EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Adults

1 Samuel

Daily Discipleship Guide **Winter 2026-27**



© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

EVERYTHING WE NEED

If you're the product of a certain generation, you may remember the card catalog at your local library. While students today can find information at the click of a button or the tap of a screen, not that long ago we relied on the catalog's line of drawers and rows of cards to locate our research material. It was organized according to the Dewey Decimal System, but it had everything we needed.

It's helpful to have one resource that covers a variety of topics. While the card catalog took some time to navigate, it saved us time in the long run. It held the key to just about any subject we could image. From sports to history to geography to biographies to fiction to poetry, it was all there.

In a sense, the book of 1 Samuel is like a card catalog for learning God's perspective on life. Like an encyclopedia of His work in the world, 1 Samuel offers lessons on prayer, leadership, conflict resolution, faithfulness, courage, friendship, integrity, and so much more. Through the lives of individuals like Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David, we get a broad picture of what God expects of His people—and what happens when things go wrong.

Best of all, 1 Samuel points readers toward the Messiah, the promised One who would come to redeem people from their sins. The Messiah would be a descendant of David: Jesus Christ. We all need Jesus to bridge the gap between ourselves and holy God. He is our only hope for salvation. If you've never made the decision to follow Jesus, there is no better time than right now! Here's what you need to do . . .

- **ADMIT** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **BY FAITH RECEIVE** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **CONFESS** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources



SUGGESTED FOR THE WEEK OF

FEATURES

- Bible Reading Plan 6
- Memory Verses 7
- Biblical Background 8
- Using the Daily Discipleship Guide 10
- Leader Helps 116
- Visual Ideas 160
- Coming Next Quarter 162

SESSIONS

DEC. 6 — Session 1: **Prayer** (1 Sam. 1:9-18,24-28) 12
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 121

DEC. 13 — Session 2: **Calling** (1 Sam. 3:1-14) 20
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 124

DEC. 20 — Session 3: **Savior*** (Luke 2:8-20) 28
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 127

DEC. 27 — Session 4: **Supremacy** (1 Sam. 5:1-10; 6:13-15,19-20) 36
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 130

JAN. 3 — Session 5: **King Demanded** (1 Sam. 8:1-9,19-22) 44
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 133

JAN. 10 — Session 6: **Obedience** (1 Sam. 15:7-23) 52
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 136

JAN. 17 — Session 7: **Valued** (Ps. 139:1-10,13-16,23-24) 60
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 139

JAN. 24 — Session 8: **Anointed** (1 Sam. 16:1-13) 68
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 142

JAN. 31 — Session 9: **Victory** (1 Sam. 17:32-47) 76
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 145

FEB. 7 — Session 10: **Friendship** (1 Sam. 18:1-9; 20:35-42) 84
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 148

FEB. 14 — Session 11: **Respect** (1 Sam. 24:1-11,16-20) 92
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 151

FEB. 21 — Session 12: **Discernment** (1 Sam. 25:14-19,29-35) 100
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 154

FEB. 28 — Session 13: **Guidance** (1 Sam. 30:1-8,21-25) 108
LEADER HELPS ON PAGE 157

*Evangelistic Emphasis

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

MEET THE WRITERS



G.B. Howell, Jr. served with Lifeway as content editor of *Biblical Illustrator* until his retirement.

Craig Hamlin is Associate Pastor and Discipleship and Mission Strategist for Crosslink Church in Mebane, North Carolina.

Sam Crouch is retired after 52 years in full-time ministry as a writer, editor, and pastor.

Bill Craig is retired from Lifeway, where he served for 35 years, including as Vice President of Publishing and Ministry Experience.

Kima Jude leads the church's women's ministy in her church and has worked for several years in higher education.

Explore the Bible: Daily Discipleship Guide (ISSN 2574-4402; Item 005794512) is published quarterly by Lifeway Christian Resources, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, Ryan Blackwell, President, © 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources.

No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing by the publisher.

For ordering or inquiries including Autoship, visit Lifeway.com, call 1-800-458-2772, write Lifeway Resources Customer Service, 200 Powell Place, Suite 100, Brentwood, TN 37027-7707, or fax 615.251.5933. For address changes, email subscribe@lifeway.com. For bulk shipments mailed quarterly to one address, visit Lifeway.com/Autoship, email orderentry@Lifeway.com, or write to the above address.

We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review Lifeway's doctrinal guideline, please visit lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline. The Key Doctrine statements in this study guide are adapted from these guidelines.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers®. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®) copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the Holy Bible, King James Version. Scripture quotations marked NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. The suggestions for pronouncing Bible names are from That's Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names by W. Murray Severance, © 1997 by Broadman & Holman Publishers. Used by permission.

Daily Discipleship Guide
Winter 2026-27
Volume 4, Number 2

Amber Vaden
Team Leader

Mike Livingstone
Content Editor

Gianetta Thornburg
Production Editor

Darin Clark
Design Team Leader

Chad Hunter
Graphic Designer

Dwayne McCrary
Manager, Adult Ongoing Bible Studies

John Paul Basham
Director, Adult Ministry

Send questions/comments to
the team by email
ETB.adults@Lifeway.com
or by mail to:
Explore The Bible: Daily Discipleship Guide
200 Powell Place, Suite 100,
Brentwood, TN 37027-7707

Printed in the United States of America

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

I don't know about you, but I like having and following a plan. Knowing what to expect and when to expect it fills me with comfort. Life doesn't always cooperate, though. Plans change. Circumstances shift. When the unexpected happens, flexibility is key.



In 1 Samuel, we learn about God's plans for David. Surely God's purposes were far beyond anything David would have imagined for himself. In 1 Samuel 16, God instructed Samuel to travel to Bethlehem, visit Jesse's house, and anoint the one who would succeed Saul as king. God chose David, Jesse's youngest son and a humble shepherd, to lead Israel. Samuel anointed David, but the next part of God's plan was anything but conventional. David spent many years running from Saul and waiting for the day he would be installed as king. These years were filled with unforeseen and unwanted experiences that would test David's character. Still, God's purposes would come to fruition.

Whether you're enjoying a season of calm or learning to trust God with the unexpected, I hope this quarter of study brings you closer to Him. We can depend on His plans even when we don't have all the details. God is both trustworthy and good! "There is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, as all we have heard confirms" (2 Sam. 7:22b).

In Him,

Amber Vaden

amber.vaden@lifeway.com

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

BIBLE READING PLAN

DECEMBER

- ❑ 1. 1 Samuel 1:1-8
- ❑ 2. 1 Samuel 1:9-18
- ❑ 3. 1 Samuel 1:19-28
- ❑ 4. 1 Samuel 2:1-11
- ❑ 5. 1 Samuel 2:12-20
- ❑ 6. 1 Samuel 2:21-26
- ❑ 7. 1 Samuel 2:27-36
- ❑ 8. 1 Samuel 3:1-10
- ❑ 9. 1 Samuel 3:11-21
- ❑ 10. 1 Samuel 4:1-11
- ❑ 11. 1 Samuel 4:12-22
- ❑ 12. 1 Samuel 5:1-5
- ❑ 13. 1 Samuel 5:6-12
- ❑ 14. 1 Samuel 6:1-9
- ❑ 15. 1 Samuel 6:10-21
- ❑ 16. 1 Samuel 7:1-8
- ❑ 17. 1 Samuel 7:9-17
- ❑ 18. 1 Samuel 8:1-9
- ❑ 19. 1 Samuel 8:10-22
- ❑ 20. 1 Samuel 9:1-9
- ❑ 21. 1 Samuel 9:10-18
- ❑ 22. 1 Samuel 9:19-27
- ❑ 23. 1 Samuel 10:1-8
- ❑ 24. 1 Samuel 10:9-16
- ❑ 25. 1 Samuel 10:17-27
- ❑ 26. 1 Samuel 11:1-11
- ❑ 27. 1 Samuel 11:12-15
- ❑ 28. 1 Samuel 12:1-7
- ❑ 29. 1 Samuel 12:8-15
- ❑ 30. 1 Samuel 12:16-25
- ❑ 31. 1 Samuel 13:1-9

JANUARY

- ❑ 1. 1 Samuel 13:10-15
- ❑ 2. 1 Samuel 13:16-23
- ❑ 3. 1 Samuel 14:1-7
- ❑ 4. 1 Samuel 14:8-14
- ❑ 5. 1 Samuel 14:15-23
- ❑ 6. 1 Samuel 14:24-35
- ❑ 7. 1 Samuel 14:36-46
- ❑ 8. 1 Samuel 14:47-52
- ❑ 9. 1 Samuel 15:1-9
- ❑ 10. 1 Samuel 15:10-19
- ❑ 11. 1 Samuel 15:20-29
- ❑ 12. 1 Samuel 15:30-35
- ❑ 13. 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- ❑ 14. 1 Samuel 16:14-23
- ❑ 15. 1 Samuel 17:1-11
- ❑ 16. 1 Samuel 17:12-24
- ❑ 17. 1 Samuel 17:25-33
- ❑ 18. 1 Samuel 17:34-47
- ❑ 19. 1 Samuel 17:48-58
- ❑ 20. 1 Samuel 18:1-9
- ❑ 21. 1 Samuel 18:10-19
- ❑ 22. 1 Samuel 18:20-30
- ❑ 23. 1 Samuel 19:1-8
- ❑ 24. 1 Samuel 19:9-18
- ❑ 25. 1 Samuel 19:19-24
- ❑ 26. 1 Samuel 20:1-9
- ❑ 27. 1 Samuel 20:10-15
- ❑ 28. 1 Samuel 20:16-23
- ❑ 29. 1 Samuel 20:24-34
- ❑ 30. 1 Samuel 20:35-42
- ❑ 31. 1 Samuel 21:1-9

FEBRUARY

- ❑ 1. 1 Samuel 21:10-15
- ❑ 2. 1 Samuel 22:1-10
- ❑ 3. 1 Samuel 22:11-23
- ❑ 4. 1 Samuel 23:1-11
- ❑ 5. 1 Samuel 23:12-18
- ❑ 6. 1 Samuel 23:19-29
- ❑ 7. 1 Samuel 24:1-7
- ❑ 8. 1 Samuel 24:8-13
- ❑ 9. 1 Samuel 24:14-22
- ❑ 10. 1 Samuel 25:1-13
- ❑ 11. 1 Samuel 25:14-22
- ❑ 12. 1 Samuel 25:23-31
- ❑ 13. 1 Samuel 25:32-38
- ❑ 14. 1 Samuel 25:39-44
- ❑ 15. 1 Samuel 26:1-7
- ❑ 16. 1 Samuel 26:8-17
- ❑ 17. 1 Samuel 26:18-25
- ❑ 18. 1 Samuel 27:1-12
- ❑ 19. 1 Samuel 28:1-7
- ❑ 20. 1 Samuel 28:8-15
- ❑ 21. 1 Samuel 28:16-25
- ❑ 22. 1 Samuel 29:1-7
- ❑ 23. 1 Samuel 29:8-11
- ❑ 24. 1 Samuel 30:1-10
- ❑ 25. 1 Samuel 30:11-20
- ❑ 26. 1 Samuel 30:21-31
- ❑ 27. 1 Samuel 31:1-6
- ❑ 28. 1 Samuel 31:7-13

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

MEMORY VERSES

SESSION 1:

Hannah prayed: My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is lifted up by the LORD. My mouth boasts over my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. - 1 Samuel 2:1

SESSION 2:

The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel responded, "Speak, for your servant is listening." - 1 Samuel 3:10

SESSION 3:

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. - Luke 2:11

SESSION 4:

For you, LORD, are the Most High over the whole earth; you are exalted above all the gods. - Psalm 97:9

SESSION 5:

But the LORD told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king." - 1 Samuel 8:7

SESSION 6:

Then Samuel said: Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. - 1 Samuel 15:22

SESSION 7:

Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began. - Psalm 139:16

SESSION 8:

"Humans do not see what the LORD sees, for humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart." - 1 Samuel 16:7b

SESSION 9:

Then David said, "The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." - 1 Samuel 17:37a

SESSION 10:

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a difficult time. - Proverbs 17:17

SESSION 11:

Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me, for I take refuge in you. I will seek refuge in the shadow of your wings until danger passes. - Psalm 57:1

SESSION 12:

May your discernment be blessed, and may you be blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself by my own hand. - 1 Samuel 25:33

SESSION 13:

But David found strength in the LORD his God. - 1 Samuel 30:6b

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

First Samuel records events from roughly 1070–1010 BC, during the closing days of Israel's era of the judges. The nation was trapped in a persistent cycle of sin and rebellion, doing whatever seemed right in their own eyes (Judg. 17:6).

Samuel served as Israel's prophet, priest, and judge (1 Sam. 3:19-20; 7:9,15). He called the nation to forsake their idols and return wholeheartedly to the Lord (7:2-4). Under his leadership, Israel began to transition from a loose confederation of tribes into a people prepared to become a kingdom. However, when he appointed his sons as judges, they proved corrupt—much like Eli's sons before them. Israel rejected their leadership and demanded a monarchy, wanting to be like the other nations (8:5).

Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, became Israel's first king. Samuel anointed him under the Lord's direction (9:17). Saul was a tall and handsome man who worked for his father. Initially, he was timid and unassuming, but, after being anointed by Samuel, he stepped from obscurity into royal authority. Though his reign began well, his obedience soon faltered. Saul disobeyed God in matters of worship (chaps. 13–15). While God allowed him to continue leading, He declared that He would raise up a king after His own heart (13:14). Rather than repent, Saul grew increasingly bitter—especially after a young shepherd named David defeated the Philistine giant, Goliath. Saul's bitterness hardened into jealous rage.

At the Lord's command, Samuel anointed David as Israel's next king (16:13). David's popularity soared after his victory over Goliath, and unlike Moses—who humbly prepared Joshua to lead after his own failure—Saul looked on David with jealous hatred. As Saul declined in influence, David's influence grew through the empowering work of the Spirit. During the years David fled from Saul's hostility, God protected him through Jonathan's loyal friendship (18:1-5; 20:1-42) and Abigail's wise intervention (25:1-35). Even while hiding in caves, David refused to harm Saul, honoring him as the Lord's anointed (chaps. 24; 26). By the end of 1 Samuel, the contrast is clear: under pressure, Saul sought a witch, while David sought the Lord (chaps. 28; 30). Finally, God fulfilled His word to take the kingdom from Saul's lineage when Saul and his sons fell in battle (chap. 31).

First Samuel highlights the difference between a life that wants God's help without wanting God Himself and a life that seeks God's honor through faithful obedience. David's final act in the book—seeking the Lord's direction against the Amalekites—positioned him for the next great chapter of his life: becoming the Lord's anointed king over Israel.

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

OUTLINE

1 Samuel

I. Samuel's Ministry (1:1–12:25)

A. Samuel's birth and call (1:1–3:21)

B. The ark narrative (4:1–7:17)

C. The people ask for a king (8:1–12:25)

II. Saul's Reign (13:1–31:13)

A. Saul's battles with the Philistines (13:1–14:52)

B. Saul's failure against the Amalekites (15:1-35)

C. David's selection as Saul's successor (16:1-23)

D. David's victory over Goliath (17:1-58)

E. David's struggles with Saul (18:1–26:25)

F. Saul's reign ends (27:1–31:13)



© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

USING THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

A person's spiritual growth hinges on daily Bible engagement. *Daily* implies a discipline much like exercising, brushing teeth, or eating a certain number of calories EVERY day. Our spiritual training should be no different since we need spiritual nourishment every day. The focus is the *Bible*, God's Word. There is nothing wrong with knowing the thoughts of great philosophers, leaders, or theologians, as long as God's Word is the final word on the matter. Engagement carries the idea of participation and involvement. *Engagement* is active, requiring us to read, study, and reflect.

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you engage with God's Word. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

- Use this resource when studying with a group. The first four pages of each session help the group examine a Bible passage and move us toward acting on the truths discovered as a group and an individual.
- Use the **Talk It Out** page to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals (an accountability group). Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study while working to memorize a Bible verse.
- Use the **Daily Exploration** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.
- Use the resource every week even when you are unable to attend the group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study does not excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook at goExploreTheBible.com or at Lifeway.com/digitalstudies.



© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

Getting the most from Talk It Out

Talk It Out supports groups of three or four people who come together weekly to encourage, share, and sharpen each other. While other issues may be addressed, the Talk It Out section focuses on the weekly memory verse. The questions and comments provide a means for encouraging each other to memorize Scripture while reflecting on the main point of that week's lesson.

These groups are made up of three to four people...

- Participants should be of the same gender.
- These groups should be smaller on purpose.
- These groups can meet at almost any location.
- These groups can easily accommodate each other's schedules.

Some married couples may choose to use the Talk It Out section for a weekly family devotional activity.

...Who meet weekly...

- We were created to relate, so meeting weekly is important.
- In some cases, your smaller group may need to meet virtually. You may find it best to meet face-to-face every other week or once a month and use virtual tools the other weeks.

...To hold each other accountable and encourage each other in their spiritual growth.

- Review the questions and comments in Talk It Out.
- Look for ways the memory verse relates to the main point of the lesson.
- Include time to pray for each other.

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

SESSION 1

Prayer

1 SAMUEL 1:9-18,24-28

WHEN GOD ANSWERED HANNAH'S PRAYER FOR A SON, SHE DEDICATED THE CHILD TO THE LORD.



© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

At the local discount store were two golden bicycles with silver and white trim, each with a built-in headlight. For two elementary school siblings, it was exactly what was hoped for at Christmas. Delighted squeals filled the house on Christmas morning when the two bikes were spotted in the living room.

DID YOU EVER HAVE SOMETHING THAT YOU REALLY WANTED—AND YOU GOT IT? WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The standard detective questions come into play as we look at 1 Samuel 1–2. The answers to these questions can help us understand and appreciate the backdrop for events in these chapters.

Who? Elkanah lived in the tribal territory of Benjamin; yet he was from the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 6:1,27-28). Elkanah had two wives: Hannah and Peninnah. The name *Peninnah* can mean "pearl" or, in contrast, something like "prolific" or "fertile," which indeed, she was. Verse 6 refers to Peninnah as a "rival," which also translates from Hebrew as a "troubler."

Hannah and her story are the focus of 1 Samuel 1–2. In Hebrew, her name means "grace" or "graceful woman." Living up to her name, Hannah was the recipient of God's grace, and she showed great grace despite personal heartache.

Eli served as the priest at Shiloh in the opening chapters. He became the custodial guardian of young Samuel. We will read more about him in our next session. Samuel was the final judge for the nation of Israel. He also served as a prophet, kingmaker, and priest.

When? Historically, the stories in 1 Samuel began when Israel was led by judges; the book closes with the death of the nation's first king, Saul. This would place them from late in the twelfth century until late in the eleventh BC. During this time the Hittites' influence was declining, and the Philistines were rising in power.

Where? Events in these opening chapters are associated mostly with Shiloh. Under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites had erected the tabernacle at Shiloh (Josh. 18:1-10). It remained there for over three hundred years. The ark of the covenant was also there (1 Sam. 3:3). First Samuel also refers to the tabernacle as "the LORD's house," "the LORD's temple," and "the tent of meeting" (1:7,9; 2:22).

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

1 Samuel 1:9-18,24-28

9 On one occasion, Hannah got up after they ate and drank at **Shiloh.** [A] The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's **temple.** [B] **10** Deeply hurt, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. **11** Making a **vow**, [C] she pleaded, "LORD of Armies, if you will take notice of your servant's affliction, remember and not forget me, and give your servant a son, I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and his hair will **never be cut**." [D] **12** While she continued praying in the LORD's presence, Eli watched her mouth. **13** Hannah was praying silently, and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. Eli thought she was **drunk** [E] **14** and said to her, "How long are you going to be drunk? Get rid of your wine!" **15** "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman with a broken heart. I haven't had any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the LORD. **16** Don't think of me as a **wicked woman**; [F] I've been praying from the depth of my anguish and resentment." **17** Eli responded, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request you've made of him." **18** "May your servant find favor with you," she replied. Then Hannah went on her way; she ate and no longer looked despondent. [. . .] **24** When she had weaned him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well as a three-year-old bull, half a bushel of flour, and a clay jar of wine. Though the boy was **still young**, [G] she took him to the LORD's house at Shiloh. **25** Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli. **26** "Please, my lord," she said, "as surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. **27 I prayed for this boy**, [H] and since the LORD gave me what I asked him for, **28** I now give the boy to the LORD. For as long as he lives, he is **given to the LORD**." [I] Then he worshiped the LORD there.

Key Words

A. After the conquest, Shiloh became the place where God's people made their annual pilgrimages to offer sacrifices and worship God.

B. Not a grand temple like Solomon built, but a tabernacle where the ark of the covenant was kept.

C. The Hebrew indicates a voluntary promise to God. While a person was not forced to enter the vow, it was binding once made.

D. Part of a Nazirite vow. See Numbers 6:1-21 and Judges 13:5; 16:17.

E. In the ancient world, prayers usually were spoken aloud. Hannah was praying silently while moving her lips, so Eli assumed the worst.

F. "Daughter of Belial" (KJV); "worthless woman" (ESV). The wording suggests one who ignored God's laws and was marked for destruction.

G. Scripture is not clear about Samuel's exact age when he moved to Shiloh, but he may have been as young as three or four.

H. When they first met, Hannah had not told Eli what she was praying for. Now, she acknowledged praying for a son.

I. Hannah had asked of God and received her request. Now, she was fulfilling her vow.

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Fervent

(1 Sam. 1:9-11)

We can cry out to God with our requests.

- **What does Hannah's prayer teach us about the proper way to approach God in prayer?**

2. Persistent

(1 Sam. 1:12-18)

We need to be sensitive to those carrying burdens.

- **Why are some people quick to make assumptions about others' spiritual condition without knowing the facts?**
- **How can we show greater sensitivity to people who are carrying burdens?**

3. Fulfilled

(1 Sam. 1:24-28)

Believers should follow through on what they vow to do.

- **How did Hannah's acts of worship reflect her attitude as she fulfilled her vow?**
- **When has prayer strengthened your faith in God? What is the relationship between our prayer life and our walk with the Lord?**

Apply the Text

Reading this passage might cause some to believe that God is concerned about only the "big stuff" in our lives. But that is not the case. Have you seen times that He has taken care of smaller details in your life? Share with your Bible study group a time when God has answered a prayer about a smaller event or circumstance in your life.

KEY DOCTRINE:
The Family

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. (See Psalm 127; Proverbs 17:6.)

BIBLE SKILL:
Use a Bible dictionary to better understand a term.

Read the article "Nazirite" in a Bible dictionary to learn more about a Nazirite vow. Consider the similarity between Samuel and Samson. Read Samsom's dedication as a Nazirite in Judges 13. Note the similarities between the birth of Samson and Samuel. How were they alike? How were they different? How does the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1), who was also a Nazirite, compare to that of Samson and Samuel?

***Explore the Bible* Prayer Guide**

Scan here for a weekly prayer guide based on this quarter's Bible passages.

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

TALK IT OUT

Focus on 1 Samuel 2:1. How does the tone shift from 1 Samuel 1 to 1 Samuel 2? Why?

In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah prayed earnestly for a son and vowed to dedicate him to the Lord. She explained her anguish to the priest, Eli, who blessed her. God answered her prayer, and she gave birth to Samuel. When the boy was old enough, she fulfilled her vow to God, bringing her son to the temple to serve the Lord. The first 10 verses of chapter 2 record Hannah's thanksgiving and praise to God for answering her prayer.

How have you seen God answer prayers in your life, and how did you respond? How can you intentionally respond with greater gratitude or worship the next time God answers a prayer?

Hannah responded to answered prayer not only with praise (1 Sam. 2:1-10) but also obedience (1:28). She fulfilled her vow to God by dedicating Samuel to the Lord.

Discuss the connection between answered prayer, praise, and obedience. How did Hannah's actions show that her praise was genuine? What is one answered prayer in your life that should lead you to a deeper level of obedience?

Place 1 Samuel 2:1 on your phones and agree to memorize it together.

Prayer Requests / Notes

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: 1 Samuel 1:9-10

Note Hannah's desperate situation.

Elkanah and his family traveled to Shiloh to make a sacrifice to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:3). Although Hebrew men were to appear three times a year before the Lord, the text does not indicate the reason for this trip. It could have been more personal in nature, thus not during one of the three Jewish festivals. After presenting his sacrifice, Elkanah and his family were enjoying the meal that followed.

Sitting by the doorpost of the temple, Eli could see into the tabernacle courtyard—Hannah was praying nearby (see v. 26). This is the first of four times 1 Samuel mentions Hannah praying (also vv. 12,26,27). Her weeping with many tears exposed that she was "deeply hurt." The cause for Hannah's anguish was her barren condition. Many ancient Hebrews believed barrenness was a curse from God and thus saw it as a disgrace (Luke 1:25). Maintaining the family's flocks and fields required many hands. Children were thus essential for preserving a family's stability and viability. Hannah's barren condition may have motivated Elkanah to take Peninnah as a second wife (1 Sam. 1:2). Peninnah's taunting and provoking her would have added to Hannah's anguish (see v. 6).

What struggles do you need to bring before God in prayer right now?

Day 2: 1 Samuel 1:11

Pay attention to Hannah's boldness as she initiated a vow with God.

In Hebrew culture, a vow was more than a promise; it was more akin to a sworn oath. God's people considered an unfulfilled vow to be worse than no vow at all.

Elkanah had laid a spiritual foundation by leading his family to present sacrifices to the "LORD of Armies" (1:3). Here, Hannah used this same title when making her vow to God. The term underscores God's dominion over all of heaven and earth.

Multiple times Hannah referred to herself as the Lord's "servant" or handmaid. Quite the contrast to God's dominion and power, this title emphasized Hannah's humility and submission.

Hannah's vow was a type of Nazirite vow (see Num. 6:1-21; Judg. 13:1-5; Amos 2:11). The vow typically included abstaining from alcohol consumption. It also included not going near a dead body nor cutting one's hair. The adherent would cut his hair and burn it at the altar when he had fulfilled the time of his vow (Num. 6:18-20).

God was the One who typically initiated a Nazirite vow. Hannah's vow, though, was different. She initiated the vow and promised her son to the Lord, not for a limited time but for "all the days of his life."

What does Hannah's prayer teach us about the proper way to approach God in prayer?

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

Day 3: 1 Samuel 1:12-16

Consider Hannah's intimacy with God.

A couple of phrases stand out in verse 12. First, Hannah continued praying. Her personal anguish caused her to pour out her heart again and again. Jesus taught the importance of crying out to God both day and night (Luke 18:1-8). Hannah was practicing what Jesus taught centuries before He taught it—that God's people ought "to pray always and not give up" (Luke 18:1).

Second, while praying, Hannah was "in the LORD's presence." She was fully immersed in God's presence as she prayed. This underscores the intimacy of Hannah's prayer to God.

Eli, the priest at Shiloh, is not presented here in a favorable light. He watched as Hannah prayed silently. Misreading the scene, Eli concluded that Hannah must have been drunk. Two factors likely contributed to this assumption. First, the conclusion likely indicated that alcohol abuse must have been common at the Jewish festivals at Shiloh. Second, prayers were typically spoken aloud. In fact, this is the only explicit report of a silent prayer in Scripture.

Hannah assured Eli he had misread the situation. She explained that she had been praying from the depths of her hurt because she had a broken heart. Echoing the thought that she was praying in the Lord's presence (v. 12), Hannah explained she had been pouring out her heart "before the LORD." Again, the phrase underscored the closeness and spiritual connection that Hannah had with God.

What challenges your persistence in prayer?

Day 4: 1 Samuel 1:17-18

Note Eli's blessing for Hannah.

Eli's tone dramatically changed after Hannah's explanation. Rather than criticism, Eli showed compassion and spoke words of faith. He spoke a blessing to her. Eli wanted God to grant Hannah her request. The Old Testament tells of Hebrew priests offering a blessing to God's people (Lev. 9:22-23; 2 Chron. 30:27). This is the only time recorded in the Old Testament that a priest offered a blessing to an individual.

Eli's words encouraged Hannah and evidently bolstered her faith. In responding to him, Hannah made a pun using her Hebrew name. The word translated "favor" is *hen* in Hebrew. The King James translates this as "grace." Recall that Hannah's name can mean "grace" or "woman of grace." Thus, Hannah responded, "May this woman of grace find grace with you."

Giving evidence that she had been encouraged by Eli's words, Hannah was finished praying. She was ready to be on her way. Her appetite, which had gone away (1 Sam. 1:7-8), returned; her countenance improved. No doubt, she left Shiloh feeling hopeful rather than hopeless. This was quite the contrast to how she had been when she arrived.

How can you show greater sensitivity to people who are carrying burdens?

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources

Day 5: 1 Samuel 1:24-28

Highlight the sacrifice Hannah brought as she fulfilled her vow to the Lord.

When speaking to Moses, God outlined the offering that someone who was fulfilling a vow was to present. It could include a young bull, fine flour, oil, and wine (Num. 15:8-10). Hannah brought a "bull, half a bushel of flour" (about thirty-five pounds), and wine. This generous offering fulfilled the requirements of Hebrew law—and more. Surely Hannah presented it, not out of legalistic obligation, but instead, from a grateful heart.

Hannah reminded Eli that he had seen her here years earlier praying to God. Were they standing in the exact same spot? Did she point to the spot some feet away? Scripture does not say. Yet, her words about the location and her praying triggered Eli's memory.

In their earlier encounter, Hannah had not told Eli what she was praying for. She mentioned only that her prayer was borne out of deep anguish. Eli had given no indication he had any idea about her concern. He had merely said to her, "may the God of Israel grant the request you've made of him" (v. 17). Here, though, she revealed the subject of her prayer. She had been praying for a son, for "this boy." Samuel was an answer to prayer.

When has prayer strengthened your faith in God?

What is the relationship between your prayer life and your walk with the Lord?

APPLY THE TEXT

Thinking of Hannah's example, how would you evaluate the consistency of your prayer life? What changes might you need to make to have a more stable prayer life? Are there pledges that you've made to God, but you have let them slip? What steps do you need to take to fulfill that promise?

JOURNAL

© 2026 Lifeway Christian Resources