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BIB 102 NO: Old Testament Literature

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It takes courage and discipline to stand up for what is right. Courage is the absence of fear. It is the characteristic needed to defend the truth even if it means going against loved ones. The Lord equips his people with courage, and he encourages them to discipline themselves. Like most other things in life, a choice is presented for a choice to be made. Whatever one may choose, there will be a consequence.

Eli was a priest at the time when Elkhana and Hannah did not have a child. Eli's sons did not have respect for the Lord's affairs. Eli's home was not in order when it comes to his sons. God's offering was rejected by men because of their sinful heart. Eli spoke to his sons but their heart was so deep in defiling the Lord's affair, they were lost in their own eyes and show no respect toward their father so the Lord decided to kill them. Eli still remained faithful to the work of the Lord. He prophesied over Hannah, he still served in the temple, and he taught Samuel how to serve in the temple. When the prophecy came to Eli about him and his house, he did not grumble or treat Samuel harshly.

Eli was diligent in the work of the Lord, but he failed to restrain his sons from doing the wrong thing. As a parent, he ignored what was happening and allowed his sons to do whatever they wanted. When he tried to discipline them, it was too late. The scripture shows that Eli asked his sons a question based on what he heard,

“So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. 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” (1 Sam. 2:23-25).

It looks like he was bringing order, but the reality was that his sons did not pay him attention because they were uncontrollable and wicked.

Eli could not discipline his children. He should have disciplined his sons before things get out of control. It would seem like Eli was doing a perfect job. He was in a position to execute power and authority and was able to prophesy to Hannah, but yet Eli was disorganized and irresponsible. Eli honored his sons more than the sacrifice of the Lord. 1 Samuel 2:29 says “*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?*” I learned how easily people put everything else before God. It is effortless to prioritize work more than God, to prioritize a man or woman more than God. It is easy to say put God first, but the reality is we put God last; sometimes we even forget to invite him. Eli did not take adequate responsibility to fix the problem and God did not take pleasure in how irresponsible Eli was. Eli was a participant of the unfair, dishonorable acts of his sons because he did not restrain them. This resulted in the Lord placing a heavy hand on Eli and his home.

Discipline must be a stunning cornerstone in someone’s life especially if you are a leader of any position. You may have authority and power, but without discipline and respect, it means nothing. Being a good leader requires discipline. By doing that, you will be able to honor God. Whenever we dishonor God there is always a price to pay.