

"FIRST RATE FATHERING" 1 SAMUEL 2:12-26

This Week's Core Competency

Stewardship – I believe everything I am or own belongs to God. 1 Timothy 6:17-19 *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

When I think of what it means to exercise sound stewardship regarding the things God has given to us, I have failed up to this point to connect this week's Core Competency with our God-ordained role as parents. Scripture is replete with words of encouragement and even admonition regarding the sanctity of raising kids. For instance, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Pr 22:6). Another passage that comes to mind is Deut 6:7 - "Impress [the Lord's commandments] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." And perhaps, most poignant for this "Fathers' Day", "Fathers, do not exasperate [irritate or provoke to anger] your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Eph 6:4)

However, upon further reflection, it should be obvious to all of us that our children are the most precious gift that has ever been or will ever be entrusted to us. And the manner in which we seek

to fulfill this responsibility has far reaching affects. Parental neglect (lack of love, a safe and/or disciplined environment, etc) during a child's developmental years can produce significant strains on familial relationships as adolescents (as if raising a teenager isn't hard enough!) that can remain well into said child's adult years. Most kids will carry a good portion of the values that were instilled in them into their adult life and in turn, pass said values down to their children. This is true whether the values are good or bad. Granted, a parent could do "all the right things" and children still choose to rebel against their counsel and admonitions, but the general truth remains.

Ultimately God will hold each child responsible for their own actions, But, at the "end of the day" my hope is that with fullness of integrity, we can say to one another, "I made plenty of mistakes and learned a lot along the way, but I truly believe I did the best job I could in raising my child given the resources and circumstances I had to work with." If that statement is true, then friend, you should be able to rest soundly each night in the sovereign arms of your heavenly Father.

Situation for Discussion

Karen came to her home group leaders last week angry, full of despair and needing their advice. As if her divorce to Steve hasn't been painful enough, she is now dealing with his latest vindictive ploy. When the kids stay with him, he seems to go out of his way to undermine the standards and boundaries they had both previously agreed to in the raising of Sarah (age 11) and Michael (age 14).

con't pg. 2

He's buying inappropriate clothing for Sarah to wear at school and letting her talk on her new cell phone incessantly (that he purchased for her against Karen's wishes) to win her affection. Steve regularly lets Michael watch and even takes him to see movies that are clearly inappropriate for his age. He's allowed to peruse the internet and play violent video games for hours on end on Steve's filter-free computer. Both of their curfews are extended, they are allowed to stay up late/and sleep in even later. Furthermore, they don't have to do any daily up-keep at Steve's house. Each time Karen picks the kids up, she finds them with a disrespectful disposition. It takes her all week to get Sarah and Michael close to a normal, healthy routine. But by then...it's time for them to go back for another extended stay with their father.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

1 SAMUEL 2:12-26

11 Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest.

12 Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. 13 Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. 14 He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. 15 But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw. Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest. ."

16 If the man said to him, "Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would then answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

17 This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's

offering with contempt.

18 But Samuel was ministering before the LORD - a boy wearing a linen ephod. 19 Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. 20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD." Then they would go home. 21 And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24 No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. 25 If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Highlight v. 11.
- * Underline v. 12.
- * Circle each occurrence of "the LORD".
- * Box the word "but", draw a line to the margin and write "also" in v. 15.
- * Place parentheses around v. 17.
- * Box the word "but" indicating contrast in v. 18
- * Highlight v. 18.
- * Underline Eli's question/rebuke in v. 25.
- * Double underline "His sons" and "did not listen" in v. 25
- * Highlight v. 26.
- * Box the word "and," draw a line to the margin and write "meanwhile" in v. 26.
- * In the margin to v. 26 write "Compare with Luke 2:52"

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Reread vv. 12-17, 22 and 25b. Write a vivid character sketch that describes Hophni and Phinehas and their servant?
2. What do you find noteworthy about the man's response in v. 16 to the priest's servant's request in v. 15?
3. Beginning with v. 11, write out each of the three statements relative to Samuel's character and development.
4. Review your response to #3 above. How do the statements show progression in Samuel's character/development?
5. Read the following: 1Sa 1:9, 12-17; 2:12, 22-25, 29; and 3:11-18. How would you describe the high priest, Eli?
6. Read 1Sa 1:3-5, 7b-8 and 21-23. What positive character traits can you identify in Samuel's father Elkanah?
7. In your own words, explain the logic of Eli's rhetorical question to his sons in v.25?
8. Read v. 34 and 4:10-11 in light of v. 25b. How does this shape, affirm or challenge your understanding of the character and/or sovereignty of God?
9. **Discussion:** Today's message can not only be sobering, but for broken families with "absentee" fathers, discouraging. Take a moment to reflect on a few examples you know in which God, in his grace, became all the Father a child needed to grow into a man or woman who today walks righteously before the Lord?

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Our passage today picks up where our Mother's Day passage (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11) left off. 1 Samuel begins by introducing us to a "certain man" named Elkanah (v.1) Elkanah was the husband to Peninnah and the barren, Hannah. Each year, the family would travel to the tabernacle (in Shiloh) to worship the "Lord of hosts" (1:3) and make sacrifices to him. In "bitterness of soul" (v. 10) Hannah prayed a vow to God in hopes that the Lord would provide her with a "male child" (v. 11). A short time later, Hannah conceived and bore a son whom she named, Samuel. After Samuel had been weaned, and true to her promise, Hannah brought Samuel back to Shiloh to remain under the high priest Eli's training and care (vv. 24-28). Chapter 2 begins with a reciting of Hannah's prayer of praise and adoration unto the Almighty Lord who had opened her womb. Verse 11 affirms that Elkanah and his family returned to their home in Ramah; but Samuel remained in Shiloh "[ministering] to the Lord before Eli the priest." What follows 1 Sam 1:1-2:11 is a stark contrast between the offspring of two fathers; and a significant shift in the leadership of Israel. "This unit is dominated by a literary contrast. It artfully alternates between the sinful practices of Eli's wicked sons and the innocent purity and righteousness of Samuel and his family" (Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, NIVAC, 70).

While one can convincingly argue that the main parental emphasis in the life of Samuel is through his mother Hannah, the record does reflect the sound moral and spiritual character of his father, Elkanah. Elkanah was a faithful worshiper of Yahweh (1:3). He provided sustenance for his family during their pilgrimage; including a compassionate, double-portion to Hannah (since she was unable to conceive; vv. 4-5). He sought to console Hannah in her distress (v. 8). He demonstrated his dedication to honoring God by continuing future pilgrimages to Shiloh even when his entire family (Hannah) could not travel (vv. 21-22). And last, but certainly not least, rather than chastising Hannah for possibly making a vow to the Lord in haste, Elkanah demonstrated his respect and esteem

for her by a) honoring her desire to not travel and b) encouraging her to continue the necessary course so the Lord's word (regarding Samuel) would be established (v. 23). By all available accounts, Elkanah modeled the role of being a godly, servant-hearted man; fulfilling the calling set before him by God.

Eli, on the other hand, is another story. Commentators of 1 Samuel tend to minimize shortcomings in Eli's high priestly ministry. However, Eli had issues that were both personal and professional. It was Eli who, at the added expense of neglecting to oversee the proper execution of his son's priestly duties, is found to be sitting outside the tabernacle voicing false accusations to Hannah in the midst of her intense grief (1:12-14). Upon casual inspection, one is left with the observation that Eli's personal (familial) relationships received a deaf ear and blind eye's worth of attention (3:13); which obviously led to his son's unrestrained corruption and vacuous relationship with Yahweh (2:12). By the time Eli got around to confronting his sons for their perverted practices and licentious behavior (v. 22), the die had already been cast in the mind of God. Only their death would satiate his righteous anger regarding their callous ways (vv. 25b, 34; fulfilled - 4:10-11).

As you read and reflect on today's passage (begin with 2:11), make special note of the subtle contrasts the author makes between the offspring (Samuel) of the righteous father (Elkanah) with that of the offspring (Hophni and Phinehas) of a man (Eli) who, at the very least, exhibits questionable behavior while clearly abrogating significant responsibilities related to his sacred/parental role as Israel's high priest. From a practical standpoint, this passage highlights the import that a father's instruction, training and influence has on their children's character development; character development on the one (positive) hand that can foster God honoring actions while on the other (adverse) hand can draw them away from living a life that truly honors God.

The Message of the Passage

Fathers, as the God-ordained spiritual leader of your family, exercise your sacred responsibility to train your children in the way they should go.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage**

- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**

- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
 - o **Belonging**
 - o **Becoming**
 - o *going Beyond*

- **Journal your reflections on this week's passage.**

- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)
 - * Home Group Discussion (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group).

Take some time to discuss character strengths that are vital for a father to be a godly role model. How are these similar an/or different from some of the character strengths that are vital for a mom to be a godly role model to her children?

“First Rate Fathering”
(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 12 **Eli** Eli served as a judge and high priest over Israel in the years preceding Samuel's birth and up to Samuel's childhood development in priestly service unto the LORD. Eli served during a tumultuous time in Israel's history. "In those days, Israel had no king; and everyone did as he saw fit." (Judges 21:25) While there is no record of personal impropriety in his priestly service (albeit somewhat inept in discernment - 1:13), Eli lapsed significantly in regards to his paternal role towards his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. As priests themselves (1:3), Eli possessed the extra responsibility of training and overseeing their priestly service. His failure to do so led to intense corruption (2:12, 15-17, 22). Eli's response to their deeds was too little too late (v. 29; 3:13). God in turn responds by pronouncing calamity upon Eli, his sons and even their descendents (31-36).
- v. 12 **wicked** (Lit. - "sons of Belial" - KJV; "worthless" - NASB, ESV; "corrupt" - NKJV) "The designation "wicked men" in these opening chapters of 1 Samuel refers to cultic abuses, that is, a lack of regard for the proper worship of Yahweh. (Arnold, 70, citing from R.W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC, 9).
- v. 12 **no regard** (Lit. - "did not know (yada) the Lord") Essentially what is being revealed in this passage is that Hophni and Phinehas, even while serving as priests in the tabernacle, had no real/true personal relationship to God. That is, while they were going through the motions of ministry (albeit in a vile and corrupt manner), God had never entered into a covenantal relationship with them. While 3:7 states that "Samuel did not yet know (yada) the Lord, the context refers more to his unique calling in ministry (as then present Israel's great judge and prophet) that had yet to be bestowed upon him; for "the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him" (3:7). Regarding the former, this passage (and God's judgment that follows Hophni and Phinehas - v. 25, 34; fulfilled - 4:10-11) should serve as sobering words for certain televangelists (and in fact anyone) who present themselves as members of the Christian faith while at the same time twisting Scripture to achieve personal wealth and prosperity; and that at the frequent expense of sincere believers who are weak, desperate and/or elderly.
- v. 15 **but** (Lit. - "also"; See RSV, NRSV, NASB, NKJV, etc.) "The occurrence of "also" (gam) at the beginning of v. 15 rather suggests that both practices [as described in vv. 13-14 and then vv. 15-16] were abnormal" (David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT, 155-56).
- v. 15 **the fat** "The fat was supposed to be burned first as "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (Lev 3:5)" (Tsumura, 156). Their disdain for the Lord's ordinances was even recognized by the average Israelite.
- v. 17 **contempt** (to revile, scorn, despise, reject, condemn, etc.) "These young men treated [the offering] not with sober respect or sacred awe, but with contempt, as if they resented both their dependence on offerings for food and the religious rigmarole that went with it" (Tsumura, 157).
- v. 18 **Samuel** In great contrast to Hophni and Phinehas, Samuel is one of the most prominent men in Israel's storied history. His mother's (Hannah) vow to dedicate her firstborn son unto the Lord's service lands him under the tutelage of Eli - likely prior to his fourth birthday. Eli's parental lapses along with his son's wicked and corrupt ways paves the way for God to raise Samuel up to be a "faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind." (vv. 35-36)
- v. 18 **linen ephod** "The ephod was a sacral garment, either a simple linen uniform worn by all priests in service to the Lord (1Sa 2:28) or the more elaborate apparel of the high priest (Ex 28:6)" (*Archaeological Study Bible*, from Cultural and Historical Notes: The Ephod, 399).
- v. 22 "It seems that some time has passed since the last episode. Eli is now already very old" (Tsumura, 161).
- v. 25 **mediate/intercede** "The term mediate and intercede here primarily refer to the ordinary relationships among human beings in a legal context. If a man sins against a man, it is God, or the judges who represent him, who will mediate for him. But, if a man sins against the Lord, there is nobody who will intercede for him" (Tsumura, 161). Thanks be to the grace of God for answering Eli's rhetorical question and Job's cry ("If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both" - Job 9:33) in the person and work of Jesus. "For there is on God and on mediator between God and people, the human Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- v. 25 **the Lord's will** "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 own course of action. In their hearts, there is no turning back" (Arnold, 72). The Lord is determined to honor their rebellious will be bringing forth swift justice against their sin.

Connect the **FAMILY**.

Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

Read I Samuel 2:12-34. Although Hophni and Phinehas did some really bad things, Eli was judged just as harshly because he didn't do anything to stop them. He allowed his goal of making his son's happy to become more important than doing what God wanted him to do. You can make God your first priority by obeying him.



Pray it!

Pray God's will for your child by praying scriptures. Insert your child's name in the blanks as you pray.

Father, I pray _____ will be rich in good deeds and be generous and willing to share. I pray he will lay up treasure for himself as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that he may take hold of the life that is truly life. 1Ti 6:18-19

Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

Stewardship – I believe me and all my stuff belongs to God.
Memory verse – "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." 1Ti 6:18, 19"

Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- *What two things were Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, doing that were so bad?
- *What did Eli do that was bad?
- *What kind of priest did God promise to raise up?
- *How does a person know "what is in God's heart and mind"? v. 35

Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Parents, write a note to the kids explaining they are really God's children. He has given you the wonderful job of taking care of them. Since you want to be a good steward of everything that belongs to God, you promise to teach them how to honor God in everything they do.



Challenge

Kids preschool through sixth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.

Family completes **Experience It** _____ Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** _____

Family participates in **Live It** _____ Child memorizes **Memory Verse** _____

Kids can earn extra tokens on Sunday morning by:

Bringing a friend to **The Kid Connection** _____ Completing **KIDZ Bulletin** _____

Child's name _____ Parent's signature _____

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than thirty-five years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty years and have one son, Zach.

Keith Smith (B.A. in Speech Communication, Texas Tech University and M.A. in Religious Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the Family and Children's Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. Keith is a featured communicator for Song of Solomon for Students and speaks at children/student camps across the country. He has developed a number of relational parenting seminars designed to motivate parents to empower their parenting by emotionally connecting with their kids. Keith lives with his wife, Denise, and their two children, Jordan and Alex.

Kevin Glenn (M.A.B.S., M.A.C.E. Dallas Theological Seminary) Guest author.



8001 Anderson Blvd.
Ft. Worth, TX 76120
1-866-PANTEGO
Fax 817-275-6403
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.