

1 Samuel 2 — Two paths: self-centered corruption versus life in the presence of the Lord (Samuel).

1. Setting and theme

- Chapter includes both worship and serious sin (rebellion, theft, sexual immorality, abuse).
- Backdrop: Hannah's answered prayer and dedication of Samuel (from chapter 1).
- Framing contrast: **path of self** (lust, greed, consumption) vs. **path of Samuel** (service and presence with God).
- Conflict is not against people, but against ungodly principles/worldly systems.

2. Hannah's prayer/song (vv. 1–11)

- **Personal reversal and deliverance**
 - Rejoicing: "horn lifted high" (God restores strength and dignity).
 - Language of deliverance echoes God's past salvation of Israel (not petty vengeance).
- **God's character and moral governance**
 - No one holy like the Lord; God is the Rock.
 - Warning against pride/arrogance: God knows and weighs deeds.
 - God reverses human strength: warriors broken; the weak strengthened; hungry filled; barren made fruitful.
 - God is sovereign over life/death, poverty/wealth, humbling/exalting.
 - Foundations of the world belong to God: life operates by God's moral order (reaping and sowing principle).
- **Judgment and hope**
 - God guards faithful servants; the wicked are silenced.
 - Not by human strength; God judges opponents.

- Prophetic note: mention of "king" and "anointed/Messiah" points forward beyond Hannah's story.

○ Transition

- Samuel continues to minister before the Lord under Eli.

3. Corruption of Eli's sons (vv. 12–17; 22)

- **Root issue:** they do not know/respect the Lord though acting as His representatives.
- **Abuse of worshipers through greed**
 - Demanding more than their allotted share of sacrifices.
 - Taking choice portions (fat belonging to the Lord); immediate gratification; taking by force; exploiting those they should serve.
- **Sexual exploitation/abuse**
 - Public scandal: sleeping with women serving at the tent of meeting entrance.
 - Likely exploitation of young women; misuse of spiritual authority and office.
 - Application: illegitimate sexual pursuit deadens spiritual sensitivity and is a serious sign of rebellion.

4. Contrast: Samuel's faithful growth (vv. 18–21; 26)

- Samuel serves sincerely (priestly garment), showing reverence and commitment.
- Parenting emphasis: Hannah's yearly robe as a picture of consistent spiritual formation ("stitch after stitch").
- Key contrast stated: Samuel grows in favor, while Eli's household declines.

5. Eli's failure to restrain and the cost of passive leadership

- Eli's discipline is weak ("anemic"): asks "why," but takes little action.
- Summary indictment (3:13): **"he did not restrain them."**

- Principle: silence/inaction in the face of known evil makes one complicit; love requires truthful intervention.
- Leadership responsibility: remove unfit leaders from office to protect those harmed.
- Parenting application: dangers of “guilty parenting”

Guilty Parenting:

Saying “yes” when you should say “no”

Over giving money, gifts and freedom – thinking that will make up for past mistakes

When you operate from guilt and say, “I was a bad parent and I need to make up for that somehow.”

Guilt says, “I was a bad parent.”

Responsibility says, “I made some mistakes, but I can do better today.”

Healthy parenting focuses on present actions, not past shame.

So how do you make amends? Not giving them everything they want.

Make amends through consistent behavior, not over compensation.

Realize that trust is built through consistency over time, not gifts.

Be consistent and routine.

- Discipline teaching

Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death (Prov. 19:18).

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die (Prov. 23:13).

A spanking and a warning produce wisdom, but an undisciplined child disgraces his mother (Prov. 29:15, GW).

- Discipline is not abuse; avoid provoking children (Eph. 6:4).
- Boundaries protect; discipline aims at forming self-discipline.
- Guidance: discipline is for defiance, hateful/selfish acts, harming/bullying, tantrums/belligerence, threats.
- “Three D’s”: dishonesty, disrespect, disobedience.

6. Prophetic confrontation and coming judgment (vv. 27–35a)

- Unnamed prophet confronts Eli directly.
- Eli’s family used God’s blessings/resources for selfish gain (lust, greed, entitlement).
- Eli loses moral authority: he benefits from the same corruption and honors sons above God.
- Warning against child-centered parenting that displaces devotion to God.
- Principle emphasized (v. 30): honoring God brings honor; despising God brings disgrace.
- God will raise up a faithful priest (fulfilled later in 1 Samuel).

7. Conclusion and practical takeaways

- **Live in contrast** to broken worldly principles; opposition is to ungodly systems, not people.
- **Reject self-centered living**; challenge cultural messages of “your way/your truth” with God’s truth.
- **Practice spiritual steadiness**: prayer, Scripture, stillness, reflection on eternal things; depend on God for strength and wisdom.