A Heart Broken By Sorrow

Tim Hadley Sr. · Psalm 34:18 · October 17, 2025



David reminds us that "*the Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite [crushed] spirit*" (Ps. 34:18). Hannah is an example of one who was crushed by deep sorrow; her brokenness is recorded for us in 1 Samuel 1.

Hannah lived during the period of the judges, when men were not following God's laws, but each "*did what was right in his own eyes*" (Judg. 21:25). Her husband Elkanah had another wife named Peninnah, who had children. Peninnah tormented Hannah because Hannah had no children (1 Sam. 1:6).

Because of these circumstances, Hannah's heart was grieved, but really that is simplifying her pain! It is important to see just how deep her hurt truly was! In verse 6–7 we are told twice that Peninnah provoked Hannah severely, causing her to weep. This weeping is mentioned three times in the passage (vv. 6, 8, 10). It is not only that her feelings were hurt, but that this hurt ran deep, and there was no end to it! **We are told that Hannah experienced "*bitterness of soul*," that she wept in anguish, that she was a woman of sorrowful spirit, pouring out her soul before the Lord.** Proverbs 15:13 reminds us that "*by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken*." This describes Hannah! Proverbs 17:22 describes this type of a broken spirit as drying

up the bones! The loss of vitality and energy!

Like Hannah you may have deep pain, hurt that has been there for many days, months, or even years. We want to encourage you to remember, "*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*," and "*The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart*."

No help, not even from close people

No one understood just how deep Hannah's bitter pain went or just how broken she felt. Her husband sought to help by reminding her just how good her situation was by saying, "*Am I not better to you than ten sons?*" Perhaps he meant well, as so many do when they try to help one who is deeply hurting. **But he just did not understand the broken spirit.** Eli the priest misjudged her, reminding us that even spiritual leaders may not be able to enter into our pain (v. 12). Scripture states, "*the spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit?*" (Prov. 18:14).

Where could Hannah turn for help? She poured out her heart to the Lord. Hannah's prayer is the very first prayer of a woman recorded in the Bible. Notice it was a silent prayer from her heart! It was not for show, nor for anyone else but the Lord! Hannah's brokenness drives her to the Lord, not away from Him. While her pain involved all of her—spirit (1:5), soul (1:10, 15), and body, because she was weeping—Hannah does not let her "*bitterness of soul*" make her become a "bitter woman," but she cast her pain before the Lord who cared for her (1 Pet. 5:7).

When we hurt in bitter pain, we can go directly to the throne room of God. Hebrews 4:16 reminds us of the tremendous privilege we have: "*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*."

Help from God

When considering Hannah's deep sorrow, and her prayer, it may be instructive concerning those times when we do not know what to pray for. **Sometimes, when the pain is so strong, the hurt is so deep that we do not know how to pray.** Paul

reminds us, "*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought*" (Rom. 8:26). He simply wants us to come in faith and lay our hearts open before Him, and He is able to heal the brokenhearted!

It is important to mention why Hannah wanted a child. She did not simply want a child, but a male child (1 Sam. 1:8, 11), someone who could grow to be used of the Lord to lead His people. She made an incredibly challenging vow to God that, if God gave her a male child, she would dedicate him to serve the Lord all the days of his life. Hannah kept this vow, keeping Samuel home until he was weaned. She then brought him to the tabernacle to fulfill her vow to dedicate him to God's service (1:21–28). In his early days, she showed her tender love for him by making him a new robe each year. Samuel knew his mother loved him, but he also knew that his mother was fulfilling the vow she had made to God.

Hannah had opened her heart to the Lord in her bitterness; now we hear her opening her heart in sweet praise! He has turned her sorrow into a song (2:1–10)! The Lord can give songs in the night (Job 35:10; Ps. 42:8). He gave a song to a surrendered heart! The song of the Lord can be power to the powerless, strength to the weak, joy to the joyless, healing to the soul, victory to the defeated, and a sacrifice of praise unto the Lord (Heb. 13:15).

In the end: praise

Hannah's heart was full of worship and praise for who God is and what He has done. She is occupied with about ten different attributes that describe who God is! Her brokenness was used by God to cause Hannah to think on His strength (1 Sam. 2:1), His holiness (2:2), the uniqueness of God (2:2), His omniscience (2:3), the justice of God (2:3), His omnipotence (2:4), the Great Provider (2:5), the Sovereign One (2:6–8), the Faithful One (2:9), and His righteousness in judgment (2:10). Hannah was occupied not only with what God had done for her, but especially with who God was to her. **Through her brokenness Hannah learned that His stability is unshakable, His comfort is incomparable, His power is unconquerable, His love is unchangeable, His compassion is inexhaustible, His shield is impenetrable, and His peace is inexplicable!** God blessed her with three more sons and two

daughters (2:20–21).

This praying mother taught her son to pray, and Samuel became a praying prophet in Israel (3:1–21). Hannah’s brokenness was not only used of God to bring sweetness to her soul, but to bring about a prophet of God who was known as a man of prayer. He prayed for restoration (7:5), he prayed in times of frustration (8:6), he prayed in intercession (12:19–23), and he prayed in lamentation (15:11). All because his mother was broken and took that brokenness to the Lord!

What about You? The most wonderful thing we can learn about our cries is that our loving Father hears every single one, just as He did for Hannah and so many more! He will hear your cries today!

Source https://thebiblestudy.site/article/a-heart-broken-by-sorrow/