

# LifeWay Bible Studies for Life Series for May 13: A legacy of hope

May 2, 2012

Looking back a week, we considered that while many people think of a legacy only in terms of money left as an inheritance, a legacy actually is anything transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor from the past. This broader definition provides a new perspective of seeing legacies that are far more valuable than money. One prime example of this type of legacy is found in what Hannah passes along to her son, Samuel.

This week's lesson begins when most of Samuel's life already has been lived. Samuel lived during that period of time after the death of Joshua and period of kings that would serve over the nation Israel. Prior to Saul becoming king, Israel had been led by a series of judges. Samuel is the last in that line of judges that included names like Gideon and Deborah.

The people of Israel have been calling for a king. Samuel has given them multiple reasons why this is not a good idea. His chief reason has been the danger of becoming dependent upon the king rather than upon God. But God has instructed Samuel to anoint a king and present him to the people.

In Samuel 12:23-24, Samuel has presented Saul as the first king of Israel to the people. He then makes a vow or promise to the people of Israel that he will pray for them. Samuel clearly saw that the future of Israel still rested in their remaining faithful to God. Their future was not in a king who could lead armies into battle but in God who could deliver them from all the evil they would face. Samuel's promise to pray for them is evidence that had taken what had been passed down to him and made a vital part of his own

life.

**For thought:** For more than 50 years, Paul Harvey made daily radio news broadcasts. His unique voice and ability to relate a story were known by millions of Americans. A later addition to his repertoire of programming was his “The Rest of the Story.” Samuel’s rest of the story is about the origin of the legacy he used so well in his life. What legacy have you received that is making a difference in the way you live?

Samuel’s story culminates with anointing Saul to be the first king of Israel and later anointing David to be the second. But his story begins before he was born. It begins with a woman named Hannah who was the barren wife of Elkanah. Elkanah had a second wife who had born children. She found ways to torment Hannah and put her down because she was not able to have children.

Hannah could have given up at this point, but Hannah’s hope for a child was not based on medical conditions. Her hope was placed in God. It was this hope that brought Hannah to the tabernacle at Shiloh where Eli served as the priest. There she prayed for an extended period of time for God to give her a son. Her promise to God was if he gave her a son, she would give her son back to God to serve the Lord for all of his life (1 Samuel 1:10-11).

Perhaps because of the length of her praying or because she prayed so softly, Eli thought she was drunk. He scolded her and tried to send her away. But Hannah carefully explained her situation and that she was praying from the depth of our heart. Eli then blessed her with the words that God might grant her prayer.

**For thought:** Where do we place our hope today—medical science, technology, government, military or God? How often is our praying so deep and intense that nothing else around us matters?

1 Samuel 1:27-2:1 records the fulfillment of Hannah’s prayer. She has

given birth to Samuel. How she and Elkanah must have rejoiced in having this baby. It would have been so easy for them to either forget the vow Hannah had made or to renegotiate the vow to God. At this point Hannah had no other children, only Samuel.

How similar is the account of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac. Abraham was willing to take his only son, Isaac, and sacrifice him if that was what God desired. Hannah took Samuel after he was weaned to Eli. There, Samuel served with Eli seeing his mother once a year when she would come to offer a sacrifice.

Most Christian parents want their children to believe in Christ and attend church. However, they often are reluctant for their children to be fully committed to Christ because the sacrifice might require more than they are willing to give.

I remember that as I sensed a call to be a minister, someone suggested I could serve God just as well by becoming a doctor and making lots of money and then teaching Sunday school or being a deacon. I didn't have to become a preacher. But if I was to obey God, I had to.

**For thought:** Samuel received a legacy of hope in God from his mother. She lived with that hope and passed it along to her son who also lived it. Will we pass on a legacy of hope in God to our children or will we pass along a series of alternatives to what God asks of us?