

After God's Heart

Portrait of Eli 1 Samuel Chapters 2-4

Lesson 2

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. How were you inspired by Hannah's story?

2. Placing God in any position other than first in our lives will lead to calamity! Though Eli was the High Priest in Israel, he failed to put God first. His misplaced priorities led to problems in his own family, spiritual apostasy in Israel, and defeat by the Philistines. Jesus promised in Matthew 6:33 that if we would seek first the kingdom of God, He would add all we need to our lives. When reading the portrait of Eli, note the tragic results of Eli's failure to put God first.

This week's study is taken from 1 Samuel 2-4. Read the following highlighted sections and give a brief title for each:
 - a. 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25

 - b. 1 Samuel 2:27-36

 - c. 1 Samuel 3:11-18

 - d. 1 Samuel 4:10-18

3. Before you begin digging into this narrative, write a prayer asking the Lord to speak to you through His Word. Include any concerns you may have about understanding and applying your lesson this week.

What is the word that the LORD spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me.
1 Samuel 3:17a

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25

1. Contrast the commandment of God in Leviticus 7:31-34 with the behavior of Eli's sons in 1 Samuel 2:12-16. Note your observations.
 - a. According to 1 Samuel 2:12b, what was the reason that Eli's sons were so *corrupt*?
 - (1) Considering their position why would this be such a serious problem?

2. According to 1 Samuel 2:17, what effect did Hophni and Phinehas' sin have on the people of Israel?
 - a. Use their example to comment on how bad behavior affects others.

3. Another sin of Hophni and Phinehas is disclosed in 1 Samuel 2:22. Remark on the terrible thing they were doing.

4. Summarize Eli's reaction to his sons' behavior. 1 Samuel 2:23-25a
 - a. How did Hophni and Phinehas respond to Eli's warning? 1 Samuel 2:25b

 - b. Why do you suppose Eli's warning was ineffective? See also Proverbs 29:19 and Ecclesiastes 8:11.
 - (1) What is your opinion of Hophni and Phinehas?

 - c. Compare the behavior of Eli and his sons with Paul's description of godly leadership in 1 Timothy 3:2-7. What do you see?
 - (1) Why is it important to pray for godly leadership?

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Samuel 2:27-36

1. Who did God send to rebuke Eli? 1 Samuel 2:27
 - a. What reminder did God give Eli in 1 Samuel 2:27-28?
 - (1) Why do you think this is significant?
2. From 1 Samuel 2:29 record God's rebuke to Eli.
 - a. Why was Eli considered a partaker in the sin of his sons?
 - b. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 10:37 apply to Eli's situation?
3. Use 1 Samuel 2:30-33 to summarize God's judgment on Eli's house.
4. What would be the *sign* to Eli concerning these things? 1 Samuel 2:34
 - a. What does this convey about the seriousness of this sin in God's sight?
5. Who would God *raise up* after this? 1 Samuel 2:35
 - a. This prophetic word was partially fulfilled through the godly ministry of Samuel. However, the ultimate fulfillment is found in Hebrews 7:20-27. Read this passage and share your thoughts.
6. Eli loved his sons more than he loved God. Read Mark 12:30 to note the intensity with which God desires us to love Him. Take a moment to write a prayer asking God to help you to love Him more.

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Samuel 3:11-18

1. In 1 Samuel 3:1-10 we read about young Samuel's first encounter with God. From 1 Samuel 3:11-14 briefly record what God spoke to him.
 - a. According to 1 Samuel 3:13, why was God going to judge Eli's house *forever*?
 - (1) Consider James 4:17 and comment on why God held Eli responsible *for the iniquity which he knows*.
 - (a) How is this a warning to you?
 - (2) The Lord emphasized the fact that Eli did not *restrain* his sons' behavior. Read 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and comment on the link between godly parenting and Christian leadership.
 - (3) It must have been difficult for Samuel to deliver this message to Eli. Read Galatians 6:1 and note how such a message should be given.
2. Summarize the events of 1 Samuel 3:15-18.
 - a. Although Samuel was afraid, why was it important that he give Eli this message?
3. What was Eli's response to Samuel's message? 1 Samuel 3:18b
 - a. Why was this an appropriate response?
 - b. Read Proverbs 9:8-9. How do you desire to respond when the Lord gives you a difficult message?

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Samuel 4:10-18

1. In 1 Samuel 4 the Israelites went to battle against the Philistines. After their first defeat, they decided to bring the *ark of the covenant* into the next battle thinking that its presence would bring them victory. Record what happened according to 1 Samuel 4:10-11.
 - a. Use Leviticus 16:2 and Hebrews 9:3-7 to comment on how the *ark of the covenant* should have been regarded.
 - (1) Why was it a bad idea to take the *ark* into *battle*?
 - (2) Why do you think Eli allowed them to take the *ark*?

2. Using the events of 1 Samuel 4:12-18 answer the following questions:
 - a. What happened in 1 Samuel 4:12?

 - b. What was Eli's condition? 1 Samuel 4:15, 18

 - c. What four tragic things were reported by the *messenger*? 1 Samuel 4:17

 - d. How did Eli react to the news of the *battle*? 1 Samuel 4:18
 - (1) What part of this news affected him most?
 - (2) Why do you suppose this was so?

3. How do you think this tragedy could have been averted?
 - a. How can the following Scriptures help you avoid unnecessary grief in your life?
 - (1) Proverbs 29:1

 - (2) Hebrews 3:12-13

