

The Lord Calls Samuel

Lesson Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:1–4:1

Focus Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:8–20

Key Verse: *Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” 1 Samuel 3:9a*

1 SAMUEL 3:8-20 (NRSV UE)

8 The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

11 Then the Lord said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.

12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

13 For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.

14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.”

15 Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

16 But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.”

17 Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.”

1 SAMUEL 3:8-20 (KJV)

8 And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.

17 And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him."

19 As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

KEY TERMS

- **Samuel** – The name *Samuel* most commonly

means *God has heard* or *Name of God* in the Bible. It is derived from the Hebrew name *Shemu'el*, which is a theophoric name combining a reference to the divine.

- **Blasphemy** – The act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God or to something sacred.

- **Shiloh** – Shiloh is a Hebrew name primarily interpreted as place of *peace*, *tranquility*, or *he to whom it belongs*.

Hannah's treasured and memorable prayer is an example of God's response to the distress of his children.

narrative to the return of God's spiritual presence among the people. Samuel's life integrated the numerous gifts and

callings of prophet, priest, judge, and the original maker of kings to the people of Israel. While Samuel is best known as a prophet, these initial chapters also underscore his early multifaceted roles. In 1 Samuel 1:20, his mother Hannah explains the naming of her son was "because

I have asked him of the Lord." Hannah's treasured and memorable prayer is an example of God's response to the distress of his children. Chapters three and four of 1 Samuel provide context for Samuel's multifaceted leadership. Samuel would become the nation's last judge and is considered a true and historically significant prophet. As a prophet, he

INTRODUCTION

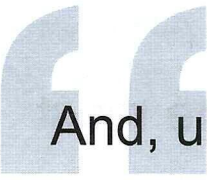
The books of Samuel transition Israel's

conveys God's will and reaffirms God's expectation of the people. He serves at the earliest times of his youth to support the priestly duties, preparing him for the office of priesthood. As a priest, he intercedes for the people in performing sacrifices and cleansing them from their sins. As a judge, he administers justice, leads the nation to restorative status, and promotes a return to obedience to God's will. And, ultimately, Samuel becomes the anointer and establisher of the nation's first kings. Samuel's emergence signals a new era, preparing Israel for the transition to monarchy while emphasizing the necessity of obedience and integrity in those who lead God's people.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

The texts comprised of 1 Samuel chapters 3 and 4 mark a significant transition in Israel's spiritual history, highlighting the emergence of Samuel as a pivotal leader. Raised in the tabernacle under the priest, Eli, Samuel performs priestly duties, bridging the gap between God and the people. In chapter 3, the

narrative centers on Samuel's calling, where God speaks to him directly. This was an unusual event in a time when "the Word of the Lord was rare" (1 Sam. 3:1). This divine encounter affirms Samuel as God's chosen prophet. The description of Samuel's first prophecy is not a literal meaning of "itchy ears" but declares that the words would be shocking and astonish the hearer. Eli would be the first to validate Samuel's gift and calling as



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Eli receives a prophecy of God's judgment over his family. The message relayed to Eli (vs. 11-14) not only establishes a return of God's Spirit among the people but establishes Samuel's true authority as not only prophet but ultimately as a judge. Samuel's willingness to listen and respond sets

him apart from the corrupt priesthood under Eli, emphasizing the need for faithful leadership.

His role as judge becomes evident as he guides Israel through a period of spiritual crisis, particularly after the disastrous loss of the Ark to the Philistines which is later found in chapter 4. The

failure of Eli's sons and the subsequent judgment upon Eli's house contrast sharply with Samuel's rising influence, reinforcing his divine appointment to restore order and faithfulness in Israel. Samuel's wisdom and obedience to God presents a stark contrast to the earlier narratives found in the book of Judges. His life was dedicated to God by his parents who were committed to serve the Lord (1 Samuel 1:21-27).

SANKOFA

Better a poor man who lives with integrity than a rich man who distorts right and wrong.
(Proverbs 28:6)

One of the most important lessons to teach children and to model in leadership is to demonstrate integrity. In a world that values wealth and fame above the care and compassion of others, it is often rare to see someone sacrifice these privileges to do what is right. The stories of fallen leaders come across the media screen far too often. And at times it appears that those who hold positions of authority but

engage in reckless and unscrupulous activities are adamantly entrenched in their position, refusing to admit guilt or wrongdoing. The official or person of authority may attempt to hide behind the positions he or she holds. But, ultimately, God sees everything. It is even more egregious when parental authority is not used to rebuke the bad behavior of their children. Parents are the first models of

leadership that a child has. Therefore, it is crucial for a parent or guardian to not simply speak about right and wrong, but also do it. The consequences not only fall on the children but can often become the burden of the parent. No one is perfect. But the goal of every Christian is to seek perfection through

Jesus Christ. Admonishing the behavior of children as well as adults is critical in establishing a just and fair community that is safe and reflects the values and principles of a loving God. To live in integrity must be a daily practice and goal.



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CASE STUDY

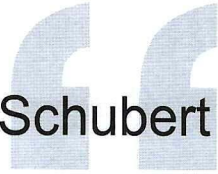
A prominent true story of parental conviction and courage can be found in the case of Nichole Schubert. Schubert is a Washington-state mother who made national headlines in 2022 after sharing a potentially tragic event that involved her son. In 2019, she turned her 17-year-old son into the police after discovering he was planning a mass shooting at his high school. She was led to act after discovering a detailed journal outlining his plans to commit a school shooting. The discovery occurred while Mrs. Schubert was cleaning her home and found his journal, which outlined detailed plans to kill her first, then commit a school shooting at his

Washington state high school. Despite the heartbreak and potential for family estrangement, she reported her son to law enforcement to save lives, stating it was a necessary action to protect her community. Her son was arrested, pleaded guilty, and completed a rehabilitation program. Schubert maintained she loved

her son unconditionally but felt compelled to act on her moral responsibility as a parent.

In a similar case in Spencer, Oklahoma, Alania Vasquez reported her 14-year-old son to police. She told the police officer who came to her apartment that she believed her son would hurt people, possibly at a school. Her son had a growing obsession with guns and violence, and she had discovered him watching videos of school shootings. She was unable to process the thought of her son committing such an act. However, he had been in trouble for making threats at school. A teacher had overheard him telling his classmates how to construct pipe bombs. Vasquez knew something had to be

done. These are two cases where each parent was willing to do what was necessary to protect others and to get help for their children. One can only imagine the difficulty these mothers faced. But it is the responsibility of every parent to do their best to raise a child.



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LIFE APPLICATION

There is no perfect parent or child. Nor is there an evidence-based parenting model where one size fits all. Raising children is challenging, expensive, and can be exhausting. However, this does not validate turning a blind eye to a young person headed in the wrong direction. In this text with the father Eli, he appears to have failed his sons. Although his sons were capable of making choices, Eli still had a responsibility to admonish them for their disobedience and to hold them responsible. As Christians, we are all called to a level of accountability for our children and the young people of our community. Children need this guidance and correction, despite their resistance to it. This is a time to reassess methods that may be enabling children rather than correcting them. Otherwise, a child may follow a destructive path.

Questions

1. Discuss with others the importance of loving parenting techniques that not

only nurtures a child but also incorporate discipline and accountability.

2. Under what circumstances would you report the illegal actions (past, present, or expected future) of your child or other close relatives. Discuss how church officials should handle this type of situation.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS


As Christians, we are all called to a level of accountability for our children and the young people of our community.

Closing Hymn: AMEC Hymnal #364, "My Hope Is Built"

Closing Prayer: Here we are, Lord, standing in the need of prayer. We pray, Lord, for our children, their children, and the children of generations to come. Guide us, Lord, in the way we should go in providing sound and

effective support to our young people. May they feel the love that is needed for security and confidence. May they understand and embrace the teachings that lead to strong virtues of compassion, love, integrity, and self-control. May the fruits of the Spirit rain upon them and each guardian, teacher, mentor, and

community member so that the oversight of children is done in love. May your hand be upon them to provide for them and protect them. And may your Spirit breathe the gift of wisdom, insight, and

courage to steer the children along the right path. We commit them to you and pray your blessings, in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

November 2-8

Monday	Revelation 21:1-4, 19-27 (Bask in God's Eternal Glory)
Tuesday	Ezekiel 10:1-7 (The Glory of the Lord)
Wednesday	Ezekiel 10:15-19; 11:22-25 (God's Glory Leaves the Temple)
Thursday	Galatians 6:1-10 (We Reap What We Sow)
Friday	1 Samuel 6:13-18 (Rejoice in God's Glory)
Saturday	2 Corinthians 5:1-10 (God's Judgment Is Sure)
Sunday	1 Samuel 4:12-22 (When All Is Lost)