

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

June 18, 2006

Eli's Family: Lack of Discipline

Frank Himmel

The Bible depicts Eli as a godly man. He judged Israel forty years (**1 Sam. 4:18**), the next to last ruler of that era. Eli was a priest as well as a judge, serving in the tabernacle at Shiloh (**1 Sam. 1:9**). His last years were spent as a mentor to young Samuel, who grew to be one of the all-time great characters of Bible history. Eli's death reflected his character, too: news that the ark of the covenant had been captured by the Philistines made him fall off his seat, and he broke his neck and died (**1 Sam. 4:18**).

Eli's sons were another story. They *"were worthless men; they did not know the Lord"* (**2 Sam. 2:12**). They acted as though the priesthood existed for their benefit. Instead of limiting themselves to the prescribed priestly portion of a sacrifice, the breast and right thigh (**Lev. 7:28-34**), they took whatever their fork would hold. And they had no qualms about taking the Lord's portion, the fat (**Lev. 3:3-5**). They used the priesthood to make themselves fat!

Hophni and Phinehas were as brazen as any priests in history. They threatened anyone who challenged them. They even went so far as to commit fornication with the women who served at the tabernacle (**1 Sam. 2:22**).

Old Eli rebuked his rebellious sons (**1 Sam. 2:22-25**). He warned them that they were not only sinning themselves, they were leading others to sin, too. But his rebuke fell on deaf ears.

God revealed to Samuel that the day would come when He would cut off Eli's house from priestly service. He explained, *"I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves, and he did not rebuke them"* (**1 Sam. 3:13**).

How could God say Eli did not rebuke his sons when the text records his rebuke? The answer is obvious: Eli did not do enough. The word rendered *rebuke* literally means to be dim. We might say that Eli did not sufficiently take "a dim view" of what his sons were doing. Yes, he reprimanded them, but when they did not repent he left them in office (Most translations use the term *restrain*). Actually, what Hophni and Phinehas did deserved death. God accused Eli of honoring them above Him (**2:29**). That verse suggests Eli's hesitancy may have been because he was in some way benefiting from his sons' actions.

Personal devotion to God and a good example are musts if we are to bring up our children in the way of the Lord. But more is needed. Persistent misbehavior calls for corrective discipline. Hopefully, a rebuke or mild punishment will suffice. When it does not, God clearly expects us to do whatever is necessary. May He bless us with wisdom and courage.

A Father's Example

Edgar Guest

There are little eyes upon you that are watching night and day;
There are little ears that listen to every word you say.

There are little hands all eager to do the things you do;
And a little boy who's dreaming of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellow's idol, you're the wisest of the wise;
In his little mind, about you no suspicions ever rise.

He believes in you devoutly, holds all that you say and do.
He will say and do it your way when he's grown up just like you.

You are setting an example every day in all you do
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up to be like you.

Give Me the Truth

Edgar Guest

If you are my friend, if you are concerned about my soul, give me the truth. Do not flatter me. Do not praise my virtues while remaining silent about my vices. Do not fear that the truth will offend me. Do not treasure our friendship, our friendly relations, above my salvation. Do not think by ignoring my sins you can help me. Do not think that being blind to my sins will prove yourself charitable. However I may react to it, whatever may be my attitude toward you after you have done it, give me the truth.

The truth, and only the truth, can make me free from the shackles of sin (**John 8:32**), strengthen me in the pathway of righteousness, and lead me to the joys of heaven.

If I am wavering, weak, lukewarm, indifferent, neglectful; if I have been overtaken in a trespass; if I have been drawn into the pleasures of the world; if I have left my first love; if I have been led astray by error; or if I have done none of these, but simply need to grow in knowledge and be edified, *give me the truth!*

“Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.” – Psalm 90:11

Family News

Patsy Bronson, Jim Stubblefield's mother, is scheduled to receive a pacemaker tomorrow at St. Thomas hospital.

Mary Burnett remains at home and continues to be all right. When she was in the hospital they increased her blood pressure medication and her blood pressure has been better since.

Elmo Ferrell has mostly bad days: however, yesterday was a good day.

Nathan Fultz, who used to attend here, has received good results from his MRI. It did not show any growth of the tumor. Next MRI is in 9 months.

Rhonda Hull had an ultrasound and a needle biopsy this past week on nickel-sized lump. Good news: the biopsy indicated that the tumor was not malignant. However, to be safe, they will remove the tumor (out-patient surgery at Skyline) on Tuesday morning.

Sandra Hunt will see her regular doctor sometime this week.

John Jenkins, Robert's father, has lung cancer. There has not been any change (he is very weak and not doing well).

Jennifer Lindzy, Fran Pickens' 33-year-old granddaughter, has cancer. Allen Malone returns home from Vietnam this week. There is a new report in the back of the auditorium.

Laura Reed has had a virus and been sick the past couple of weeks. This weekend she is finally doing some better.

Robert Wray has cataracts. He has two doctors' appointments this week: regular doctor on Tuesday and eye surgeon on Thursday.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: Alex Bansemer; Justin Edwards (back late today); Robert Jenkins (here today, gone tomorrow); Allen Malone (Vietnam now, home late this week).

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"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).