

The Dream Team: Understanding Hannah

Ready:

“Oh no, sir!” she replied. “I haven’t been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the Lord. Don’t think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow.” 1 Samuel 1:15, 16

Set

Do you remember Old Testament Hannah? She was a wife of Elkanah, a Jewish man. But here’s the thing. She was not his only wife. Peninnah was his other bride who could give birth like candy popping out of a vending machine. From the Scripture, we know that Peninnah tormented Hannah about her inability to have children. Rubbing salt into the wound, on the annual trips to the temple to present sacrifices, Peninnah was given a portion of meat equal to the number of children. Hannah received but one for herself since she had no children.

Hannah was heartbroken. But though Peninnah was the source of ridicule, Hannah showed remarkable control by not retaliating. Rather, her frustration was directed to God. “*Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the Lord. And she made this vow: “O Lord of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you”* (1 Samuel 1:10,11).

I wonder if I could have remained silent under such duress. Even when Priest Eli saw her praying and wrongly accused her of being drunk, she showed respect for the office in her response. In the end, Eli took up for Hannah, praying that God would not only grant one son, Samuel, but many children.

As an athlete or coach, do you think there is a lesson to be learned from Hannah’s response and self-control? She apparently had great wisdom to know when to shut up and be silent, and when to cry out to the only one who could make a difference. Lashing out at competitors or referees is seldom wise or effective. It does nothing but aggravate the party on the receiving end. But self-imposed silence, speaking only to God about the situation? Therein lies the power.

Go

1. Can you think of an example when Jesus kept silent at accusations made against him?
2. Think about a time when you spoke inappropriately and with the wrong attitude. What happened? Would the result have been different had you kept quiet or shown respect?
3. Is there ever a time when we should speak up to defend ourselves or teammates?

Workout

Matthew 26:63; Matthew 27:11-14; Isaiah 53:7

Overtime

“Dear Heavenly Father, Please grant me the self-control to know when to speak and when to remain silent. Help me have the right attitude, devoid of bitterness, and to cast all my cares and concerns on You, for I know You care for me. Amen.”

Bible Reference:

1 Samuel 1:15-16

1 Samuel 1:10-11

Matthew 26:63

Matthew 27:11-14

Isaiah 53:7



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