

Lesson 8: The Dysfunctional Family

1. Take a close look at your family. What are some things that can easily wreak havoc on your family during the next year if allowed to take root? What proactive steps can you take that will keep your family strong?
2. **1 Samuel 3.19** . . . What was the source of Samuel's success in the midst of such a dysfunctional setting?
3. What impact do you think the prayers of his godly mother (Hannah) had on Samuel's life as he grew up in such an environment?
4. In many ways, *we* raise *our* children surrounded by a dysfunctional world. How can we prepare them for life in the face of so many obstacles that threaten to destroy them?

THE FATHER KNOWS BEST

5. How was it possible that Hophni and Phinehas grew up in the home of the high priest, yet *“did not know the Lord”* (2.12)? What lesson is there for us?

6. Everyone knew what Eli’s sons were doing --- and Eli knew (2.22). What did he do about it in 2.23-24? However, they refused to listen to their father. What did God want to do (3.25b)?

7. The telling statement of 2.29 - *“You honor your sons above me”* - should speak to each of us. We must never allow parental devotion to our children overtake our foremost duty to the Lord. Yet, it’s easy to do. Think of ways this can happen.

8. Like Eli, we can have blind spots about our children. What is our response when God brings the warnings of others to our door? Is it always the school’s fault, the teacher’s fault, the policeman’s fault or the elders’ fault, etc.? Or, are we wise enough to listen? It’s always easier to blame someone else than it is to take responsibility and action. Discuss.

9. How much of a problem is *passive parenting* in today’s culture?