

The Book of SAMUEL

A Contrast in Faithfulness

(1 Samuel 2:12-26)

1 Samuel 2:12-26

¹² Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.

¹³ The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, ¹⁴ and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw."

¹⁶ And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." ¹⁷ Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

1 Samuel 2:12-26

¹⁸ Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.

¹⁹ And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

²⁰ Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." So then they would return to their home. ²¹ Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters.

And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:12-26

²² Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

²³ And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. ²⁵ If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?"

But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.

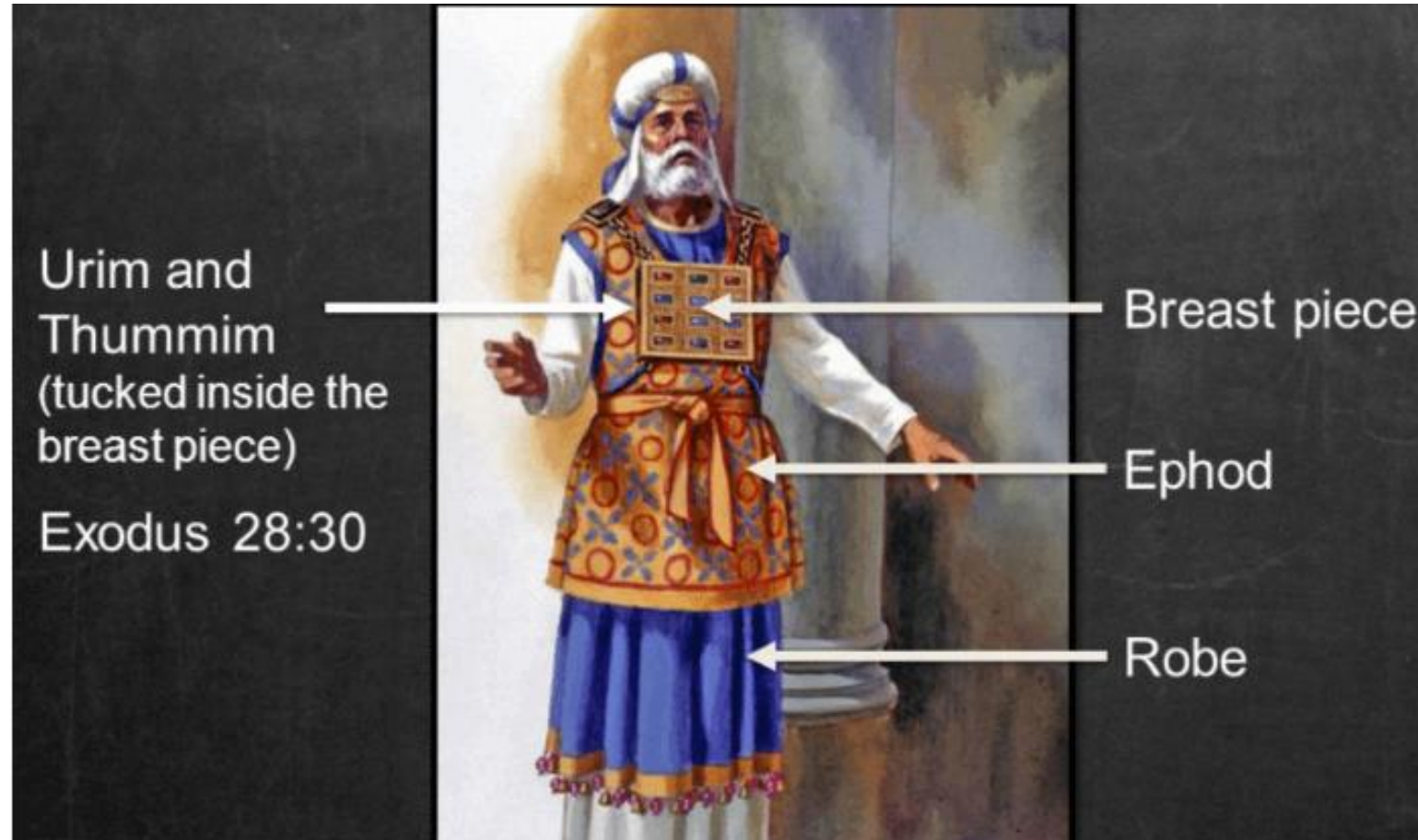
²⁶ Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.

Hannah Serves Both Her Family and the Lord

¹⁸ Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with **a linen ephod**. ¹⁹ And his mother used to make for him **a little robe** and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. (1 Samuel 2:18-19)

Takeaway: The importance of creating a family culture of caring for each other and of serving the Lord

Priestly Attire



I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

A. Let the Child Decide?



I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

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- In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)
- Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him. (Proverbs 26:12)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

A. Let the Child Decide?

- "One viewpoint: As we nourish our children, it is natural that children grow up in the religion of their parents. If we really believe in and love our religion or denomination and are convinced that it is true, we should "direct" the children to our religion or denomination. Passing on our beliefs to them will be our best gift to them.
- It is the duty/responsibility of the parents to introduce children to their [the parents'] own religion — **a hands-off approach is irresponsible**. We should transmit our faith to them as we pass on other good values. They need our wise guidance before they reach the age of maturity. **Do not leave them in a vacuum."**

--Rajan Zed

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

A. Let the Child Decide?

- **Takeaways:**
- It is impossible for children to simply accumulate reliable knowledge about religion without being taught.
- If parents do not believe in “influencing” a child’s religious choice, it is probably a sign that the parents don’t have a strong religious belief themselves.

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

B. Wicked Fools

- The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)
- My son, if sinners entice you,
do not consent. . . . [If they say] “throw in your lot among us;
we will all have one purse” —
¹⁵ my son, do not walk in the way with them;
hold back your foot from their paths,
¹⁶ for their feet run to evil, (Proverbs 1:10-16)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

B. Wicked Fools

- **3** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.
- He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:1-5)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

C. Pervasive Culture

- **32** When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” ² So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” ³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!” ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD.” ⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. (Exodus 32:1-6)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

C. Pervasive Culture

- ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

D. Engaged Parents

- ⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[b] ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)
- The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice. (Proverbs 12:15)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody:

D. Engaged Parents

- Paul to Timothy: ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. (2 Timothy 1:5)
- Hear, my son, your father's instruction,
and forsake not your mother's teaching,
⁹ for they are a graceful garland for your head
and pendants for your neck. (Proverbs 1:8-9)

I. Everybody Follows Somebody

Takeaway: God as Our Guide

- Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them (Matthew 19:13-15).
- **Takeaway:** Self-will and even rationality alone will ultimately fail to lead to paths of righteousness. We need an outside “guide”; thus, we must be humble enough to look to God Himself—e.g., through prayer and studying the Bible—as our guide.

II. Old Testament Examples of God's "Blessings and Curses"

- "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷ **the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today,** ²⁸ **and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God,** but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known. (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)
- For those blessed by the LORD shall inherit the land,
but those cursed by him shall be cut off. (Psalms 37:22)

III. Curses for Eli's Sons

- “Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.” (1 Samuel 2:12)
- “Thus, the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.” (1 Samuel 2:17)

III. Curses for Eli's Sons

- Eli's Reprimand: "Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³ And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. ²⁵ If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death. (1 Samuel 2:22-25)
- Eli's sons "did what was right in their own eyes"
- Eli's failure to remove his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, from their positions was a failing on his part.

What does it mean?

“for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death” (1 Samuel 2:25)

- “Like the Pharaoh of the Exodus, who first hardened his own heart and then continued to resist God’s grace until God himself gave him over to his own obstinate nature, so Hophni and Phinehas are clearly committed to their course of action. In their hearts, there is no turning back. As Wesley said: ‘They had now sinned away their day of grace. They had long hardened their hearts.’”

--Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel: The NIV Application Commentary*

III. Curses for Eli's Sons

A Prophet Shows Up and Delivers God's Curse

- ²⁷ And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? ²⁸ Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.
- ²⁹ Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, **and honor your sons above me** by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ ³⁰ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. (1 Samuel 2:27-30)

III. Curses for Eli's Sons

A Prophet Shows Up and Delivers God's Curse

- ³¹ Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.
- ³² Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³ The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.
- ³⁴ And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. (1 Samuel 2:31-34)

IV. Blessings for Hannah's Family

- ²⁰ Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord.” So, then they would return to their home. ²¹ Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord. (1 Samuel 2:20-21)
- ²⁶ Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man. (1 Samuel 2:26)
- God's words through the unnamed prophet:
³⁵ And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. (1 Samuel 2:35)

Blessings for all those who remain faithful

- So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) . . .
- ⁴² . . . he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” (Acts 10:34-36, 42-43 ESV)



Let Us Pray

