

A Real Man Would . . . Teach

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June 29, 2025

1 Samuel 3:10-21 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 until 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!" And 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." ¹⁹ So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been* established as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Elvis Presly recorded the song, "Hardheaded Woman." It was written by Claude Demetrius. This song implies that women have been the source troubles for men since creation. It uses the examples of Eve, Delilah and Jezebel. Eve, Delilah and Jezebel all had their problems, but their sins were their sins. Their sins were not an excuse for their husbands. The problem with Adam, Samson and Ahab was that they followed their wives into sin, instead of leading in the righteousness of God.

All of these men to various degrees failed to be the men God created them to be. They all chose to follow their wives into sinfulness rather than to lead teaching their family the righteousness of God.

Our text today gives us another example of a man who failed to lead his family into righteousness and to teach his children the righteousness and peace of Christ. The result was tragedy. Tragedy for Eli and his sons and for all Israel.

Real men teach their children all the wonderful works which God has done.

Ephesians 6:4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Sometimes it might be tempting to think of teaching as a female task. 89% percent of elementary school teachers are women. In this passage and others, God clearly and poignantly declares that Fathers, not mothers but fathers are responsible to teach the children about God. Fathers are responsible to lead in coming to church, lead in family devotions and prayers, and lead as examples of prayer and the righteousness that comes from Christ. This doesn't mean that women can't do family devotions or can't drive the kids to church. Sometimes being a leader means making sure it's done and that is it. But it does

mean that God is holding you men responsible. "I'm looking at you," He says. You are supposed to lead the way both in words and actions. It also means that you should be participating in this most important task, not just leaving it up to your wives.

We have the following example from scripture of what happens when men don't lead their families in the righteousness of God.

Genesis 6:2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

In this passage the sons of God refer to those who were brought up in faith, believing in God's promise and following his word. These were primarily the descendants of Seth. The daughters of men are those descendants from Cain who were brought up rejecting God and his word.

While the women in this passage are also not making good choices, scripture puts the primary blame on the men. They from the beginning of their marriage chose not to lead in honoring God but to chase sinfulness. Just like in the day of Eli the result is tragedy.

On the other hand, we have the example of Abraham whom God praises as a real man and a good father:

Genesis 18:19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

God says he revealed himself to Abraham for this purpose, so that Abraham would be able to teach his children. Because Abraham would teach his children, they would be the people of God. God would separate them for himself, and they would know him. Abraham's son Isaac is a great example of a man taught about God from early childhood and living in faith to God his whole life. Isaac's faith was so great that he willingly allowed himself to be bound to the altar trusting in God.

When children don't come to Sunday school and show up for Confirmation class without knowing the story of David and Goliath it is evident that some of us are failing to be real men. Some of us are failing to teach our children the wonderful works of God. Distance and jobs sometimes make it difficult to come to church, but that just makes it all the more important to teach our kids at home. Each of us has to judge for himself how he measures up at fulfilling this role.

What can we say except that we are all failures, but we see Jesus. We can't be the men we should be, but we see Jesus who became a real man and was a true father to us. He did not send the children away, but told his disciples, "Let the little children come to me." He brought them to his father. He has brought us to his Father as well.

Eli's failure was not just that he failed to correct his sons, but also that he gave up. Rather than giving up when we know that we have failed we turn to Jesus. We ask for forgiveness and we look to him for strength to do the right thing.

We see it in our text. Even though Eli messed up so badly, nevertheless God blessed the people again through Samuel. The Lord had removed his presence from the people, but through Samuel "The LORD appeared again in Shiloh."

We see Jesus who always had time for the little children, to bless them and teach them. We see Jesus who always has time for us. We are his children through baptism. No matter how many times we fail to be the father we should be, he doesn't give up on us.

Strengthen us Lord that we may be better fathers like you. Forgive us Lord when we fail. Amen.