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Three Women Who Kept Going

*Ruth, Hannah and Elizabeth. One complete day
each.*

RUTH · HANNAH · ELIZABETH

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Before you start

You have a lot of people to hold up and not many people holding you up. If that is your life right now, this is for you. No sign-up, no email, no catch. Download it, print it, keep it.

This is quiet time with God, made for the woman who carries everything. Three women from the Bible, one day each, about ten minutes a day. You need a Bible or a Bible app and something to write with.

Each day works the same way.

READ The passage is the point. Read it slowly, out loud if you can, and keep it open.

NOTICE After the reading there is help with the passage, then three questions. They are not feelings questions. Each one asks you to find something that is actually in the text.

RESPOND There is space to write. Nothing on it has to be neat.

PRAY A short starting line. Finish it in your own words.

A note about the Scripture. Every Bible verse here is quoted word for word from the Berean Standard Bible. Nothing is summarized or rewritten. Keep the passage open so you can check it. We want you trusting the Bible, not us.

One habit worth building as you read: every time the Bible records a promise, notice who it was spoken to. Some were said to one woman, in one house, on one day. Reading them carefully is not cold. It is how you end up trusting the ones that are yours.

Ruth

Her season: starting over with nothing of your own

Read Ruth 1:14-18.

Sometimes the choice is not between right and wrong. It is between going back to what you know and walking toward something with nothing waiting in it. Ruth makes that choice out loud, on a road, in front of a woman who is telling her not to.

Here is the situation. Naomi has lost her husband and both her sons in Moab. She is walking back to Bethlehem with her two widowed daughters-in-law, and she has just spent several verses explaining that she has nothing to offer them. No more sons. No prospects. Nothing.

Verse 14 puts two women side by side and lets you feel the difference. Two different verbs, and one of them is a holding-on word. They are the ones the writer chose.

Do not read Orpah as the villain here. She is doing exactly what Naomi told her twice to do, and Naomi had already prayed a blessing over her. The text does not scold her. It simply follows Ruth.

Then verse 15 is the hardest push of all, and it comes from the person Ruth is trying to stay with.

Naomi names the whole cost out loud. Verse 15 puts two things in Orpah's hands, and staying with Naomi means walking away from both, into a country where she would be a foreigner.

And that is when Ruth says the famous thing: *For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.* A run of promises, and then an oath on top of them.

Count what is in that list. Most of it is about ordinary life. Where you walk, where you sleep, who your neighbors are, where they put your body when it is over. The one about God changes her nationality, her religion and her future in a single clause.

Now notice what she is not promised in return. Naomi does not offer her a husband, a home, safety, or even a welcome. Naomi has already said she has none of those to give. Ruth is not making a deal. She is binding herself to a grieving older woman with no prospects, and to that woman's God.

And notice what Ruth does not say. She does not say it will work out. She does not predict anything at all. She makes promises about what she will do, and then she goes and does them for the rest of the book.

When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped trying to persuade her.

Ruth 1:18 (BSB)

That is how the scene ends. No hug. No thank you. No speech about how much this means. Naomi gives no further reply in this scene, and the two of them walk on toward Bethlehem.

If you are starting over with nothing of your own, notice that the Bible's most famous loyalty speech was made by a woman with no guarantees, to a woman with no answers, on a road going toward a town that was not hers.

NOTICE THE TEXT

1. In verse 14, what does Orpah do and what does Ruth do? Write down both verbs exactly as the verse has them.
2. In verse 15, what does Naomi call Orpah, what two things does she say Orpah has gone back to, and what does she tell Ruth to do?
3. Verse 16 begins with something Ruth asks Naomi not to do, before she makes a single promise. Write that first sentence out. Then find the oath at the end of verse 17: what does Ruth ask the LORD to do if she breaks her word?

PRAY

Lord, Ruth made promises about what she would do, and nobody promised her anything back. Your book kept her words anyway. Help me bring You the part of my life I cannot see clearly yet, starting with...

Hannah

Her season: waiting, year after year

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18.

You have probably prayed a prayer you would not want anyone to watch. Face wrecked, nothing coming out right, nothing like the prayers people say out loud on Sundays. Today a priest watches one of those and gets it completely wrong.

Here is the situation. Hannah has no children. Her husband's other wife has several, and taunts her about it every year on the family's trip to worship at Shiloh. This has gone on for years, until she weeps and will not eat.

Verse 9 puts her in motion. After the meal, Hannah stood up. Eli the priest is *sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD*. Keep that picture: she is standing, he is seated, watching.

Verse 10 tells you her condition and does not soften it:

In her bitter distress, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears.

1 Samuel 1:10 (BSB)

That is the state she prays in. Not composed. Not resolved. Bitter distress, and a lot of crying.

Verse 11 is her vow, and it is specific. She asks God for several things in a row, and then she makes a promise of her own, with a condition in front of it. Read that twice. The thing she has ached for through years of being taunted is the thing her promise is about.

Then verses 12 and 13 move the camera to Eli. He watches her, and what he sees is not what is happening. In verse 14 he says his conclusion to her face.

Sit with that. The religious professional, at the door of the house of God, looks at the most sincere prayer in the chapter and gets it completely wrong.

Hannah answers respectfully. She calls him my lord. She says she is a woman oppressed in spirit and has had no wine. She says she has poured out her soul before the LORD. And then, in verse 16, she asks him not to take her for a wicked woman, because *“I have been praying out of the depth of my anguish and grief”*.

She explains herself without once apologizing for how her praying looked. That is worth copying.

Eli changes his tone immediately. Go in peace, he says in verse 17, *and may the God of Israel grant the petition you have asked of Him*. Notice exactly what that is: a

priest's blessing and a wish, said by the man who had just misjudged her. He does not tell her the answer is yes. He does not know.

And then verse 18, which is what this day is really about. Read the last part of that verse slowly and count what changes in it.

Here is the detail everything hangs on. She prayed, she was blessed by a man who had her completely wrong, and then verse 18 reports three ordinary things in a row. Now look at what the passage does not say she had yet.

The Bible does not explain what shifted in her. It reports that something did, and it reports it before the answer came.

NOTICE THE TEXT

1. In verse 11, list everything Hannah asks God to do. Then list everything she promises to do. What is she offering to give back?
2. Verses 12 and 13 are from Eli's side. What does verse 12 say he watched? What does verse 13 say about her lips and her voice, and what did he conclude?
3. In verse 14, what exactly does Eli say to her? In verse 18, what three things does Hannah do after he blesses her?

PRAY

Father, the priest at the door read Hannah completely wrong, and she explained herself and went on praying. You heard what he did not. Here is the thing I have asked You for so many times that I am tired of hearing myself say it...

Elizabeth

Her season: waiting into old age

Read Luke 1:39-45.

You have waited a long time for something, and other people's news keeps arriving anyway. Luke does not tell us how Elizabeth felt about Mary's news. He tells us exactly what she said, out loud, the moment Mary walked in.

Here is the situation. Luke says Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah were righteous in God's sight and blameless, and then says they had no children and were both well along in years. He puts those two sentences side by side on purpose.

He will not let you read her empty house as a verdict on her. Then she becomes pregnant, and she spends five months out of sight.

Verse 39 brings a visitor. Mary, her relative, has just been told she will carry the Son of God, and the angel mentioned Elizabeth. Verse 39 tells you how fast she moved, and verse 40 tells you exactly where she went. Mary travels a long way, fast, to the one woman the angel had named.

Verse 41 is the hinge:

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:41 (BSB)

Watch the order of the three things in that verse. Her body responds before her mouth does.

Then she speaks, and Luke says she speaks in a loud voice. Luke had told you she spent five months in seclusion. Luke's first recorded words from Elizabeth after Mary arrives are a loud, Spirit-filled blessing.

Listen to what she says. *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.* Then, *And why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* And at the end, *"Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord's word to her will be fulfilled".*

She uses the word blessed more than once, and not one of the times is about herself.

Now think about who is saying it. Luke has told you Elizabeth was well along in years, that she had no child, and that she spoke of a disgrace among the people. Her

own pregnancy is six months along. And in walks Mary, her relative, carrying a greater child, and Elizabeth's body responds with joy before her mouth does.

Verse 43 is the one to sit with: *And why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* The passage records no comparison between the two women. She calls Mary's baby her Lord, and she treats the visit as an honor she did not earn.

Her last line, in verse 45, is about Mary too. Elizabeth is speaking about the woman standing in front of her, who has believed the word the angel spoke to her. It is one woman naming another woman's faith out loud. Which is, honestly, a thing very few of us ever do. It is so much easier to be polite. Elizabeth was loud.

And here is the last quiet detail, in verse 44. Elizabeth tells Mary exactly what her greeting had to do with the movement in verse 41.

NOTICE THE TEXT

1. Verses 39 and 40 are the journey. What does verse 39 say Mary did, and where does it say she went? Whose home does verse 40 say she entered, and who does it say she greeted?
2. Verse 44 is Elizabeth explaining what happened in verse 41. What does she say reached her ears, what does she say the baby did, and what word does she use for how he did it?
3. Read verses 42, 43 and 45 in order and write down who each sentence is about. Then read verse 40 again: who spoke first in this scene, and who has done all the speaking since?

PRAY

Father, every blessing Luke records from Elizabeth that day was about somebody else. Help me be honest with You about what I am carrying while other people's news keeps coming. Here is what I want to bring You...

That is the sampler

Three women, three days, no strings. If it was useful, keep it and go back through it.

The full study takes twelve women, three days each, and adds a page at the end of every section that connects them: Naomi, Ruth, the widow of Zarephath, Hannah, Elizabeth, Anna, Mary of Nazareth, Martha of Bethany, Lydia, Rahab, the woman at the well, and Esther.

Same method. Same fences. Scripture word for word from the Berean Standard Bible, and no promises nobody can keep.