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Great Lessons from A Poor Example

I like to think of the story of Eli as one of great lessons provided by a poor example. The story goes to show that even those as dedicated to the Lord as Eli, can still mess up and fall short of the glory of God. Elis shortcomings of raising his two sons resulted in death and the decimation of his home, just as our own poor decisions can lead to our own destruction. Even so, we learn that the Lord uses these shortcomings to bring forth the resurrection of better things such as the leadership of Samuel, and hope which resides in all of us Christians.

A tendency I've noticed in myself that I think most people can relate to, is the ability to point out the wrong doings of others before we acknowledge our own. This entitlement and superiority over others is only amplified when many become parents. Kids are their pride and joy. It's easy for them to compare their kids to others as well as their parenting skills to another parents. Eli shows a similar quality of what I'm describing in 1 Samuel 1:12. Eli misinterpreted Hannah to be drunk while she was actually praying about her sorrows of being barren and not having children. While scolding her, he should've been scolding his own two sons who were doing far worse things. Samuel 3:13 states *"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."* This verse goes to show that by nature, it is easy for us to focus and judge what other people are doing instead of using that energy to reflect on our own sins as well as those we love.

I think that Eli assumed his sons would follow in his footsteps and would live out the Godly life he was exemplifying. He let this get in his way of raising his own sons. Being an example is not enough, one must take the time to instill these values into their children instead of just assuming that they will follow in their footsteps. 1 Sam 2:17 states *“Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.”* Eli's Godliness and ministry blinded him into thinking that he along with his sons were an exception, just as many of us also like to believe.

Although Eli made many mistakes in raising his own children, I'd like to believe that God provided him with a second chance when raising Hannah's son Samuel. Eli took the proper initiative to spend time with him. He instilled the values of glorifying and serving the Lord and projected them onto Samuel. While Eli's biological sons Phineas and Hophni grew to be priests yet served Babel instead of the Lord, Samuel grew to be an even Godlier man than Eli. God made amazing remarks about Samuel and even put him on a similar pedestal as Moses when speaking to Jeremiah. I believe that Eli was overall a very respectable and honorable man. His love for the Lord was so great that during the time of his son's death, he died instantly not from the grief of their passing, but from the knowledge that the ark of the covenant was in the hands of the enemy. Eli's love of God was stronger than any other in his life. This is remarkable within itself. Although there were consequences for Eli's sin, we see the good that God allowed to come out of it by raising up a new leader Samuel.

One of the beauties of this story is that it is very applicable to the lives of Christians centuries later. It teaches us that even great men who love and dedicate their lives to the Lord are subject to sin. A lot of Christians may feel that pastors, priests, along with other religious leaders are perfect, unrelatable, and have no faults. The book of Eli shows us otherwise. Even the best of

us fall short of Gods glory. We must learn from Elis mistakes and not let the sins of others lead to our destruction and downfall, especially if preventable. We must also take away the lesson of setting our pride aside and coming to terms with our sins instead of being preoccupied and calling out others.

Overall, I believe that Eli was a great man of God who let his pride get the best of him, just as many Christians do, due to imperfections and a result of sin. . Elis shortcomings of raising his two sons resulted in death and the decimation of his home, just as our own poor decisions can lead to our own destruction. Even so, the Lord can provide great blessings and do great things out of ordinary sinners such as us As you can see, the Lord uses our shortcomings to bring forth the resurrection of new leadership such as Samuel, and hope which resides in all of us Christians.