

## I. THE ISSUE OF BEING PERMISSIVE WHEN IT COMES TO TRAINING CHILDREN

notice...

### A. THE THINGS THAT CHARACTERIZED ELI'S SONS

1. Eli's sons were unsaved, self-willed and selfish (I Sam. 2:12-16).

Their lack of spirituality was characterized by the way they made demands concerning what the people brought as offerings to the Lord. Notice these same sinful attributes oftentimes characterize unsaved children. They selfishly want their own way with little or no consideration for others or what God's will is for their lives.

2. Eli's sons became a stumbling block for others to worship the Lord (I Sam. 2:17).

This is what people can become when they do things that would turn others away from coming to the house of God. It might involve a carnal believer whom others have to avoid because he/she is over-friendly with the opposite sex or it might be someone whom others have to avoid because he/she is always pressuring others to buy something. It might also involve a person whom others have to avoid because he or she is nosey or gossipy about others. This could involve any number of things such as an undisciplined child who is allowed to bully others who would come to church.

3. Eli's sons were immoral and rebellious toward their father (I Sam. 2:22-25)

Their immorality was evident in their acts of fornication with the women who came to the tabernacle of the congregation and their rebellion was evident in their paying no heed to their father's rebuke and his reputation.

### B. THE THING THAT CONDEMNED ELI'S SONS AND CUT OFF ELI FROM THE PRIESTHOOD (I Sam. 2:27-36; 3:11-14).

1. Eli's sons were condemned because of their unsaved condition and their condition was evidenced in their character and conduct. Note conduct always reflects character. Note I Pet. 4:1-4.
2. Eli's priesthood would be cut off because he honored his sons before the Lord by allowing them to do sinfully (I Sam. 2:27-34; 3:11-14).

This is the reason why some children will never amount to anything spiritually and will in turn have no spiritual legacy. They have been allowed to do sinfully with too little or no parental restraints. Some parents have followed a fallacious practice in allowing their children to make wrong choices without correcting them. Some say, "I'm not going to force my children to go to church. I'm going to let them make up their own minds." Other parents have given in to the threats of their children to leave home if they didn't get their own way. It's sad that many parents will force their children to do things which are necessary, as attending school, but they will allow them to make their own choices concerning spiritual matters.

### **C. THE THINGS THAT CAME UPON ELI AND HIS SONS.**

1. It was prophesied by a man of God that Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, would both die in one day and this prophecy was fulfilled (I Sam. 2:34; 4:11).
2. It was prophesied by a man of God and told to Samuel that Eli and his descendants would be cut off from the priesthood and this prophecy was fulfilled (I Sam. 2:22-34; 3:14; 4:11-18; I Kings 2:26,27).

### **D. THE THINGS THAT PARENTS SHOULD LEARN FROM THIS SAD STORY.**

1. Parents should learn that children by nature are sinful and need to be disciplined at various times for their misbehavior. Note Prov. 13:24. Note also a statement released some years ago by the Minnesota Crime Commission:

"Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toy, his uncle's watch. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness, which would be murderous if he were not so helpless. He is dirty. He has no morals, no knowledge, no skills. This means that all children - not just certain children - are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in the self-centered world of his infancy, given free reign to his impulsive actions to satisfy his wants, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist."

2. Parents should learn that it is dishonoring to God to allow their children to do wrong without being disciplined and restrained.
3. Parents should learn that God holds them accountable for the sinful conduct of their children.
4. Parents should learn that the spiritual welfare of their children is of primary importance. Seeing them saved and serving the Lord is vastly more important than seeing them educated and settled in a profitable career.