

## **Three Key Words that Every Father Should Remember**

### **1 Samuel**

#### **Introduction:**

1. A father's love is a very powerful thing. Children tend to view their mother's love as a "given." Mom has to love me. But, they tend to view their father's love as a choice.
  - Kids wonder, "What does he really think of me? Is he proud of me? Does he love me? Does he accept me? Does he like being with me?"
2. Being a father (especially the right kind) is not an easy task. Dads today are inundated with responsibilities, demands, pressures, and obligations. There are only 24 hours in a day, and sometimes for dads, it just doesn't seem to be enough time.
3. But, we need to understand that a dad's impact is very powerful and very indelible. It truly makes a lasting impression on his children.
4. If a dad has poor fathering skills, or is simply altogether absent from his child's life, it can have an extremely negative impact on that child. Through Christ we can overcome our father's poor example or absence, but it certainly is not an easy thing.
5. Fathers, we must positively impact our children for Jesus Christ. Ephesians 6:4
6. We only have our children at home for a short time, and then they are gone. So, how can we accomplish this? How can we impact them for Christ?
7. I want us to look at two men in the book of 1 Samuel (that we have been studying), Eli and Samuel. Both men knew the Lord, and both men were priests for God. But it might surprise you to know that both men's children grew up to be ungodly and wicked.
8. As we study these men, I believe there are three words that are the keys to raising godly children. Every father should keep these three words in the forefront of his mind and heart.

#### **The first key word is instruction.**

1. When Paul said that fathers are to bring up their children "*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,*" the phrase "*bring them up*" means "to train; to instruct." Ephesians 6:4
  - The word "*nurture*" literally means "tutorage; education; training."
2. Children need instruction. They need guidance in all areas of life, including the spiritual realm. They need to see how every area of their lives relates back to the Lord (school, friendships, work, dating, etc.).
  - They need help in establishing priorities, developing convictions, and gaining solid belief systems that are founded on God's Word.
3. Fathers, according to the Bible, that is **our** job. Eli failed to do this as a father. 1 Samuel 2:12, 17, 22

- It is quite clear that these boys had no moral convictions. They did not get in this immoral state overnight. This was obviously the result of a lack of training from Eli.
4. When Eli was old and the boys were grown, Eli tried to instruct them (1 Samuel 2:23-25a). How did these boys respond to dear old dad (1 Samuel 2:25b)? It was too late. The time for instruction was when they were young. Proverbs 22:6
  5. Eli may have thought, "I'm the high priest, I take my boys to the temple, they are around the things of God, and they see me serving God. They will be fine." But this wasn't enough. They needed **personal** instruction and training from dad.
  6. Dads, you cannot count on your kids getting the instruction they need from the youth pastor, the AWANA leader, the pastor, or the school teacher. They need to hear instruction from you. Proverbs 1:8, 4:1, 13:1
  7. They also need to see you living out what you are teaching them. A picture is worth a thousand words.

**The second key word is correction.**

1. Back in Ephesians 6:4, Paul uses the word "*admonition*."
  - This word "*admonition*" means "rebuke; warning."
2. So many times, as dads, we want to leave the correction of our children to mom, or somebody else. We want to be the good guy. But God's Word says, "*Fathers...*"
3. Turn with me to 1 Samuel 3:13. God told Eli that he would judge his house for the iniquity (sin) which he (Eli) knoweth. For years Eli knew that his sons were doing wickedly. Look at the rest of the verse.
  - "...*Because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*"
  - Notice that God indicted Eli (their father) for the lack of correction in their lives.
4. What was the result of Eli's lack of correction? The result was that these boys destroyed their lives and ended up dying a premature death. 1 Samuel 4:11
5. The daily choices and decisions that we make with our children have long-term consequences. We fear that if we correct and discipline our children that they will get angry and resent us. The exact opposite is true.
  - When we withhold correction from disobedient children, we are like Eli, and we end up raising angry and rebellious children. Proverbs 19:18-19
  - But when we correct our children with a right spirit of love, they instinctively know that we love them and care about them. Proverbs 13:24
6. A father may say, "But my child is good, he/she never needs correction." Your child is made of the same stuff that my kids are made of: fallen, sinful flesh! Proverbs 22:15
  - God's design is that parents drive the foolishness out of the heart of their child through godly, loving, but firm correction. Eli's sons never had that foolishness driven out, therefore they were rebels.
7. But do you know what godly, Christ-like correction results in? Let's read Proverbs 29:17.

- Rest and delight - this is God's plan, but it starts with godly instruction, and then continues with loving correction.

**The third key word is attention.**

1. We can kind of understand why Eli's sons turned out corrupt, but 1 Samuel 8:3 is the real shocker. Samuel's sons were also wicked and corrupt.
2. Samuel was one of the godliest men in the Bible. He was a prayer warrior that loved God. What happened to Samuel's sons? I think we find the answer in 7:15-17. It appears that Samuel wasn't home much. His boys didn't get the fatherly attention they needed.
3. There is a lesson to learn here. We cannot assume because we serve God and because we pray for our children that they will automatically turn out right.
  - One time I heard a famous preacher who traveled all over the country say that he told God, "God, I will take care of **your** work; you take care of **my** family." Needless to say, when it came to his children, it wasn't a pretty end.
4. The Bible teaches that children left to themselves bring their parents to shame.
5. In Ephesians 6:4 the phrase "*bring them up*" carries the idea of "rearing to maturity." The word "*nurture*" means "tutorage," and the word "*admonition*" means "attention to."
  - All three words infer the same principles. Kids need time and attention, and lots of it.
6. Dads, it's not enough that you provide a nice home, car, and toys for your children. They need you! When you neglect your child, but then try to correct them or lecture them, you do what Ephesians 6:4 says, and you provoke them to anger. They resent it.
7. But when you take time to talk, listen, laugh, and play with your kids, they are more than willing to listen to you during those teachable moments of instruction and correction.
8. It is very difficult for you to have influence on your children if you don't give them adequate amounts of time and attention.
9. This last point is what makes those first two points really work and be effective.
  - Because you are spending time with your kids, you are able to instruct them during those teachable moments of everyday life.
  - Because you are spending time with them, they truly receive your correction, and it impacts them greatly.