

Oops! My Cup Is  
Empty! And...My  
Coffee Pot Is Broke!

Lessons from the Life of Hannah



A Bible Study  
JUST For You!

By Cindy Rushton

Oops! My Cup  
Is Empty! And...  
My Coffee Pot  
Is Broke!

By Cindy Rushton

# Oops! My Cup Is Empty! And...My Coffee Pot Is Broke!

By Cindy Rushton

Copyright 2003 by Cindy Rushton. Published in the United States of America by Rushton Family Ministries, 1225 Christy Lane, Tuscumbia, Alabama 35674. Phone: (256) 381-2529;

Email: [time4tea@hiwaay.net](mailto:time4tea@hiwaay.net);

See us on the web: [www.cindyrushton.com](http://www.cindyrushton.com)

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the expressed written permission from the publisher.

For more information on how to obtain tapes or books written and published by Cindy Rushton, please contact our offices for a free catalog or a sample issue of our

*Time For Tea Magazine.*

# Oops! My Cup is Empty! And... My Coffee Pot is Broke!!!

Relate? Tired? Weary? Parched? Just need YOUR cup filled back up?

Growing up, I remember one phrase my Mom would use that always sent chills down my spine and straightened up my attitude and behavior every single time, "I HAVE HAD IT!" Know what I mean? Heard this one? Well, SAID this one?

Ever had times that you have "HAD IT?" You have "HAD IT"

...yet everything seems to get worse...

...and worse

...and worse...

Things hit from all different directions? Felt a bit pressed in from every angle? But...as you TRIED, things got worse and worse

...your dreams crumbled!

...your heart broke!

...you got zapped on every angle!

...you found yourself more and more empty!

...and things KEPT right on hitting you????

Then! Right when you found that your cup was empty...you found that your coffee pot was broke too! Then what???

What about now? Are you at your very end? Feel pressed? Tired? Weary?

Well, beloved, let me take you to 1 Samuel to introduce you to a woman who wants to share her story with you so you will know what to do and where to go when YOUR cup is empty... your coffee pot is broke...and you don't even have enough gas to get you to the local gas station for a cheap cup of coffee!

## Meet My Friend Hannah!



Meet my friend Hannah! Hannah...a woman who seemed to have it all! You know that kind of gal! She seemed to have the perfect life. All she could ever want! But...when we open the pages of 1 Samuel, we are introduced to Hannah at the point that her cup is empty... She is dry...completely parched (!!!). Hannah's cup is empty and by the way that things look, her coffee pot is broke! There is no hope in site!

We meet Hannah when she is completely weary! Wore out! Exhausted from the battle! Broken!

She has "HAD IT!" She is tired of waiting! Tired of believing! Ready to throw in the towel!

Ever been there? Well...are you there now?

There seems to be a series of events to get one to this place. Look back or look at your current situation—what makes you weary in waiting?

What made a difference, such a difference that waiting became easier?

What kind of things did others do to help?

What kind of things did others do that were frustrating the experience even more?

Isn't it interesting? At our low points like this, we DON'T want anyone to KNOW! Goodness!  
The stigma! Why do you think this is so?

For many of us it can be that we may not think our struggles matter to others. For others, it can be very frustrating to share a struggle and yet find others making it even tougher with foolish counsel (and that OFTEN comes masked in "great wisdom!!") and self-righteousness. Yet, for others, it is very hard to let others into our lives. Yet, our loving, heavenly Father focuses into this story of the life of Hannah right when she is in the depths of depression. He takes us into her story to share her struggle...feel her intense pain...and find wisdom in handling our own struggles. This is the beauty that comes from the ashes of "burnt up dreams." Let's look deep at Hannah's incredible story... She has much to share with us!

Take a look at 1 Samuel 1. Use several translations if you have them. Slow down to get a "picture" in your mind of this story! Perhaps *The Message* will help you to see the story unfold—it is my favorite! Here it is:

*There once was a man who lived in Ramathaim. He was descended from the old Zuph family in the Ephraim hills. His name was Elkanah (He was connected with the Zuphs from Ephraim through his father Jeroham, his grandfather Elihu, and his great-grandfather Tohu.) He had two wives. The first was Hannah; the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children; Hannah did not.*

*Every year this man went from his hometown up to Shiloh to worship and offer a sacrifice to GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies. Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as the priests of God there. When Elkanah sacrificed, he passed helpings from the sacrificial meal around to his wife Peninnah and all her children, but he always gave an especially generous helping to Hannah because He loved her so much, and because God had not given her children.*

*But her rival wife taunted her cruelly, rubbing it in and never letting her forget that God has not given her children. This went on year-after-year. Every time she went to the sanctuary of God she could expect to be taunted. Hannah was reduced to tears and had no appetite.*

*Her husband Elkanah said, "Oh, Hannah, why are you crying? Why aren't you eating? And why are you so upset? Am I not of more worth to you than ten sons?"*

*So Hannah ate. Then she pulled herself together, slipped away quietly and entered the sanctuary. The priest Eli was on duty at the entrance to God's Temple in the customary seat. Crushed in soul, Hannah prayed to God and cried and cried—inconsolably. Then, she made a vow—*

*Oh, God-of-the-Angel-Armies,  
If you'll take a good, hard look at my pain,  
If you'll quit neglecting me and go into action for me  
By giving me a son,  
I'll give him completely, unreservedly to you.  
I'll set him apart for a life of holy discipline.*

*It so happened that as she continued in prayer before God, Eli was watching her closely. Hannah was praying in her heart, silently. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. Eli jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. He approached her and said, "You're drunk! How long do you plan to keep this up? Sober up, woman!"*

*Hannah said, "Oh no, sir—please! I'm a woman hard used. I haven't been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. The only thing I've been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God. Don't for a minute think I'm a bad woman. It's because I'm so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I've stayed here so long."*

*Eli answered her, "Go in peace. And may the God of Israel give you what you have asked of Him."*

*"Think well of me—and pray for me!" she said, and went her way. Then, she ate heartily, her face radiant. Up before dawn, they worshiped God and returned home to Ramah. Elkanah slept with Hannah his wife, and God began making the necessary arrangements in response to what she had asked.*

*Before the year was out, Hannah had conceived and given birth to a son. She named him Samuel, explaining, "I asked God for him."*

Oh...feel her pain? Here we meet Hannah. A godly woman! A woman with godly priorities! A precious broken woman with a heart's desire to step up to the call of womanhood... But, Proverbs 13: 12 says, "*A hope deferred makes the heart SICK*" and Hannah is living proof that this is absolutely true!

Ever had a hope "deferred" like our friend Hannah?

Often, the "wait" is the toughest part of a tough time whether it is waiting for God to move...waiting on a change in the situation...waiting for pain to go away...waiting for justice... oh! Waiting! UGH!

Why do you think that our HOPE is at risk while we wait?

How does this affect our situation?

Now...let me break here to make sure that we are all on the same page here with Hannah. You may KNOW this pain all too well. Been there, done that! You are a kindred spirit! Or you may have never struggled with barrenness or infertility. You may have 15 children and your struggles sure aren't with a "hope deferred!"

But! Barrenness and infertility is not just a physical thing! There can be much more difficult

barrenness, infertility, and loss—spiritual barrenness, infertility, and loss! Doing all of the RIGHT things and never quite having that spiritual relationship and life you have dreamed of...BUSY for God...yet, no REAL fruit and abundance! Yep! We all, if we are honest, find ourselves like Hannah at some point! Now, do you relate?

What did you WANT from the beginning of your relationship with God?

Have you gotten weary along the way? Why?

Hannah did ALL of the "right" things! Loving God passionately. Worshiping Him regardless how tough her circumstances were and how they battled for her attention. Loving her husband and ministering to Him. Loving and desiring to be a mommy. And even enduring persecution for YEARS from the other woman—another woman that we would all LOVE to meet in a dark alley—hummm!! Year-after-year doing ALL of the "right" things!

Hannah had the "right" priorities. Her relationship with the Lord and her family was her focus. She had the "right" commitments. She was totally surrendered to the call of biblical womanhood! She had the "right" spirit—even in the midst of suffering disappointments and discouragement!

But...this year, when we meet Hannah, she is at her end! She has "HAD IT!" Let's read and glean more from this story from *The Message*...

*There once was a man who lived in Ramathaim. He was descended from the old Zuph family in the Ephraim hills. His name was Elkanah (He was connected with the Zuphs from Ephraim through his father Jeroham, his grandfather Elihu, and his great-grandfather Tohu.) He had two wives.*

WOE!

Stop RIGHT there!

We find the very FIRST PROBLEM! The man had TWO WIVES!

*The first was Hannah; the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children; Hannah did not.*

The man had **TWO WIVES!** And to make matters worse—the "other woman" had children, whereas Hannah didn't.

Brainstorm real quick here. What problems do you immediately see?

Relationally

Emotionally

Spiritually

Coming from my life experience of 7 years of infertility mixed with miscarriages, I can only tell you that infertility/barrenness is hard enough! The pain—month-after-month-after-month!

Waiting!

Hoping!

Dreaming!

Longing!

Praying!

Begging God!

Wondering all of the WHY'S!

Expecting!

Wanting!

Yep! Breaking. Shattered to pieces in little ways bit-by-bit...

...over-and-over

...each and every single month!

Her dreams—good *GODLY* dreams—not coming to fruition.

Still believing! Still hoping! Loving her man and wanting to be surrounded by little ones that have his big brown eyes...his sweet puffy little lips...his funny ways! The dream...just staying one more month away...just barely out of reach!

Yet! Others getting theirs!

And, worse of all, for Hannah, "the *OTHERS*" included one "other" that really made things tough—her husband's *OTHER WOMAN*!

HELLOOOO!! This is a tough situation! We are talking about the "other woman" who presented A LOT of trouble for our dear friend. Although we are not there yet, look quickly at verses 6 and 7. We learn that this "other woman" was not a "head game" or a bit of "jealousy" on Hannah's part. This other woman taunted her cruelly. She provoked her year-after-year. She constantly "rubbed it in" that Hannah did not have children! In fact, she made it seem as though God, Himself, was against Hannah.

Ok...let's get REAL honest here! It is obvious here that Hannah did not just "blow it!" I am afraid I blow it on far less REAL and frustrating things! However, one of the toughest things about tough times is that it often looks as though others have "got it all!" Noticed that in your tough times?

Hate to say it, but this can REALLY be an illusion! Even in this situation, where Hannah's rival was another woman who was ALSO married to her husband—I am sorry, but it is hard to imagine it getting worse than that one! AND bearing his children--with seemingly no problem in the world... But, there is something here that is simply external in Peninnah's life. Do you think she REALLY had it all?

What do you think she was hoping for...longing for each and every month...each and every year?

Could she REALLY have it all? Why do you think that?

Well...appearances ARE deceiving! The most important things are not always what we SEE! In fact, we will come back a bit later and see what God does here! For now, let's move on through this story in *The Message*...

*Every year this man went from his hometown up to Shiloh to worship and offer a sacrifice to GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies. Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as the priests of God there. When Elkanah sacrificed, he passed helpings from the sacrificial meal around to his wife Peninnah and all her children, but he always gave an especially generous helping to Hannah because He*

*loved her so much, and because God had not given her children.*

The "up" side of the story! This WAS a godly home. But, like other godly homes—there WERE tough times AND the other woman seemed to MAGNIFY and CAPITALIZE on them. Let's continue reading--

*But her rival wife taunted her cruelly, rubbing it in and never letting her forget that God has not given her children. This went on year-after-year. Every time she went to the sanctuary of God she could expect to be taunted. Hannah was reduced to tears and had no appetite.*

*Her husband Elkanah said, "Oh, Hannah, why are you crying? Why aren't you eating? And why are you so upset? Am I not of more worth to you than ten sons?"*

*So Hannah ate. Then she pulled herself together, slipped away quietly and entered the sanctuary. The priest Eli was on duty at the entrance to God's Temple in the customary seat. Crushed in soul, Hannah prayed to God and cried and cried—inconsolably. Then, she made a vow—*

*Oh, God-of-the-Angel-Armies,*

*If you'll take a good, hard look at my pain,*

*If you'll quit neglecting me and go into action for me*

*By giving me a son,*

*I'll give him completely, unreservedly to you.*

*I'll set him apart for a life of holy discipline.*

*It so happened that as she continued in prayer before God, Eli was watching her closely. Hannah was praying in her heart, silently. Her lips moved, but no sound was heard. Eli jumped to the conclusion that she was drunk. He approached her and said, "You're drunk! How long do you plan to keep this up? Sober up, woman!"*

*Hannah said, "Oh no, sir—please! I'm a woman hard used. I haven't been drinking. Not a drop of wine or beer. The only thing I've been pouring out is my heart, pouring it out to God. Don't for a minute think I'm a bad woman. It's be-*

*cause I'm so desperately unhappy and in such pain that I've stayed here so long."*

*Eli answered her, "Go in peace. And may the God of Israel give you what you have asked of Him."*

*"Think well of me—and pray for me!" she said, and went her way. Then, she ate heartily, her face radiant. Up before dawn, they worshiped God and returned home to Ramah. Elkanah slept with Hannah his wife, and God began making the necessary arrangements in response to what she had asked.*

*Before the year was out, Hannah had conceived and given birth to a son. She named him Samuel, explaining, "I asked God for him."*

What gets you down? What "reduces" you to tears? What "taunts" you? What stresses you out?

Think through those times that you have found your cup empty and your coffee pot broke... what really made it difficult?

Is it the "delay" of your dreams?

Not understanding WHY things are happening the way they are?

Wondering if God notices or even cares?

Is it the "taunting"?

Seeing others do wrong, yet get the blessings you SO desire?

Being judged and ridiculed by those that cannot possibly grasp what you are going through?

The husband that doesn't get it??

The personal agony and grief?

Being misunderstood by those watching your grief?

If we are to find the answers to living victoriously in the struggles of life, one of the first things to do is to KNOW what pushes us to the limit so we can either eliminate the problem...

...find answers to the problem

...or learn to accept the problem and change our reaction to it!

Looking at this passage...

What things do you think wore Hannah down to the point of despair?

What COULD she change?

What did she do with those things that she could not change in her life?

Even without "seeing" her dreams, she had faith. Faith in what she could not see!  
WOW! What gave her this faith?

How did her faith change a really tough situation?

What happened?



Look closer at Hannah. I am sure that if we were to talk with Hannah over tea today, she would want for you to KNOW that waiting is worth it! She would exhort us to wait in faith—complete, unwaivering, trusting faith! But, there is more that we can learn from this dear friend! Here in this passage, we see her hope dimming. We see her spirit grieved. We find Hannah in the depths of depression. We see her biblical response. But there is even more to learn from this passage. So often we look at the situations from the lives of others as a “complete story.” Let’s look back over this story, sift out those things that can help us TODAY right in the middle of our struggles! Ready? Let’s glean from this precious vessel...



## 1. Hannah got up out of her circumstance and went to God!

IN her circumstance, Hannah was helpless! IN her circumstance, Hannah was under constant and unrelenting attack! IN her circumstance, Hannah was being wore down on every angle! BUT GOD! As Hannah got up (sometimes the hardest thing to do is that first step—to GET UP!), pulled herself together, slipped away, and entered into the sanctuary, things began to change! But, REAL release happened right there as she poured out her heart to God—God was cut loose! Hannah poured out her ALL to God! Without reservation! With total abandonment! Every thing in her heart was on the altar—her pain, hurts, brokenness, disappointments, discouragement, despair, bitterness—EVERYTHING! Best of all, we see God immediately beginning to work—did you notice that God sent Hannah someone to speak a word of encouragement?

So, whatever your circumstance is today, may I encourage you to get up out of your circumstance and go to God! I am here today with you to share with you that GOD HAS HEARD YOUR PRAYER! And, you even have it better than Hannah—I don't think you are drunk! I know pain when I see it!

Get up out of your circumstance. Get yourself together. Slip away. Now...pour out your heart to God! Even here, pour out your heart here below...share ALL! EVERYTHING! You may need another page or ten—that is ok! Just pour out!



## 2. Hannah let go!

Yep! She could have planted those "heart seeds" of bitterness that were left in her hands from the actions of Peninnah...her "brain-dead" husband...or even from Eli. But, here we see a woman who knew the power of release! Here we see a woman who obviously knew the danger of "storing up" the pain, frustration, and bitterness of shattered dreams. She knew the secret of surrender and total abandonment! Relate? What have you done with your seeds?

Bitterness, anger, pain, hurt... these seeds actually grow and grow until they choke out life! Do you think that it is time to let them GO???

Don't let yesterday use up today! Always remember that in each problem, however difficult, there is a POSSIBILITY or POSSIBILITIES! Instead of dwelling on the problems, seize the opportunities! Move on! Let go!

Hannah found release when she let go! She was able to eat heartily again! She became radiant! AND best news yet! She conceived! SIX TIMES! Hoot! Hoot!



### 3. Hannah learned to take it easy on Herself!

As we meet Hannah, it is obvious that she was giving her OWN self a hard time! In her mind, she was like so many of us in thinking, "I will be SO happy when----" She was beating herself up for every mistake in her life...for what she didn't have...for what others SEEMED to have...for what she thought life would be like if she had her dreams fulfilled.

This is SO human! Perhaps today your struggle is not even similar to Hannah's, but you know that deep down the best thing you could do for yourself is just take it easier on yourself—to give yourself a break! What are some of your expectations that you have of yourself?

Are they reasonable? Why? Why not?

Are you awaiting your breakthrough in life thinking, "I'll be happy when....happens?"  
Why?

Are you "beating" yourself up for—

Mistakes?

What you don't have?

What you do have?

What you think others have?

Where you think you *COULD* be?



*Take it EASY on yourself!* So often we are our very own worst enemy! I know that I am SO hard on myself! Perfectionism is not even a tough enough word! What DO you expect of yourself?

I found through several miscarriages that I expected SO much of myself! I placed limits on my grieving...time to recover...help I would accept... Talk about catastrophic! Grief is continual. It has so many different stages. In fact, one thing that I learned deeply through the loss of seven precious children was that those who experience any loss are given a gift at that time of loss. They are given the gift of taking that person's influence on with them—beyond their brief life here on earth. When we experience the pangs of grief, we are able to open up that gift to once again share with those around us. To experience grief and never use that grief to help others is a greater loss than the loss of a loved one. Bitterness ensues. Pain deepens.

So, what are good expectations? Work through the book of James. Make a list of expectations that God wants for us to prepare for—

How do your expectations compare?

So, do you find that you should be taking it a bit easier too? Will you?

Hannah's expectations were not BAD expectations. They were actually stemming from the vision that God had placed on her heart. The tough part was that while waiting, Hannah obviously began to believe that she would only be happy when she had her children. Been there, done that?

In your life right now, is there anything that you are holding out there—just beyond grasp—until you will “arrive,” then...happiness will be realized?

Let's look at that through a “physical” example...We travel extensively with our ministry and with our businesses. I sensed this year that I was beginning to get a bit weary from the travel, waiting until I was THERE at my destination to really relax and enjoy