

## God Hears Her

1 SAMUEL 1:9–20

*Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk. —1 SAMUEL 1:13*

One day I told my daughter I was going to read a grown-up book for a while, and then we would look at books together. When I started to read in silence, she looked at me and said, “Mommy, you aren’t really reading.” If I wasn’t speaking, she assumed I wasn’t processing words.

Like reading, prayer can be silent. The Old Testament character Hannah, who longed for a child, visited the temple and prayed “in her heart.” Her lips were moving, but “her voice was not heard” (1 SAMUEL 1:13). She explained, “I was pouring out my soul to the Lord” (v. 15). God heard Hannah’s silent prayer and gave her a son (v. 20).

Our all-knowing God searches our hearts and minds, and He hears every prayer—even silent ones. We can confidently pray—knowing He’ll hear and answer (MATTHEW 6:8, 32). We can praise God, ask Him for help, and thank Him for blessings—even when no one else can hear us. If someone sees us talking to the Lord, he or she can say with confidence: “God hears her!”

 Jennifer



## No Appetite

NEHEMIAH 8:1-12



*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. —1 PETER 2:2*

When the people of Israel returned home after their forty-year exile in faraway Babylon, their spiritual appetite was weak (NEHEMIAH 8:1-12). They had departed from God and His ways. To get the people back to spiritual health, Nehemiah organized a Bible seminar, and Ezra was the teacher.

Ezra read from the book of the law of Moses from morning until midday, feeding the people with the truth of God (NEHEMIAH 8:3). The people listened attentively. In fact, their appetite for God's Word was so stirred that the family leaders and the priests and Levites met with Ezra the following day to study the law in greater detail because they wanted to understand it (V. 13).

When we feel separated from God or spiritually weak, we too can find spiritual nourishment in God's Word. "Like newborn babes, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 PETER 2:2). Ask the God who hears you to give you a renewed desire for relationship with Him. Then open your Bible and begin feeding your heart, soul, and mind with His Word.

 Poh Fang



## Nozomi Hope

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18

*We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

—2 CORINTHIANS 4:7

In 2011 a massive earthquake and tsunami took nearly 19,000 lives and destroyed 230,000 homes in northeastern Japan. In its aftermath, The Nozomi Project, named for the Japanese word for “hope,” was created to provide sustainable income, community, and dignity—plus hope in a God who provides.

Nozomi women sift through the rubble to discover broken china shards that they turn into jewelry, which is sold around the world. This provides a livelihood for the women and shares symbols of their faith in Christ.

In New Testament times, people hid valuables in simple clay pots. Paul describes how the treasure of the gospel is contained in the human frailty of followers of Christ: jars of clay (2 CORINTHIANS 4:7). He suggests that the meager—and even broken—vessels of our lives can reveal God’s power in contrast to our imperfections.

When God inhabits the imperfect and broken pieces in our lives, the healing hope of His power is often made visible. No, His repair work in our hearts doesn’t hide our imperfections. But perhaps those etchings in our beings make His character more visible to others.

 *Elisa*



## Driven by God

1 KINGS 8:54–63

*“May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him.”*—1 KINGS 8:58

Recently I received an email inviting me to join a community of “driven people.” When I looked up the word *driven*, I learned that a driven person is highly motivated to succeed and works hard to achieve her goals.

Is it good to be a driven person? Here’s a fail-proof test: “Do it all for the glory of God” (1 CORINTHIANS 10:31). Think about what happened after Noah’s flood. A group of people constructed a tower to “make a name” for themselves (GENESIS 11:4). They wanted to be famous and avoid being scattered all over the world. They were driven by the wrong motivation.

In contrast, as King Solomon dedicated the ark of the covenant and the new temple, he said, “I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD” (1 KINGS 8:20). Then he prayed, “May he turn our hearts to him” (v. 58). He was driven by God.

May our “hearts be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands” (v. 61). Then we’ll be the right kind of driven women.

 Keila



## The King Could

MATTHEW 19:16–26

*Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*

—MATTHEW 19:26

As a child, I had a favorite book of nursery rhymes. Mine told me about Humpty Dumpty, a big, egg-shaped creature with a painted face and skinny arms and legs, perched happily on a wall. Then he fell and broke into countless pieces. I felt hopeless when I read that they “couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.”

Since then, I’ve come to know Christ as my Savior and Lord. I’ve experienced His powerful and tender hands restoring the shattered pieces of my life and the lives of others. I’ve had the joy of seeing many seemingly hopeless drug addicts made new in Christ. So I’ve added a line to the Humpty Dumpty nursery rhyme: “What all the king’s horses and all the king’s men couldn’t do, the King could!”

Are you or someone dear to you feeling broken today? Remember, no one is hopeless and beyond God’s saving help. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (MATTHEW 19:26).

When the broken pieces of life seem beyond hope of repair, don’t give up. We have a King who can put people back together again.

 Joanie



# I Am Not Forgotten

PSALM 13

*We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.*

—PSALM 33:20

Waiting is hard at any time; but when time passes and our prayers seem to go unanswered, it's easy to feel that God has forgotten us. Worries loom large, and during the night the dark hours seem endless.

The psalmist grew weary as he waited (PSALM 13:1). He felt abandoned—as if his enemies were gaining the upper hand (v. 2). When we're waiting for God to resolve a difficult situation or to answer often-repeated prayers, it's easy to get discouraged.

Satan whispers that God has forgotten us and that things will never change. We may be tempted to give in to despair. Why bother to read the Bible, pray, or worship with fellow believers in Christ? But we need those spiritual lifelines the most when we're waiting. They help to hold us steady in the flow of God's love and to become sensitive to His Spirit.

The psalmist had a remedy. He focused on what he knew of God's love, reminding himself of past blessings and praising God. We can do the same, for we are never forgotten.

 *Marion*

