

What Hannah's Story Teaches Us about Dreams

Fifteen years had passed since that fateful day when God whispered the dream into my receptive ear. The tingling sensation trickled down and drenched my parched soul. The excitement was more than I could stand.

So, after waiting in breathless anticipation for the dream to come to pass, here I was fifteen years later. I began to wonder if maybe I heard Him wrong...or maybe it happened and I was so busy that I missed it...or maybe I never put the dream back where it belonged.

God designed us to be dreamers – to desire the best of what He alone can offer. But in our imperfect human condition it's easy to get sidetracked, and after distraction comes discouragement.

Hannah understood this. Yet instead of wallowing in defeat, she brought her anguish to God and made a promise she fully intended to keep.

"And she made a vow, saying, 'Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life..." 1 Samuel 1:11
NIV

If you are wondering the same things about your dream, I hear you. But more importantly, God hears you. And maybe, just maybe, it's time for us to learn a lesson from Hannah. Perhaps it's time to give up that dream once and for all. Allow me to share three reasons for giving our dreams back to God.

1. God's REACH extends far beyond our own.

She watched Peninnah day after day, and each condescending glance thrown her way fueled that sick feeling in the pit of her stomach. How much more could she take? Yes, Hannah was forced to sit by and watch someone else get blessed while she waited in agony. But would having a son to call her own, raise into adulthood, and take over the family business accomplish God's intended plan?

Oh no. God had more planned for Hannah and her son than her human mind could possibly fathom. I'm so glad God doesn't show us the future, aren't you? I for one would probably argue with Him if I saw all the amazing things He has prepared for me.

Really, God? I'm not so sure I can handle all that. Maybe you should find someone else!

Not Hannah though, she understood that giving away her most valuable possession showed a remarkable kind of obedience.

2. The REWARD far exceeds the temporary sacrifice.

God blessed Hannah's life – not because of the dream, but because of her willingness to give the dream to Him.

"So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord." 1 Samuel 1:28

In our current Christian culture, we spiritually give our children to God as an act of worship and dedication, but Hannah went way beyond that. Can you imagine actually dropping your toddler off at church and leaving him there to be raised? Could you let go of him or her, knowing all you would be missing?

I just can't imagine it. But remember, Samuel represents Hannah's dream. In the same way that she bravely relinquished Samuel to Eli, we too must be willing to let God grow our dreams in *His* way and *His* timing.

3. RELEASING the dream keeps your perspective in its rightful place.

The question we should ask ourselves is this: *Where is my heart?* Those whispered words still resonate in me. The tingling sensation is still there. The excitement over the promised dream hasn't subsided.

Fifteen days, fifteen months, or fifteen years – it doesn't matter. What matters most is where I focus. So wherever you are in the development of your dream, it's time to ask the question:

Is your heart invested in the dream or in the dream Giver?

Once we have committed to total release of the dream, we will begin to see God more vividly than ever before. We will find the best gift we could ever hope to receive – all of *Him*.

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Bonus material for *Over It. Conquering Comparison to Live Out God's Plan*