

1 Samuel 1:11 She made this vow: "**O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death.** He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." 1:12 As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. 1:13 Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 1:14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine." 1:15 But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman **deeply troubled**; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. 1:16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for **I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time.**" 1:17 Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him." 1:18 And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your sight." Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer. 1:19 They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. 1:20 In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD." 1:21 The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. 1:22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time." 1:23 Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only--may the LORD establish his word." So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. 1:24 When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. 1:25 Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. 1:26 And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. 1:27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. 1:28 Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." She left him there for the LORD.

How could she do it? How could Hannah promise to give her only child back to God if He would grant her one?

Was it enough for Hannah to have a child at all?

Was she longing just to be a part of God's creative and redeeming work, just once, just for a little while; to produce a male child who would live to bear responsibility and care for others?

Was it because Hannah knew that God is different from everyone else?

God never takes; ***God never gives only to take back.***

If God gave Hannah a son, surely God would give much more?

Hannah didn't know what follows this lesson – that God would give her 3 sons and 2 daughters after Samuel – BUT she did know that God gives exceedingly above all that we can think or ask!

How might Hannah's life be a gift that changes our Christmas; maybe even the rest of our lives?

Would your life be different if your deep trouble, anxieties, and vexations pressed you more firmly into God's Word, promises, and love for you?

What if your life was all about giving just to be a part of God's love for others? What if God's best and greatest gift was to take away your concern for yourself, for what you get to keep or get back from others?

What if you were someone who bore the Christ child into the lives of others – just to be a part of God's saving work?

What has God ever taken from us except any cause for anxiety and vexation? What has God given instead except every cause for JOY by His profound and far-reaching love in redeeming our lives and providing for us especially when that seems impossible?