

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## 1 SAMUEL 1-3

Samuel's life was a stream of unbroken faithfulness to God. Plot his years on a timeline, and you'll find *no season of him sowing wild oats - no lapses of spiritual laziness - no bouts with moral compromise*. His mother dedicated him to God from his infancy, and Samuel remained devoted all his long life... *The life of Samuel is what I call an example of **compound godliness!***

Open a money market account at the bank, and it'll accumulate compound interest. Your money makes money. The interest you're paid rolls back into the investment, so that your balance grows and snowballs. And the same principle applies to spiritual investments.

The person who lives for God receives compound benefits... *A heart* devoted to purity grows increasingly pure... *A mind* fixed on heavenly thoughts becomes more and more elevated in its thinking... *A will* bent Godward grows in the direction it's bent... And *a spirit* willing to muster faith will add muscle to that faith...

Luke 8:18 tells us, "*Whoever has, to him more will be given...*" *And this was Samuel*. Years of purity, and loyalty, and faith, and sensitivity to God added up. It eventually produced authority that held the nation in check, and ushered in a new age of Israel's history...

In Jeremiah 15:1 God bemoans the sin of a future generation when He says, "*Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people...*" God lumps Moses and Samuel in the same category - *both were powerful intercessors*.

And here's why young people need to live for Jesus, **faithfulness is like interest**. A life devoted to Jesus at an early age, will not only benefit you now - but years of godly living compound into stature and authority that God uses mightily... *Yet make too many spiritual withdrawals... fail to let godliness accrue over time... fall into too many lapses of faith... and you'll lose out!*

In the days of Samuel, God needed a man of stature and influence to lead the nation through a transition. **Samuel was the last judge - and the first prophet**.

He'll anointed Israel's first two kings, Saul and David, and launch the nation's monarchy. Samuel and the prophets will speak God's word to coming kings.

Samuel's ministry was like that of John the Baptist. Both men were lifelong Nazirites, and forerunners of Davidic kings. Samuel anointed *the first King David*, while The Baptist paved the way for *the son of David* - the last in the Davidic line - Jesus the

Messiah.

Samuel is often called “the prophet of prayer.” On several occasions he rallied the nation to pray. As we read in Jeremiah 15, He was a mighty intercessor. When Samuel died the entire nation gathered to his home in Ramah to mourn his passing. The Israelites loved Samuel, because they knew Samuel loved them.

His story begins in Chapter 1... Samuel was from the mountains of Ephraim. His dad was named **Elkanah**, and Elkanah had two wives: **Hannah** and **Peninnah**.

Once, Mark Twain was challenged by a polygamist to quote a Bible verse that prohibited having more than one wife. The quick-witted Twain replied, “That’s easy, **no man can serve two masters.**” God’s plan was one man and one woman for life. God tolerated bigamy, as He does divorce today, but it was never His ideal.

And bigamy comes with a potential problem - *two wives might not get along*. Bigamy can end up a **three-ring circus!** That was the case with Elkanah’s family. Hannah and Peninnah became fierce and fiery rivals.

And we’re told the reason why at the end of verse 2, “**Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children...**”

Verse 3, “**This man (Elkanah) went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.**” Elkanah’s family made a pilgrimage to the Tabernacle for the annual feast. “**And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb.**”

And what a provocative comment - God is sovereign over all things, including conception. He can *close a womb*, or *open a womb*. And at times His will does both. Child-bearing-aged couples need to trust God.

**And Hannah did!** She was a woman of faith and godliness. If all Hannah had to cope with was God’s will, she probably wouldn’t have been so upset, *but...*

Verse 6 “**Her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb.**” The Hebrew phrase “**make her miserable**” speaks of “**a thunder crash.**” Peninnah stirred up *an emotional storm in Hannah!* In antiquity, barrenness carried a stigma - it was seen as *a divine curse*. And what made this worse for Hannah were her rival’s digs.

Peninnah was a mean girl, no doubt - but Elkanah exacerbated the problem. He loved Hannah more, and hated to see her suffer... so to compensate Hannah, he gave her special favors. At the Tabernacle it was a double portion of the sacrifice, but I

imagine Elkanah gave Hannah twice as much of everything... *twice his time... twice the grocery money... two weeks vacation to Peninnah's one... double her spending money...*

And how do you think Peninnah reacted to Elkanah's extra shows of affection toward Hannah? She hated it! She retaliated by bombarding Hannah with *cutting comments*, and *biting barbs*. Peninnah would brag about her children in front of Hannah; then follow it up with something like, "And what about your kids, Hannah? Oops, sorry I forgot!" *It was all poor Hannah could do to keep from slapping the ole girl silly!*

"So it was, year by year (Peninnah refused to let up), when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat."

Notice, Hannah could steer clear of Peninnah around the house. They lived separate lives. They both had a home routine that avoided each other. But once a year they shared a common space. Elkanah would load up his family in the mini-van, and make his pilgrimage to Shiloh where he worshipped God at the Tabernacle.

*That's when the sparks flew!* Every chance Peninnah got she stuck it to Hannah. Hannah loved God, but she hated these Tabernacle trips. The conflict between her and Peninnah spoiled her worship. It distracted her focus from the Lord. What should've been a joyous *celebration* became a miserable time of *exasperation*.

No doubt, Peninnah preferred to stay *home*, but the Tabernacle was God's house! It was her duty to meet with others and worship at Shiloh. Staying home was appealing, but it wasn't an option acceptable to God.

And here's a lesson for us. We too are liable to meet a Peninnah at God's house. Some church folks rub us the wrong way, or they brag about their blessings and get under our skin. *It causes us to want to stay home!* But staying home is not an acceptable option to God.

In Hebrews 10:25 every believer is commanded to "not forsake the assembling of ourselves together."

Don't let a Peninnah rob you of the encouragement, worship, fellowship you receive when we gather. God knows about Peninnah, yet still calls you to be here!

Well, Hannah is so upset she won't eat. She sulks during supper, so Elkanah tries to cheer her up... verse 8, "Her husband said to her, Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" Elkanah loved his wife. Her unhappiness grieved him.

"So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh..." She went to the Tabernacle to pour out her soul to the Lord... "Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of

soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head." Hannah prays for a baby boy, and makes a vow... **First**, if God answers her she'll see to it the boy serves Him. She'll turn her son over to the priests, and enroll him in the Tabernacle ministry. **And second**, he'll be raised a lifelong Nazirite.

Remember, a Nazirite was a walking billboard for the values of God's kingdom. The Nazirite drank no wine, never shaved his head, and refrained from touching anything dead. His took *pleasure in the spiritual not the physical...* His *attractiveness was internal not external...* And *his pursuits were eternal not temporal.*

Samson too was a lifelong Nazirite; yet too many moral lapses kept godliness from accruing in his life. And when pressured, Samson broke his vow. He and Samuel were alike *outwardly*, but opposite *inwardly*.

I love Hannah's prayer, verse 11, "**Remember me, and not forget your maidservant.**" When we were first married, for two years Kathy and I tried to have a child, but to no avail - and I witnessed firsthand the passion of the prayers of a barren woman. My wife latched onto these words. Kathy prayed, "**Lord, remember me...**"

In May, 1982 we attended a pastors' conference where Kath asked the wives pray for her to have a child. And as they prayed God spoke in a prophecy, "**By this time next year you will have a child.**" To make a long story short our first son was born the very same weekend exactly one year later. And in honor of the prayer *Kathy and Hannah* prayed, we named our son, "**Zachary,**" which means "**remembered of the Lord.**"

James 5:17 is true, "**The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man (or woman) avails much.**" Pour out your soul to God, and watch Him pour out blessings on you.

Verse 12, "**It happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.**" Hannah's prayer was so passionate, her prayer was so raw and emotional, Eli thought she was *tipsy*. Her lips moved, but the words were spoken in her heart. Unlike a lot of Christians, Hannah wasn't praying to impress people. She was doing business with God.

Realize, **there's a big difference between saying prayers and praying prayers.** Too many people turn prayer into a performance... Once, a man stood up in church and shouted his prayer. One little boy told his mom, "**Wow, if that man lived closer to God I bet he wouldn't have to shout so loud.**" Hannah prayed like her prayer mattered. *I hope that's how you pray!*

“So Eli said to her, “How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!” Of course, Hannah denies she’s intoxicated. Her prayer is the outpouring of a sorrowful spirit. Verse 17, Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked...” *Nine months later God will do just that!*

Verse 18, “And (Hannah) said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife (*that means he really knew her in an intimate way!*), and the LORD remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him from the LORD.” And the Hebrew name “*Samuel*” fittingly means, “*heard by God.*”

For the next few years Hannah stayed home, from the family’s annual pilgrimage, to wean Samuel. Hannah knew once she had finished nursing this boy she would leave him at the Tabernacle. At the time Hebrew moms nursed their children until they were toddlers. Hannah no doubt took her time with Samuel.

Finally, in verse 24, “She took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, “O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD.” *You wonder if Eli remembered? Yet I’m sure he never forget her words, “For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.” So they worshiped the LORD there.*”

I’ll never forget one Sunday, everyone had left church, but me, Kathy, my kids, and one other little boy.

We looked around for Kyle’s parents, but they were MIA. Eventually we learned mom and dad had driven separate cars, and each parent thought the other had Kyle. We all had a big chuckle over it - the parents had left their child at church! *But Hannah did this literally!* She sent Samuel to church on a permanent lock-in.

Yet this is something all parents need to do spiritually **every day**. ***Are you giving your kids to God?*** Hannah realized her son didn’t belong to her - *he was God’s property*. Samuel had been given to her on loan.

And this is the case with every child! Parent, your child is a loaner. Though you’re footing the bill right now, he or she doesn’t belong to you. A child belongs to God, and it’s important a parent recognizes that fact.

Years ago, Christian singer, Keith Green wrote a song of devotion to God. He started out, “I pledge my head to heaven for the Gospel...” The second stanza was harder, “I pledge my wife to heaven for the Gospel.” But for me, the third stanza was toughest, “I pledge my son to heaven for the Gospel.” I’ll take a risk and trust God with my welfare - even risk my wife’s welfare - *but a son or a daughter? Will you support their decision to go to hostile country to share the love of Jesus? Have you really dedicated your kids to God?*

In reality, parenting is a process of giving back to God the gift He’s given you. From the day a child is born, we’re turning loose of that child a little at a time.

One author writes, “(Parents) need courage to let our children go. We are trustees and stewards, but have to hand them back to life and God. We have to love them and lose them.” My four children are mine, *but they’re not*. The day they were born I gave them to God, and I’ve had to keep giving them to Him every day since.

In Chapter 2 Hannah prays again. This time she *praises* God for granting her request. Hannah’s praise could be titled, “*The Triumph of the Underdog.*”

“And Hannah prayed and said: “My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn (an animal’s strength is in its horns) so “*my strength*” is exalted in the LORD. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.” And you know she’s thinking of Peninnah. The birth of her son has now made her assailant weaponless.

“No one is holy like the LORD, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.” And in verse 3, surely she addresses her housemate, “Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the LORD is the God of knowledge; and by Him actions are weighed.” *Peninnah, stop with your incriminations, God alone is our all-knowing judge.*

“The bows of the mighty men are broken, and those who stumbled are girded with strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, and the hungry have ceased to hunger. Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children has become feeble.” In all these metaphors God has turned the tables - *and God gave a son to a barren Hannah.*

The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He has set the world upon them.”

“*God laid the foundations of the earth. He’s in charge of all things!*” “He will guard the feet of His saints (or direct our steps), but the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength no man shall prevail.”

In verse 10 Hannah's *prayer* becomes a *prophecy* of the end times. "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed." Hannah's son, Samuel, is the prophet who will anoint a boy named David king over Israel. And he will sire a future king who'll rule the earth for all eternity. The Hebrews call Him, "*Messiah*" or "*Anointed One*." Peninnah was once the thunder in Hannah's life, now she knows God's thunder will prevail over all.

In verse 12, the scene shifts families. "Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest." Hannah gave her son back to God by enrolling him in the Tabernacle service, and trusting him into the care of the High Priest, Eli.

But "the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD." And these sons were priests. It's sad when men who supposedly represent God, *don't even know Him*. And remember from the book of Judges what happens to an ungodly person? They eventually turn immoral, for *ungodliness produces unrighteousness*.

The next few verses expose the crimes of Eli's sons. Recall, the Law of Moses required the sacrifice to be divvied up. The fat was burned to God. The right breast and thigh were given to the priest. The rest of the meat became the meal of the one who offered the sacrifice.

But Eli's sons were taking more than their share. They sent men with flesh-hooks to confiscate boiling meat right out of the caldrons. In some cases they took meat before it was cooked - *and the fat was offered to God*. Even against the objections of the worshippers, these thugs would say, verse 16, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." Eli's boys and their cronies were strong-arming God's people.

It reminds me of the pastor who would pray over the Sunday offering, "Lord, when I throw this money into the air you take whatever You want, and what comes back down I'll keep for myself." It's sad when a man of God is a rip-off, and is only out to pad his own pockets.

And here's the fallout, verse 17, "Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD." The priestly corruption caused the people to resent giving to God. *And this happens today*. Greedy, manipulative pastors discourage people from giving of their money to God.

*Hey, if you don't give, that's between you and God*, but one thing is for sure I don't want it to ever be because of me or our church's mismanagement. That's why we go

out of our way to be sure your giving is voluntary, and every nickel is accounted for properly. We want you to feel good about giving, not resentful

Verse 18, “But Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod.” The ephod was a priestly apron - the work clothes of a priest.

“Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “The LORD give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was lent to the LORD.” Then they would go to their own home. And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters.” And the same thing happened to my wife, Kathy, she went from being a *barren Karen* to a *fertile Myrtle*.

“Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the LORD.” And note the contrast... “*Samuel grew before the Lord,*” while Eli’s sons sinned more. “Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”

Eli’s boys were not only *pick-pockets*, but *perverts*. They committed adultery right in the door of the house of worship, in the Tabernacle. They had no shame.

Years ago, a popular Atlanta pastor, or so-called “bishop,” got exposed as a serial adulterer. He had a long run of illicit affairs with women in his church. He groomed these girls by reframing **adultery** as “**kingdom relationships**.” He told the girls God had given them a *special ministry* to the man of God. **It made me want to puke**. It was a gross example of spiritual abuse, and religious malpractice. Eli’s boys probably conjured up similar justifications for their sexual perversions.

“So (Eli) said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?”

And the one thing worse than *the sons’ sin*, was *the father’s weakness*. Eli hears of their horrible perversity, and all he gives them is a *slap on the wrist*. Eli exercises no discipline - levies no punishment - takes no action. Hophne and Phinehas are turning folks off to God, and all Eli does is offer this mild rebuke. And his sons ignored his wimpy words. Verse 25 tells us it gets worse, “Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them.”

Yet I’ve got to say, I empathize with Eli. One of a parent’s toughest tasks is to stand up to an adult child! *That child may be your future caregiver. They control access to the grandkids*. You’re afraid, if you oppose them, they’ll walk away, and you’ll lose

them... But Eli failed to take a stand, and lost his sons in a worst way.

This is where a parent needs courage and faith! Again, we *give our kids back to God every single day!* Your child belongs to God and needs to be confronted with His truth... *Sadly, Eli failed with his own sons, yet God will give him a second chance at being dad.*

For even in the midst of this priestly chaos, and evil tolerance, we're told in verse 26, **"And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men."** Samuel grew under the care and tutelage of Eli.

Other than Hannah's once a year visits Samuel was being reared by this old priest. This is mind-boggling! *Why does God entrust the upbringing of someone like Samuel, who will play such a pivotal role in the future of the nation, to a father who had failed as miserably as Eli?* And here's the answer... *His amazing grace!* For God gives Eli a second chance at being a parent.

Maybe you've blown it as a parent. You made mistakes rearing your own kids, but God has now blessed you with another opportunity... *You're part of a blended family, and kids are again under your roof... Or you had a child late in life and you're starting over... Or perhaps you now have input in a grandchild's life... Or maybe the child of a single mom needs your help...*

Or it could be your kids are still home. You've blown it - they know it - but God wants you to be humble, and ask for their forgiveness. If God gave Eli a second chance at parenthood - He can do the same for you.

Even though Eli was afraid to discipline his boys, **God was not.** Verse 27 tells us an unnamed man of God comes to Eli, and in the rest of the chapter explains how God will take away Eli's priestly position.

Though God gave his father and descendants the sacred office of High Priest, it doesn't mean God can't take it from them. God speaks to Eli in verse 29, **"Why do you kick (or rebel) at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me..."** In failing to confront his sons, Eli honored them more than God. He turned his family into an idol... ***Hey, I love my children, but I love God more.*** That has to be the attitude of us all.

Verse 30, **"Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.'"**

God will cut off the family of Eli and give the High Priesthood to another man... God has changed his mind. ***And God can do that!*** God's character is immutable. But His

plans can be altered and changed.

God says to Eli in verse 34, **Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them.**

Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread." And this is a promise that won't be fulfilled for another 120 years.

It's 1 Kings 2:27 that tells us, **"Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest... that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh."** Abiathar and his family, heirs of Eli, were expelled by King Solomon from their post and the priesthood was given to a man named Zadok. Both descend from Aaron, but judgment finally fell on Eli.

Chapter 3 takes us back to Samuel, **"Then the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation."** It's sad when God's Word becomes rare! Yet I'm afraid that's the case today.

Eli though wasn't going to make the same mistakes with Samuel that he'd made with his sons. He would keep the boy focused on God, ministering to the Lord.

**"And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down, that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down."** God called Samuel, but the boy mistook the *voice of God* for the *voice of Eli*.

Parents need to realize all kids are prone to make this mistake. An earthly dad is often our first impression of our heavenly Father. A dad's influence is colossal.

This was hammered home to me one night years ago when I was praying with my youngest son. In his prayer Mack kept going back and forth - referring to the Lord as first **"God"** then **"Dad"** - **"God"** then **"Dad"** - then it hit me, how closely in his mind he associated *his heavenly Father* with *his earthly dad*. A good parent will always remember he or she is a representative of God.

Christian musicians, Philips, Craig, and Dean, turned a father's prayer into a song. They sing, **"God, I want to be like You, because he wants to be like me."** If you're a

dad, remember you represent God to your child.

“And the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.) And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. Then he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy.” It dawns on Eli what’s happening. The old man’s *eyesight* was dim, but his *insight* was still sharp. **And this is the key good parenting.** Stay attuned to what’s going on in your child’s life. *If God is speaking, encourage them to listen... If they’re confused, help with an explanation...*

When it finally dawns on Eli that God is calling the boy. “Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.” Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

Verse 11, “Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. *(this will be shocking)*

“In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows...” and here’s God’s grievance with Eli in a nutshell, “because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.”

Understand, the primary purpose of a parent is to **restrain their kids**. You can pay their bills, be their pal, educate and entertain, even coach youth sports, but a parent’s top job is **discipline**. I’ve responded to rebellion with a belt on the bottom... used a bar of soap to wash out a foul mouth... taken away car keys and cell phones to get their attention... I’ve corralled aimless energy by requiring on-the-spot push-ups... I have been called by God to address raunchy attitudes and deliberate defiance. A parent **restrains** his children.

God’s Word, *and one Sunday in our preschool*, proves kids are sinners by nature. Thus, a parent has to curb their rebellion. Eli failed to restrain his sons, and was severely judged by God. “Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”

Samuel returns to sleep, and the next morning tends to his priestly duties. He hopes Eli won’t inquire into what God told him... *but that was not to be...* Verse 16, “Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!" And he answered, "Here I am." And he said, "What is the word that the LORD spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. God do

so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you.”

“Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him." Apparently, nobody was more aware of his painful failures than Eli himself.

“So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.” Samuel’s words carried great authority. “And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba (or *from north to south*) knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD. Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh.

For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.” With Samuel, God now had a reliable mouthpiece to speak His Word to Israel.