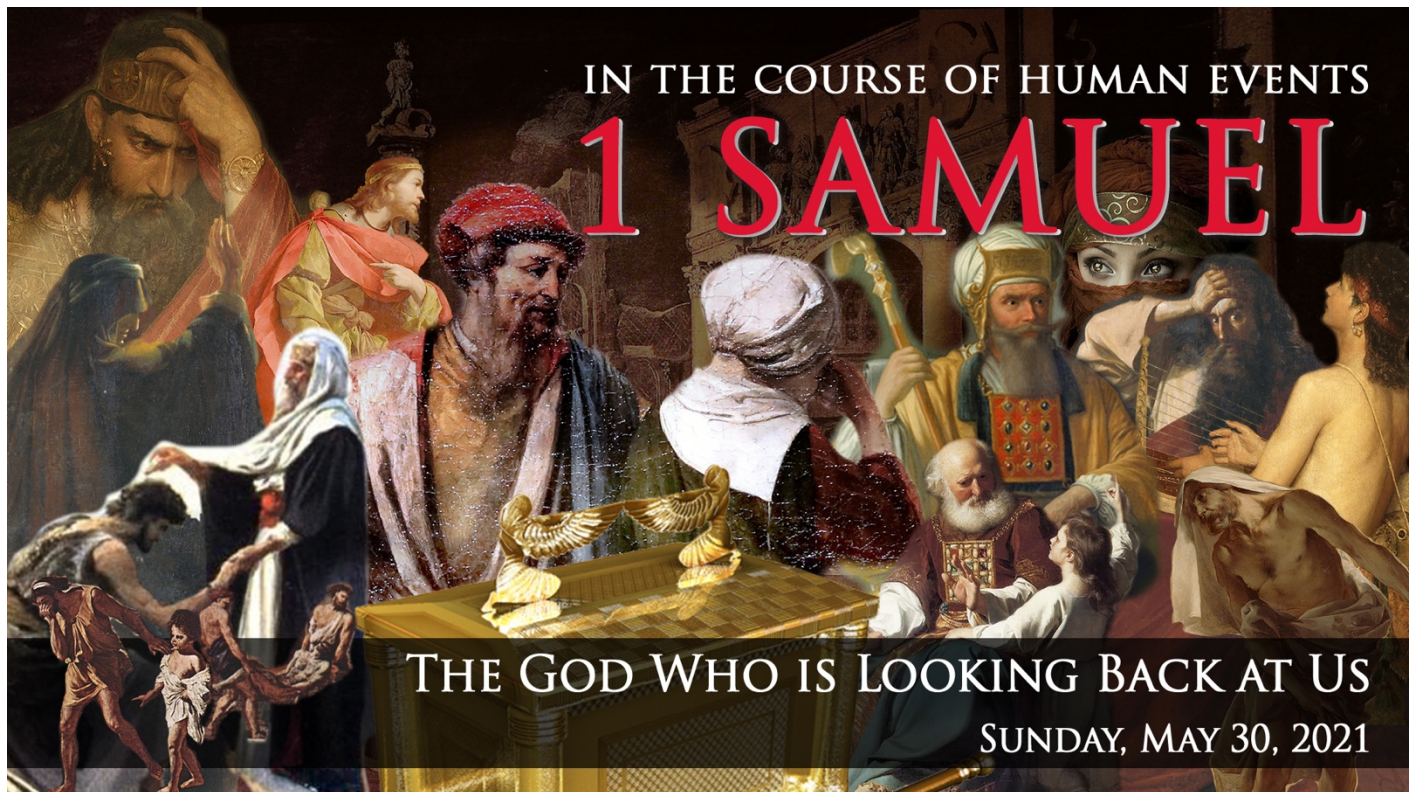


In the Course of Human Events: 1 Samuel

1 Samuel 1—Putting the Fun in Dysfunction

The Big Idea

The relationships between Hannah, Penninah and Elkanah represent an interesting study in “relationship triangles”, a relationship between three people that has become unhealthy. We’ll learn about the triangles and learn to identify them in our own lives and relationships.



Discussion starter: You walk into church and see someone emotionally distraught—what do you do? What do you say?

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20

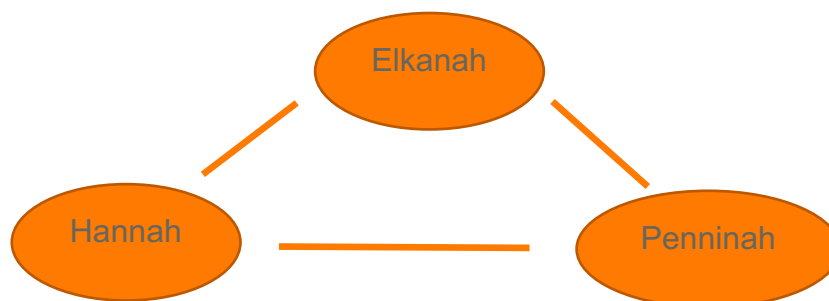
Who are the main characters?

What relationship issues do you see?

The relationships between Hannah, Penninah and Elkanah represent a classic “Family Systems” triangle of relationships—look at the diagram on the next page

What are the sources of anxiety in this system?

What is causing everyone to get stuck? What are the entanglements?



How does Eli, someone completely outside of the system, help ease the anxiety inside the system?

What changes might each individual make in order to remain connected in this system, yet achieve a healthy sense of self?

Hannah is able to finally bear a male child—does this repair the system? What problems do you think they'll have moving forward?

Do you see this dysfunctional triangulation pattern in your life, or lives of others?

2 Corinthians 1:3-7

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, ⁴ who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. ⁶ If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

Can you name the triangle of relationships that Paul names in this passage? What other triangles do you see in the Scriptures?

Have you experienced comfort in a difficult situation that, in turn, became a source of comfort to others? How do you comfort someone without becoming “entangled”?

Closing prayer: **The Full Serenity Prayer**

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world As it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make things right If I surrender to His Will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever and ever in the next. Amen.