

# **CHOICES EVERY SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVER SHOULD MAKE**

## **Choice #4: Spirit-Filled Believers Want to Avoid Eli's Idolatry of Neglect**

I Samuel 1-5

On Father's Day we began looking at Four Choices every godly dad should make. We saw there are four dads that display an attribute that God especially points out in their parenting.

### **Parenting Attributes God Points out**

1. **Job prayed** for his family;
2. **Noah preserved** his family;
3. **Abraham led** his family;
4. **Eli neglected** his family.

As we proceeded through the portraits of these dads, we also learned from the Scriptures that these four dads also portrayed the choices that every Spirit-filled believer can make, as we walk through life under the sanctifying power of the Spirit.

As we turn to the Old Testament book of I Samuel 2, this morning, we are looking at the fourth and final dad, through the:

### **Sobering Record of Eli's Choices**

Eli's life, as an Old Testament priest recorded in the Bible, has a simple but sobering lesson: *The best way to fail as a dad, is to neglect your calling as a dad.*

Just choose to just do nothing.

Just go through these most crucial years of having your children at home, and hope everything turns out.

Instead of praying like Job for each member of your family daily, just focus on your career.

Instead of seeking like Abraham to lead them each day as God's friend: pour every ounce of your mental, emotional, and physical strength into working hard at your job.

To fail as a dad, just stay detached from your marriage and family: That habit always brings disaster long term, and confusion short-term.

Through these verses we can see Eli, he worked so hard for over 40 years at his job, and was distinguished in his field. But, in the process, Eli ignored his family so long that he ended up with the sad results of his disobedient choices. As we study our passage today, we will note how God points out two areas of failure in Eli's life.

Please stand as we read I Samuel 2:26-30 (NKJV):

And the child Samuel **grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men.** <sup>27</sup> 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? <sup>28</sup> 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? <sup>29</sup> 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?**' <sup>30</sup> 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.**

Disciplining, admonishing, and confronting our children about the dangers of sin is vital to God.

God said that Eli participated in sons' sins because he did not rebuke them. Here are the two failures God points out in Eli's life.

## **FAILURE ONE: ELI NEGLECTED DISCIPLINING HIS CHILDREN**

1 Samuel 2:29 Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you **honor your sons more than me** by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'

## **FAILURE TWO: ELI NEGLECTED CONFRONTING SIN IN HIS HOME**

1 Samuel 3:13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, **and he failed to restrain them.**

Confronting sin in our home is vital to God. God rebukes Eli because he continued to resist confronting sin in home.

# Four Danger Signs Of Bad Parenting

How can we summarize the danger signs of a bad dad? Eli had:

- ✓ **Preoccupation with an occupation** to the exclusion of family needs.
- ✓ **Refusal to face the severity** of his children's actions.
- ✓ **Failure to respond quickly** and thoroughly to the warnings of others.
- ✓ **Rationalizing the wrong** thereby becoming part of the problem.

When a passage about someone's life is captured by God in His Word, they were chosen by God as an example of something. In fact I Corinthians 10:11 reminds us that the Old Testament accounts are written with a two-fold purpose: first as patterns for us to follow and secondly as warnings.

I Cor. 10:11 (NKJV) Now all these things happened to them **as examples**, and they were **written for our admonition**, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

God loves to contrast right and wrong responses to His plan. In the historical record of I Samuel, God portrays the bad choices of Eli in contrast to the godly choices of Elkanah, Hannah, and Samuel. Samuel is very special in God's Book<sup>1</sup>.

Remember, grace gives us the power to choose. Grace means God offers us a choice, and we have to make it. Sometimes at first glance it seems to be that God was harsh, and overly severe to Eli. But when you see the atmosphere of all God was doing around Eli, at the same time he was making these bad choices, it becomes clear the grace God offered that Eli neglected.

Walk with me through I Samuel and see all that God was doing in the lives of people all around him, that Eli neglected to allow God to do in his life.

## God knows Your address

I Sam. 1:1-2 (NKJV) Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. <sup>2</sup> And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Note God details the vitals on this man who lived over 3,100 years ago. We know nothing on this scale about anyone in the ancient world other than a very few kings of major empires.

## God knows our

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<sup>1</sup> See Jer. 15:1; Acts 3:24, 13:20.

## Spiritual disciplines

I Sam. 1:3 (NKJV) This man 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.

## God notices our Deeds of Kindness

I Sam. 1:4-5a (NKJV) 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. <sup>5</sup> But to Hannah he would **give a double portion**, for he loved Hannah,

## God controls Conception

I Sam. 1:5b (NKJV) although the LORD had **closed her womb**.

Ruth 4:13 says God grants conception; He can and does open and close the womb, all the way through Scripture.

## God knows our hurts, our adversaries, And When we get Harmed deeply

I Sam. 1:6-7 (NKJV) And **her rival also provoked her severely**, to make her **miserable**, because the Lord had closed her womb. <sup>7</sup> So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, that she **provoked her**; therefore **she wept and did not eat**.

## God sees the attempts we make to Console the un-consolable

I Sam. 1:8-9a (NKJV) Then Elkanah 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?" <sup>9</sup> So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh.

## Eli was God's Servant In his generation

I Sam. 1:9b (NKJV) Now Eli the priest was **sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the Lord**.

## God wants us to pour out

## **Our troubles to Him.**

I Sam. 1:10 (NKJV) And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.

Think of Hezekiah's unrolling the scroll of the threatening letter from the Assyrian king, and spreading it before the Lord in Isaiah.

## **God hears our sacred vows, and often brings us to A place where we make such vows for His glory!**

I Sam. 1:11 (NKJV) 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."

## **God is not served well by Insensitive servants like Eli**

I Sam. 1:12-16 (NKJV) And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth. 13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!" 15 But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. 16 "Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

## **God hears and answers the Deepest longings of our hearts**

I Sam. 1:17 (NKJV) Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel **grant your petition which you have asked of Him.**"

## **God shows us that prayer can amazingly change our outlook on family and personal life**

I Sam. 1:18-28 (NKJV) And she said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face **was no longer sad**. 19 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, and **the Lord remembered her**. 20 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.**" 21 Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up

to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned; **then I will take him, that he may appear before the Lord and remain there forever.**" 23 So Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish His word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him. 24 Now when she had weaned him, 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. 25 Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. 26 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. 27 For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28 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.

## **God knows whether we are genuine Followers, justified in His sight**

I Sam. 2:12 (NKJV) Now the sons of Eli *were* corrupt; they did not know the LORD.

## **God knows whether we are driven by our Sensual appetites or by hunger for His Word**

I Sam 2:12 (NKJV) Now the sons of Eli *were* **corrupt**; they **did not know** the LORD.

## **God saw that Eli's sons had Appetites for instant gratification**

I Sam. 2:15-17 (NKJV) 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.**"

## **God saw that Eli's sons had Unrestrained, Immoral hearts**

I Sam. 2:22 (NKJV) 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.

## **God watches how we raise our children, And holds us accountable**

I Sam. 2:23-25; 3:11-13 (NKJV) So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. <sup>24</sup> No, my sons! For *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. <sup>25</sup> 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. 3:11-13 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. <sup>12</sup> In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> 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**."

This word rebuke means to "weaken or cause to grow dim". Eli never restrained his sons. God warns us that sin is like a ferocious monster crouching at the door and ready to spring if not restrained.

Genesis 4:7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, *sin is crouching at your door*; it desires to have you, but you must master it." (NIV)

## The Sobering Record Of Eli's Choices

Eli's life, as an Old Testament priest recorded in the Bible, has a simple but sobering lesson: The best way to fail as a dad, is to neglect your calling as a dad.

Just choose to just do nothing.

Just go through these most crucial years of having your children at home, and hope everything turns out.

Instead of praying like Job for each member of your family daily, just focus on your career.

Instead of seeking like Abraham to lead them each day as God's friend: pour every ounce of your mental, emotional, and physical strength into working hard at your job.

To fail as a dad, just stay detached from your marriage and family: That habit always brings disaster long term, and confusion short-term.

Ask Eli, he will tell you how he worked so hard at his job, and ignored his family so long that he ended up with the sad results of his choices.

What can we do to insure this won't happen to us?

## Planning to Not Neglect our Parenting

1. Ask God to give you the joyful opportunity of introducing your children to Jesus, who is the only one who can give them a new heart. Acts 26:18
2. Ask God for help in understanding how to shepherd the heart of your children. Psalm 139:23-24
3. Ask God to make you take the time to apply some `TLC' to your children:
  - **Practice the habit of "T":** Talking gently to them Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (NIV)
  - **Practice the habit of "L":** Listening lovingly to them "as a father with children" Paul says in I Thessalonians 2:11.
  - **Practice the habit of "C":** Correcting consistently their errors and problems (Eph. 6:1-4). Fathers are not to exasperate; but balance the *nurture* (encouragement) and *admonition* (correction) of the Lord. This requires time, and may even require nights of putting the TV to bed early, and spending the time with the children instead. Or your work from the office or ministry, or your hobby or whatever that is not as important as their eternal soul.

Resist the Eli "do nothing" syndrome.

Instead, prayerfully dive into parenting those God has given you to raise for Him.



## APPENDIX For Further Study:

### How to Get Started with Spirit-Filled *Praying for Spiritual Reality in Their Lives*

1. We must pray for Spiritual Reality in the lives of those we love:

**Spiritual Reality starts when we see them genuinely SAVED.** Acts 26:18 (NKJV) to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.' (NKJV)

**Spiritual Reality continues when we see them loving God's Word.** Job 23:12 (NKJV) I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary [food.]

**Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them living in Victory.** John 8:32, 36 (NKJV) "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

**Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them thinking of Heaven.** Colossians 3:1-2 (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

**Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them Finding Sin Repulsive.** Psalm 38:18 (NKJV) For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.

**Spiritual Reality also involves seeing them stay tender towards God.** Psalm 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart -- These, O God, You will not despise. (NKJV)

### WE MUST PRAY they will live for heaven (FOR THEIR life to be a MINISTRY):

**By choosing a life of contentment.** To be content is to accept where God has placed us in life. Philippians 4:11-13. How did Paul choose to respond to his numerous troubling circumstances? In verse 13, to what did Paul attribute his ongoing victory over negative circumstances? How can you pass this strength of faith on to your children? Read Hebrews 13:5. What does God say should be our view of material possessions and money? How can you best instill these values in your children?

Pray TO SEE THEM CHOOSING TO NOT LOVE MONEY.

- o 1 Timothy 6:9-12 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have

strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (NKJV)

- o Philippians 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. (KJV)

**By choosing a life of consecration:** Read Matthew 16:24-26. What is the essence of living "a life of consecration"? Read Romans 12:1-2. Have you given your body, mind, and everything else to the Lord? Memorize this passage as a family; pray that God will make it a reality in your lives.

Pray TO SEE THEM CHOOSING A LIFE OF PERSONALLY KNOWING, SERVING, LOVING AND OBEYING THE LORD.

- o 1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)
- o 1 Chronicles 29:19 "And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision." (NKJV)
- o 3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. (KJV)

**By choosing a life of commitment:** Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What great debt do we owe to our God? How should that affect the way we live? Read Psalm 127:3. Who really owns our children? How should that affect the way we train and pray for the children He has entrusted to our care? Read 2 Peter 3:10-14 and 17-18. List five areas of commitment that Peter was charging early believers to grasp:

**By giving their lives back to God.** Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. Is there anything in our lives, which is truly ours? The world thinks there are two parts: "God's" and "not God's." What portion of your life is God's? How is your life's testimony in this area being reflected in your children? Read, memorize, and meditate upon 1 Chronicles 28:9. This is one of the truly great prayers of a father for his son. As you seek to be living for heaven—by contentment, consecration, commitment, and giving your life back to God—through Word-filled praying, your children can "catch" that same joyful walk in Truth!

**WE MUST PRAY FOR THEIR FAMILY LIFE: Pray that they reflect Christ's love in their relationships.**

**By CULTIVATING A LOVE FOR OTHERS.**

- o John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- o 1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, (NKJV);

- o 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also ought to love one another.** (NKJV);
- o 1 John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for **he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?** (NKJV)

### **By trusting GOD when troubles come.**

- o Proverbs 3:5-6 **Trust** in the LORD with all your heart, And **lean not** on your own understanding; In all **your ways acknowledge Him,** And **He shall direct** your paths. (NKJV);
- o Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul **be subject to the governing authorities.** For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and **those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.** (NKJV)

### **By loving god's plan for their lives.**

- o Psalm 139:13-18 For **You formed** my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 **I will praise You,** for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, **The days fashioned for me,** When as yet there were none of them. 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. (NKJV)
- o 1 Timothy 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but **set an example for the believers** in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (NIV) The Message says: Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. **Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity.** ... Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them...Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it.
- o Titus 2:4-5 that they admonish **the young women to** love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.
- o 1 Peter 3:1-7 **Wives,** in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 **Your beauty should not come from outward adornment,** such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. 7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the

weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. **The Message paraphrases this passage as:** The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be ***captivated by your life of holy beauty. What matters is not your outer appearance***—the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but ***your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.*** The holy women of old were beautiful before God that way, and were good, loyal wives to their husbands. Sarah, for instance, taking care of Abraham, would address him as “my dear husband.” You’ll be true daughters of Sarah if you do the same, un-anxious and un-intimidated. The same goes for you husbands: Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them.

### **By WAITING TO MEET GOD’S CHOSEN PARTNER.**

- o Proverbs 31:10-12 Who can ***find a virtuous wife***? For her worth is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband ***safely trusts her***; So he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. (NKJV)
- o Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a ***wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.*** (NIV)
- o Proverbs 19:13-14 A foolish son is the ruin of his father, And the contentions of a wife are a continual dripping. 14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, But ***a prudent wife is from the LORD.***
- o 2 Corinthians 6:14 ***Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:*** for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?