

## 1 Samuel 2:11-36 – Eli’s Wicked Sons

January 30, 2022

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. 1 Samuel 2:11 (ESV)

### 1. Eli’s sons were corrupt leaders

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. 1 Samuel 2:12 (ESV)

- Worthless is the Hebrew word “Belial”. It means death, wickedness, and rebellion. It later came to mean the devil.

What accord has Christ with Belial?... 2 Corinthians 6:15 (ESV)

...for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. 1 Samuel 2:3 (ESV)

### 2. Hophni and Phinehas dishonored the offerings of the Lord.

The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 1 Samuel 2:13–14 (ESV)

The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons. And the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifice of your peace offerings. Leviticus 7:31–32 (ESV)

Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” 1 Samuel 2:15–16 (ESV)

All fat is the LORD’s. Leviticus 3:16 (ESV)

...how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 1 Samuel 2:22 (ESV)

Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt. 1 Samuel 2:17 (ESV)

### 3. Samuel was a little priest-in-training.

Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.  
1 Samuel 2:18 (ESV)

And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 1 Samuel 2:19 (ESV)

Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." So then they would return to their home. Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.  
1 Samuel 2:20–21 (ESV)

"...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38 (ESV)

### 4. Eli was a dysfunctional father.

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.  
1 Samuel 2:22 (ESV)

And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?"...  
1 Samuel 2:23–25a (ESV)

Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. Proverbs 13:24 (ESV)

How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?  
Hebrews 10:29 (ESV)

...But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death. 1 Samuel 2:25b (ESV)

But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. Exodus 8:15 (ESV)

But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses. Exodus 9:12 (ESV)

As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." Hebrews 3:15 (ESV)

*Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.*  
Proverbs 12:1 (ESV)

## **5. Samuel kept growing in stature and favor with God and man.**

*Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.* 1 Samuel 2:26 (ESV)

*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*  
Luke 2:52 (ESV)

## **6. God pronounced judgment on Eli and his family for their sin.**

*And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD..."*  
1 Samuel 2:27a (ESV)

*...Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.*  
1 Samuel 2:27-28 (ESV)

- God graciously honored Eli's family in the past.
- God graciously honored Eli's family in the present.
- Eli and his sons chose to dishonor their history and privileged position.

*Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?'* 1 Samuel 2:29 (ESV)

## **7. God honors those who honor Him and diminishes those who despise Him.**

*Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'* 1 Samuel 2:30 (ESV)

*Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.* 1 Samuel 2:31-33 (ESV)

And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. 1 Samuel 2:34 (ESV)

## 8. Samuel was raised up to be a faithful priest.

*And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."* 1 Samuel 2:35–36 (ESV)

### Applications

1. When people in positions of power do not see themselves as accountable to God, they become selfish, greedy, lazy, and use people instead of serving them.
2. Parents dishonor God when they close their eyes to their children's sin and fail to discipline them.  
*...a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.* Proverbs 29:15 (ESV)
3. Sometimes parents need more than words for correction. Sometimes children need to face the painful consequences of sin.  
*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.* Proverbs 22:15 (ESV)
4. Adult children should seek the godly wisdom of their parents. Parents should not be afraid to carry out consequences for adult children who rebel.
5. Children are responsible for their choices. Eli's sons refused to listen to their father's godly wisdom and it ruined their life. Samuel listened to Eli's godly wisdom and was mightily used by God.
6. God honors those who honor him. Those who despise God will be lightly esteemed.

### Life Group Questions

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1. What leaders have you seen forget about God? When a leader forgets that they are accountable to God, how does that change the way they lead?
2. What factors determine why children turn out the way they do? Why do you think Abel honored the Lord but Cain was a murderer? **See Genesis 4.**
3. Eli's sons failed to follow the regulations for Old Covenant worship. What are the regulations for New Covenant worship? How do we violate them today? **(For a starting point, see Romans 12:1-2.)**
4. The Old Covenant provided for the stoning of uncorrectable children **(See Deuteronomy 21:17-21)**. What should be done with children who refuse to listen to their parents today?
5. What should parents expect of their adult children who are living on the support or resources of their parents? What should parents do if these expectations are not being met?
6. Why is it always wise to make the hard choice and honor God in life? How does that change the way you approach seemingly insignificant or private decisions in your life? **(See 2 Samuel 2:30)**