

Worship that Honors the LORD: Gratitude, Generosity and Thanksgiving (1 Samuel 1:21-28)

1. Fulfill your vows to the Lord (v.24)

The LORD takes seriously our vows that we make. Men and women of integrity are marked by following through with their promises. Integrity is a word that means “wholeness, or completeness.” It refers to the one who “makes good on their promises, despite the cost or effort.”

A person of integrity is the same on the inside as he is on the outside; there is no inconsistency between his words and his actions. He can be trusted at his word without wavering.

Solomon gives us sobering words regarding vows. “When you vow a vow, do not delay in paying it, for He has no pleasure in fools” (Ecclesiastes 5:4).

2. Gratitude and Thanksgiving in Worship (v.27-28)

The motive behind her worship was the acknowledgment that the LORD has “lent” Samuel to her. Since God has “given” Samuel to her, she will “give” him back.

Genuine worship is more than just receiving; it is giving. We must be marked by the giving of our time, energy and finances to the advancement of God’s kingdom.

Worship is costly because of its demand on the offerer. Even beyond what is given, God is concerned with our motives. True worship engages the heart, mind, and soul. We must worship in Spirit and truth (John 4:24).

You will never deny yourself and live for Christ until you realize your indebtedness to Him.

As we work out what He works through us (Philippians 2:13), we have a greater appreciation of all that Christ has forgiven us of, even as redeemed saints. As the Christian matures, his gratitude towards Christ grows not only because his knowledge of the holiness of God increases, but so does his understanding of the pervasiveness of his own sin.

When Hannah brought her son to Shiloh one last time, there would have been no greater joy in her sacrifice.

Similar to Hannah, those who are conscious of the grace of God in their lives are always seeking outlets of expressing their thankfulness to the LORD.

3. Preparation and Generosity in Worship (v.21,24-25)

When we serve to the best of our ability and give our finances and resources to the LORD’s work, that is what the LORD expects of us.

There were four elements to her gracious gift to the LORD:

- A. Three bulls/Three-year old bull: The NIV, NLT, ESV, HCSB, BSB, NASB, CSB all translate it as three-year old bull. Only the KJV and NKJV translate it as “three bulls
- B. Full ephah of flour: The Mosaic Law prescribed only three-tenths an ephah of flour, yet Hannah gave a full ephah.
- C. A skin of wine: this would have held about 20 liters of wine.
- D. Samuel: Hannah would have “fed” him until the age of three and then would have dedicated him to the LORD at Shiloh. Every first born belonged to the LORD (Exodus 13:2,13). Even though he would not have been able to function as a priest until the age of 25 (Numbers 8:24-26), he would have been mentored and trained in Jewish customs by Eli. Interestingly, Elkanah’s family lineage was from the tribe of Levi; his father was Jeroham, who was a descendant of Aaron.

- Elkanah and Hannah would have given above and beyond what was required by law as an expression of worship through generosity.
- Most of our gifts, abilities, talents, and finances require preparation in order for it to be acceptable to the LORD.

4. Family Worship (v.21-24)

- Elkanah would have had many opportunities to share proper worship with his children from Peninnah.
- Elkanah knew his wife Hannah and was aware that it was important for Hannah to fulfill her vow. He made necessary provisions in order for that to happen.
- Elkanah yielded to Hannah’s request and accommodated his family so that Hannah could present Samuel to the LORD.
- The home is blessed when both the husband and wife are concerned with the glory of God. As both pursue the LORD, there will be greater intimacy.

5. The Worshipper Must be Cleansed (v.25)

- The bull was slaughtered because they recognized that their sins needed to be forgiven before they approached the LORD. Even the best of motives must be cleansed which is why genuine worship can never be apart from the merits of Christ who has qualified us.
- We can come before the LORD not by the blood of a bull, but because of the precious blood of Christ. His blood qualifies all of our acts of worship to be acceptable before the LORD (Ephesians 2:18).