

## Children in the Lord's Ministry

What is your part in your children's work in the Lord's ministry?

First Samuel 2.12–3.18

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### Prelude:

#### **I. Can children serve the Lord?**

A. *Should* children serve the Lord?

B. Yes and yes, by all means, they can and should serve the Lord.

#### **II. How old was Isaac when Abraham readied himself to offer Isaac as a sacrifice?**

A. Joseph was a teenager when we meet him.

B. How old was David when we first see him in the Bible?

C. Josiah was 8 years old when he became king, and

1. when he was 16 years old he sought the Lord, and

2. when he was 20 years old he purged Judah and Jerusalem of idolatry.

D. Daniel had to have been in his teens or younger because

1. he endured the 70 years of Babylonian captivity, and

2. he lived for several more years during the Persian reign.

E. Paul's nephew was young enough

1. that a Roman soldier took him by the hand and

2. led him to a place so Paul's nephew could reveal a plot against his uncle.

#### **III. Then there is this 12-year-old kid,**

A. who traveled with his parents to Jerusalem one year, and

B. as they left, their son was not with them,

1. assuming he was with the crowd returning up North, but

2. when they could not find him they returned to Jerusalem,

**46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them**

**questions (Luke 2.46).**

- a) When they questioned him about the anxiety he had caused them,
- b) he responded with an answer that shows he served the Lord,

**49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2.49).**

**IV. Later, when this 12 year old had grown up and begun a teaching ministry,**

- A. parents brought their children to him
- B. that he might bless them, but
  - 1. his well-intentioned, but wrong, disciples
  - 2. tried to keep the children away from him,

**13 Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought them. 14 But when Jesus [He was that 12 year old kid!] saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." 16 And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them (Mark 10.13–16).**

- a) Jesus wants children, even little children, to come to Him.
- b) He even said that they have something we need to enter the Kingdom.

**V. Now, let us see**

- A. the grown sons of Eli the priest and
- B. the boy of Elkanah and Hannah.

**Persuasion:**

**I. First Samuel 2.12–17 – The Sons of Eli**

**12 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the Lord. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the**

priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." 17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

A. Hophni and Phinehas used religion for their own purposes.

1. They saw it as a way to *take* from people
2. rather than as a way to *give* to people.

B. They wanted religion served to *their* liking and desires.

1. To them, religion and Israel existed for their sakes.
2. If they did not get what they wanted,
  - a) they did what they had to, in their minds, to get it,
  - b) including treating their brethren treacherously.

C. These men had, what we call, "Grown up in the church."

1. Yet, it had no affect upon them, because
2. it had not transformed their hearts.

D. Their treachery led people to abhor offerings.

## II. First Samuel 2.18–21 – The Son of Elkanah and Hannah

18 But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod. 19 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. 20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The Lord give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the Lord." Then they would go to their own home. 21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Sam-

### **uel grew before the Lord.**

- A. Samuel also “grew up in the church,” but
  - 1. it caused him to grow in the Lord,
  - 2. so that even as a child he ministered before the Lord.
- B. His mother blessed him annually with something she had made him, and
  - 1. Eli blessed her and her husband
  - 2. for what they had given to the Lord.
- C. For not regretting her gift,
  - 1. the Lord continued to remember Hannah,
  - 2. giving her three more sons and two daughters.
- D. During this time Samuel grew before the Lord.
  - 1. Eli became Samuel's adoptive father, and
  - 2. was a good father to him, but
    - a) as we will see,
    - b) he was not a good father to his own sons.

### **III. First Samuel 2.22–26 – Hophni and Phinehas, and Samuel**

**22 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. 23 So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the Lord's people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the Lord desired to kill them. 26 And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the Lord and men.**

- A. Not only did Hophni and Phinehas want the flesh of animals,
  - 1. they wanted the flesh of women, because
  - 2. these men knew nothing of the spirit.

B. Eli rebuked his sons, but

1. they did not listen to him, and
2. he did not back up his rebuke with actions.
  - a) He should have removed them from serving as priests.
  - b) Perhaps they turned out as they did, because
    - (1) he only spoke tough words to them, but
    - (2) took no tough actions against them.

C. Contrast them with Samuel,

1. whose growth compared to that of what the Bible says about Jesus,

**26 And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the Lord and men (1Sa 2.26).**

**52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2.52).**

2. Parents, should focus upon their children's
  - a) intellectual health,
  - b) bodily health,
  - c) spiritual health, and
  - d) social health.

#### **IV. First Samuel 2.27–36 – God's View of Eli and His Sons**

**27 Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 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. 31 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. 32 And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. 33 But any of your men whom I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. 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. 35 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. 36 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.'"**

- A. The Lord gave Eli a privileged position as priest, but
  - 1. he did not take it seriously, and
  - 2. honored his family more than he honored the Lord.
- B. Therefore, the Lord would no longer honor Eli or his family.
  - 1. Sometimes we turn our backs on the Lord for the sake of our families,
  - 2. forgetting that the Lord gave us our families.
    - a) If He gave us our families,
    - b) He can take away our families.
- C. In the stead of Eli,
  - 1. the Lord would raise up a priest,
  - 2. who would do according to what was in the heart and mind of the Lord.
    - a) Samuel would be like David,
    - b) a man after God's own heart.

## **V. First Samuel 3.1–9 – The Heart of a Servant Child**

**1 Now 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. 2 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, 3 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, 4 that the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down. 6 Then the Lord called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.) 8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. So 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. 9 Therefore 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.**

A. Israel had

1. the Books of Moses,
2. the Book of Joshua,
3. the Book of Job, but
  - a) some scholars believe Samuel wrote the Book of Judges,
  - b) which would mean they only had seven Books of the Bible.

B. Since the Holy Spirit had not yet completed the Scriptures,

1. the Israelites depended upon the Lord appearing to someone,
2. often the priest, and
  - a) giving revelation into the Lord's will that they needed.
  - b) However, the Lord did not provide much revelation in those days,
    - (1) which was about to change with the Samuel.
    - (2) Therefore, it could have been because of the kind of man Eli was.

C. The Lord chose to speak to a boy instead of a man, and

1. would even use the boy to speak against the man,

2. although the man knew what to teach the boy.
- D. As the Lord called out to Samuel during the night,
1. Samuel naturally thought it was Eli calling for him.
  2. The boy responded immediately to his elder.
    - a) When Eli realized what was happening,
    - b) did you see what he taught Samuel to say?
      - (1) Eli planted in Samuel
      - (2) the heart of a servant,
        - (a) telling him to say to the Lord,
        - (b) **“Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening”** (NIV).
- E. That was the difference between
1. the sons of Eli and
  2. the son of Elkanah and Hannah.
    - a) The sons of Eli expected service.
    - b) The son of Elkanah and Hannah expected *to* serve.
      - (1) Is that the difference between adults and children.
      - (2) Young children want to serve, but
        - (a) later they expect service.
        - (b) This in children we have to imitate to enter the Kingdom.

## **VI. First Samuel 3.10–18 – The Son of Elkanah and Hannah Was a Servant of God**

**10 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” 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. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And 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.” 15 So Samuel lay down un-**



**til morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!" He answered, "Here I am." 17 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." 18 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."**

- A. Samuel like a child spoke what he had heard.
  - 1. Later, as adults we believe we have to interpret things, but
  - 2. Samuel did what children do best, he gave it straight to an adult.
- B. Eli said for the Lord to do what seemed good to Him, yet
  - 1. Eli made no effort to change.
  - 2. The Lord used an unnamed man of God to reveal Eli's punishment,
    - a) then used Samuel to reveal the same thing, but
    - b) Eli still favored his sons over the Lord.

### **Exhortation:**

#### **I. [Have all the children 12 years old and under, come to the front]**

- A. Our children need the Lord.
  - 1. The Lord wants our children.
  - 2. However, we need to encourage them in the Lord's ministry.
- B. [Lead the congregation in *I Love You with the Love of the Lord*, 863]

#### **II. Bring your children to everything.**

- A. Bring them to all the Bible classes.
- B. Bring them to all the worship services.
- C. Bring them to extra events. If you do,
  - 1. they will see the supreme nature of the Kingdom of God;
  - 2. they will form friendships;
  - 3. they will gain instruction; and

4. they will serve in the Lord's ministry.

### **III. However, if you honor your family above the Lord,**

A. do not expect your family to honor the Lord at all.

1. It is certainly possible that someone in your family

2. will serve the Lord *in spite of you*, but

a) that is not very complimentary.

b) Would you not rather have it that they serve Him *because of you*?

B. If you honor the Lord above all,

1. you will not lose your family, but

2. many of them will come along.

C. Even if your family does forsake you,

1. you have the Lord!

2. Family serves a means to an end, and

a) the end is the Lord

b) with whom we shall spend eternity!

### **IV. Nothing of this Earth supersedes eternity!**

A. Therefore, show your children and your grandchildren

B. the most important thing in life.

1. Be a Christian.

2. Follow the Lord wherever He leads you.