



# Next Level--Leaders...Leadership

## Leadership Lessons from the Word

### *The Big Idea:*

“My grief produced life”

*1 Samuel 1:8-18*

*Dr. Jonathan Lotson*

The holidays bring forth many pleasant memories and great joys as time is spent with family and friends. Furthermore, some of the most memorable times in our lives that we will ever experience are often surrounding a holiday. This season is usually the birthing place for traditions, and the set time for the family to gather. However, holidays are also the time when many relive memories of persons, jobs, or perhaps things that are no longer in their reach, which often brings grief. Grief does not just come and go with holidays, but it has a lingering effect that often sticks around.

Grief is an emotion that has a way of gripping many in various (*negative*) ways. For example, grief can make one desire to give up, become suicidal, depressed, or a host of other things, but it does not have to be that way. Despite the cause(s) of grief, grief can also produce life. Our leadership lesson from the word is taken from 1 Samuel 1:8-18. This passage sheds light on the life of Hannah, as she journeys from sadness to the promise of a child. The promise of a child brought her life, joy, and happiness. Like Hannah we too have a promise, even in the midst of grief that can produce life in the midst of our darkness seasons.

### ◆ *My Notes* ◆

**PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!**

### *A Question to Consider:*

*How do you handle grief?*



### Not Enough

When dealing with grief, it is imperative to recognize and accept that grief is not a destination. No matter the cause of grief, grief is not meant to be a place that one resides with no forward progress. Instead, we must realize that better days are not only in front of us, but better days are attainable. The realization that better is feasible starts with highlighting the things or persons that are around us that makes us feel at home in our grief and doing something about it. Hannah got to a place where she desired to move out of her grief, which started by realizing that where she currently was and who she was currently around was just not enough. In 1 Samuel 1:8 Hannah’s husband Elkanah, did not seem to understand her grief and felt that she should be okay because he was in her life. Elkanah, wanted Hannah to be satisfied with him alone, despite the constant and evident grief that Hannah was experiencing. Scripture shares in Psalm 147:3 that God heals the brokenhearted and binds up wounds, which highlights that God desires to bring us through grief, and not hold on to grief. However, it can become difficult to understand that God wants to bring us out of our grief if we continually surround ourselves with people and things that deceive us and make us feel that they are enough and that better is not attainable.

Scripture shares that Hannah was in deep grief and refrained from eating. In the midst of her grief Elkanah did not provide her with a way out, or suggest any possible solutions, neither did he recommend prayer or anything helpful. Instead, he wanted her to remain in her grief, by indicating that he was better to her than ten sons. Hence the importance of individuals discovering the things or persons that are around us that make us feel at home in our grief, because it is one of the initial steps of moving from grief. Coming to the realizations of the things or people around us that are not enough is imperative because the people and things that are not helpful seldom state that they are not helpful and recommend separation from them. We must make that discovery and act on it. It is imperative to note that taking steps to move from grief does not mean that one does not care about the loss that they have experienced. Instead, when we take steps to move from grief, we allow God to be enough in our lives and accept the presence and comfort of God. Taking steps to move from grief is a significant process of recovery.

### Someone is Watching You

If we are not careful, we can get to a place that we allow our grief to make us feel that we are alone and that no one has ever faced what we are currently facing. Furthermore, grief can make us feel that there is no point of moving forward or trying to find relief and that it would be better to remain in our grief. If we fail to move forward from grief, grief can trigger depression or complicated grief.

### ◆ My Notes ◆



◆ My Notes ◆

People with complicated grief often do not want to get help or try something different because they are afraid a therapist, psychiatrist, or a change in behavior will take away the memories they are holding onto.<sup>1</sup> However, taking a step to move from grief will position us to experience better days. Hannah was experiencing grief and decided to do something different than she had been doing over the years. Hannah went to the Lord and expressed her concerns, sorrows, and feelings that had been building up from within, for years. Hannah stricken with grief did not verbally speak but only moved her lips as she expressed her heart to God, which allows readers to get a glimpse of her faith at work. Grief is a strong emotion, but faith, even as small as a grain of a mustard seed is all that we need to experience the peace that is present but often blocked by the shadows of grief. Faith is imperative because it serves as a reminder that God can produce life, even in the midst of dark seasons in our lives.

Hannah was praying in the temple, but she was not alone. Eli, the priest, was also present in the temple. As Hannah was praying, moving only her lips with her voice unheard Eli thought that she was drunk, but Hannah expressed that she was not drunk but was sorrowful, sad, and grieving. Unbeknownst to Hannah, her life was about to drastically change due to her act of turning to God in faith despite her grief. After explaining herself to Eli, the priest, he told her to go in peace and assured her that God was going to grant her petition. Hannah's act of faith despite her grief produced life; not only in her but physical life through the birth of her son Samuel. It is not God's desires that we allow our grief to hold us down or suppress us. Instead, we must preserve despite our grief like Hannah did, and seek God by faith so that our grief will also produce life within us. Eli in and within himself did not have the power to transform Hannah's grief to life, but it was the power of the Holy Spirit, which is still at work today. There may not be anyone sitting around to speak life in the midst of our sorrow, but the power of the Holy Spirit is yet watching us to see if we will continually seek God despite our situations, so we too can experience the transformation of grief to life.

### Happiness will Return

1 Samuel 1:18 sheds light on a renewed Hannah who once was grieving and refrained from eating to a Hannah who ate and was no longer sad. The interesting thing about this verse is that she had not yet received her promise, yet her countenance changed for the better. We too have promises like, God will never leave us nor forsake us, and blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted, amongst other promises found in Scripture. The promises that we see in Scripture bring us hope, and peace knowing that our grief can produce life and happiness to those who turn to God. The process of moving from grief may vary per individual, but as long as there is a constant movement to God by faith despite grief, happiness will return.

<sup>1</sup> Vann, M. R. (2014, October 30). What to Do When Grieving Lingers. Retrieved January 7, 2019, from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/news/when-grieving-lingers/>



### *A Thought to Ponder:*

Hannah’s situation turned when she made a turn in her actions. She went from not eating and living in her grief for years, to going to the temple and seeking God. Having a strong relationship with God strengthens one's faith to trust God even when they can't seem to handle their current grief. Having a strong relationship with God ensures leaders that God is always present, and that God will transform their grief to life, joy, and happiness.

**What are you doing to move away from grief and into God’s presence?**

### *What Difference Would It Make:*

What benefits might you gain as a result of moving away from grief?

**In what way(s) have you not allowed the Lord to order your steps?**

**What practice(s) can you implement to create a culture in your organization that handles grief effectively?**

**What system(s) and structure can you establish to invite God into the lives of those you lead in their moments of grief?**

**How can your core leader or community hold you accountable during moments of grief and sorrow?**

### *Suggested Resources:*

**Beyond the Broken Heart: A Journey Through Grief**  
by Julie Yarbrough

◆ *My Notes* ◆