



## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Your Chapter In God's Never-ending Story

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### Week 6

**Today's Theme:** Great stories involve longing.

**Scripture Verses:**

- **1 Samuel 1:1-20**

**Supplies:** Index cards, Paper and Pens

**Opening Everyone Answers Question: (10min)**

*You want to get everyone talking here. This will set the tone for the meeting and introduce the theme.*

- *(Everyone answers)* Think about birthdays and Christmases throughout your childhood. What is the present you most remember wanting? Why? How did your longing manifest itself? Did you eventually receive that present? If so, how did you feel when you first opened it and saw the thing you'd always wanted? If not, how did you feel when you didn't get the thing you'd been longing for?

**Scripture Exploration: (25 minutes)**

*This is the part of the study that you'll dig into Scripture so as to draw out the day's theme.*

1. Read 1 Samuel 1:1-3. What's the purpose of the festival at Shiloh?

*To celebrate God's goodness by offering sacrifices to him*

- a. What does Hannah most long for?

*Children*

- b. At this point in time, do you think Hannah feels as though she has anything to celebrate at this festival? Why or why not?

- c. How, if at all, do our longings sometimes prevent us from celebrating God's goodness?
2. Read 1 Samuel 1:4-5. Why can't Hannah have children?

*The Lord has closed her womb*

3. Read 1 Samuel 1:9-10. In this moment, what do you think Hannah prays to the Lord? Why?
- a. *(Everyone Answers)* What do you long for?
  - b. How, if at all, do your longings show up in your prayers?
4. Read 1 Samuel 1:11. What's a Nazarite?

*A person who lives a certain way: Abstaining from alcohol, not shaving – all as a way of dedicating their lives to God. Other famous examples of Nazarites: Sampson, John the Baptist.*

- a. What bargain does Hannah make with God?
- That if God gives her a son, she'll dedicate her son back to God and literally give him away so that he can learn to be a priest*
- b. Describe a time when you bargained with God. How, if at all, does bargaining with God reflect your longings?
5. Read 1 Samuel 1:12-16. In this passage, Hannah pours out her deepest longing to God in prayer. She speaks out of her "great anxiety and vexation". How easy or difficult is it for you to pour out your deepest longings to God? Why?
6. Read 1 Samuel 1:17-20. In 1 Samuel 1:19, we're told that the "Lord remembered Hannah" immediately before we learn that Hannah conceived. Does this mean that the Lord had forgotten Hannah during all the years in which she had no children? Why or why not?
- a. Do our longings mean that God has forgotten us? Why or why not?

*Epilogue: Hannah has a son, Samuel, who she dedicates to God, just as she promised she would. After giving Samuel to Eli, the priest, to raise, she prays about God's incredible ways (1 Samuel 2:1-10).*

## **Storytelling Practices (20 minutes):**

*Each week, we'll provide you with different storytelling practices designed to help those in your small group practice sharing their stories. Explain the storytelling practice & then give people in your small group time to do at least one of them.*

### **Storytelling Practice #1: Pictures of Longing**

Look through the photos on your phone. Choose one that represents your deepest longing. On an index card, describe how that photo represents your deepest longing.

### **Storytelling Practice #2: An adult wish list**

Most of us have memories of sitting on Santa's lap and presenting him with our Christmas wish list. Although Jesus is NOT Santa, imagine that Jesus invites you to go for coffee with him. While enjoying your time together, Jesus asks you to share your deepest longings with him.

Create a list of 3-5 of the longings you have, in the same way that your childhood self might have created a Christmas wish list. Then write out a dialogue between you and Jesus. Your dialogue should include Jesus inviting you to share your longings with him, your doing so, and Jesus's responses to your longings.

## **Storytelling (20 Minutes):**

Your small group leader will direct you in sharing the stories you reflected on during the practices. Consider sharing all or part of your faith story at our **What's Your Story?** storytelling event on November 17.

*After giving your small group a few minutes to do one of today's storytelling practices, invite people to share their story using whatever storytelling practice they experimented with. Make sure people know they can share as much or as little of what they came up with as they'd like.*

*As people share, encourage them to think about sharing all or part of their faith story at our Storytelling Event on November 17.*

## **Processing / Wrap-Up (10 minutes):**

1. How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in tonight's storytelling practices?
2. What was scary or intimidating to you about tonight's storytelling practices?
3. What did you learn about yourself from tonight's storytelling practices? About others in our small group?
4. As you thought about your own story, where did you see God at work?
5. Where did you encounter God during tonight's small group?

**Closing Prayer:**

Close your small group time together by praying for one another's longings.