'm at work. I don't want you pestering me." He was totally rejected.

This little boy had a high IQ, but he dropped out of high school, he joined the Marines, he was given a dishonorable discharge, he had no talent, he had no skills, he couldn't even maintain a driver's license. He went to a foreign country. There he met a foreign woman. He married her. The marriage began to fail. She left him. He had the sense he was a failure; all of life about him was a failure. He begged her to come back. Finally she did come back. He returned to the United States. The only talent that this young man had was the talent of handling a rifle. He learned that in the Marines.

And on November the 22, 1963, he took his rifle and his ability to the third story of a book storage building in Dallas, Texas, to fire three shots that changed the course of a nation. His name you already know: Lee Harvey Oswald. I wonder if things would not have been different, if Lee Harvey Oswald had a mother who knew Jesus and had taken that precious little boy into her heart and into her arms and had sung to him "Jesus Loves Me." I wonder if things would have been different if she'd said, "Lee, you call momma anytime you need to call me. Sweetheart, you are more important than this job. You're the most precious thing on this earth to me."

Do you know what children need? A-B-C: acceptance, belonging, and confidence. That's what they need. Thank God for magnificent mothers, and may God help you to be one.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."