

Life-Sharing & Pioneers Lesson 1 “Can I Trust God With My Disappointments”

1 Samuel 1:1-20

1. What was one of your disappointments in 2011?

¹ There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite^[a] from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ² He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

³ Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. ⁴ Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. ⁶ Because the LORD had closed Hannah’s womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. ⁷ This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Her husband Elkanah would say to her, “Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”

2. What do you think were some of the greatest disappointments in Hannah’s life and why?

3. How long did Hannah’s disappointments last?

4. What do we think is a reasonable amount of time to trust God with our disappointments before taking matters into our hands?

5. Why would the author include the phrase, “The Lord had closed Hannah’s womb”

⁹ Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD’s house. ¹⁰ In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. ¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, “LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant’s misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.”

6. How did Hannah’s disappointments draw her closer to trusting the Lord?

7. What are some of the roles disappointments should play in our lives?

8. What disappointment have you experienced, that has led to you trusting in God more?

9. If the Lord gave you something you had been praying for for years, how easy would it have been for you to turn around and give it back to the Lord with no strings attached?

¹² As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk ¹⁴ and said to her, “How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine.” ¹⁵ “Not so, my lord,” Hannah replied, “I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief.” ¹⁷ Eli answered, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.” ¹⁸ She said, “May your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

¹⁹ Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,^[b] saying, “Because I asked the LORD for him.”

10. How was God at work in the midst of Hannah’s disappointment?
11. How can we tell that Hannah was trusting God with her disappointment?
12. Does having a strong faith in God mean that all of our disappointments will have a victorious ending to them? Why or Why not.

Life-Sharing & Pioneers Lesson 2 “Can I Trust God With My Money”

Malachi 3:8-12, Matthew 6: 19-24 Ecclesiastes 5:10-11

1. When has someone stolen money from you, and how did it make you feel when you found out the money was gone?
2. If we honestly believe that all we have comes from God, why do so many believers feel as though 10% of their income is too much beyond their ability to give to the work of Christ? Is the answer to the problem to be found in “having more money” or “changing one’s lifestyle.”

⁸ “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ “In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. ¹² “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.
3. Do you think God actually feels as though our not giving a tithe is robbing God? Why or Why not.
4. Which is more valuable “the salvation of one’s soul” or “the money in one’s checking account?” Why is it easier to believe that God can save my soul, than to believe that God can stretch and multiply my money.
5. Some Christians believe that instead of giving a tithe, everybody should just give what they want to give since we are under grace and not the law. Do you think offerings at our church would go up or down if this was taught at our church? Why?

Matthew 6:19-24 Today's New International Version (TNIV) Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^[a] your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy,^[b] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 Today's New International Version (TNIV) ¹⁰ Those who love money never have enough; those who love wealth are never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. ¹¹ As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?

6. What treasures do you have stored up in your home right now that Jesus could be speaking about in this passage? (Things you have not used in the last year that could have been a benefit to others, but instead set idly by, because you still cling to them). Why are we reluctant to let these treasures go?

7. How do our eyes work against us when it comes to possessions? How do you know when you have started to love money or things?

8. Why would our love for money cause us to hate God?

9. What are some of the ways in which we mask our love for money by calling it something else?

10. How are “giving to God” related to “trust in God”?

5. If we repent, fully expecting and intending to do the same thing again tomorrow, have we repented?
6. How does choosing a path of sin relate to trusting God with my future?
7. What is it that keeps us from giving ourselves over totally to God?

Psalm 37:3-4 Today's New International Version (TNIV) ³ Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. ⁴ Take delight in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

8. What does it mean to delight yourself in the Lord?
9. When the passage says the Lord will give you the desires of your heart, do you think it means, "God will put certain desires within your heart" or "God will give you the things your heart desires." Why do you feel this way?

Jeremiah 29:10-12 Today's New International Version (TNIV) ¹⁰ This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

10. How do we reconcile the bad things which come into our lives, with God's plans to "prosper us and to give us a hope and a future"?
11. Why is trusting God with our future, our best course of action?