

Helping the Next Generation Hear God

Story Setup: What Happens Before 1 Samuel 3:1–10

Hannah's Prayer & God's Answer (1 Samuel 1)

- Hannah desperately wanted a child but could not have one.
- She poured out her heart to God in prayer at the tabernacle.
- She promised that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord.
- God answered her prayer, and she named her son Samuel ("heard by God").

Hannah's Faithful Dedication

- When Samuel was still very young, Hannah brought him to the house of the Lord.
- She kept her promise to God, trusting God with her child.
- This shows that Samuel's story starts with a parent's faith, not Samuel's faith.

Samuel Grows Up in God's House

- Samuel lived and served at the tabernacle with the priest Eli.
- He learned to help with simple tasks and grew familiar with worship and God's presence.
- The Bible says Samuel was growing "in the presence of the Lord."

The Spiritual Climate of the Time

- The people of Israel were in a spiritually dark time.
- God's word was rare.
- Eli's sons were priests, but they were corrupt and dishonored God.
- This means Samuel was growing up in a world where faithful examples were limited.

Eli's Role (Imperfect Mentor)

- Eli was the priest and Samuel's caretaker.
- Eli wasn't a perfect leader or parent, but he still played a key role in Samuel's spiritual growth.
- Even flawed adults can be used by God to guide children.

“Samuel’s story begins with a praying parent, continues with faithful presence in God’s house, and sets the stage for a moment when God speaks to a child who is still learning how to listen.”

1 Samuel 3:1-10 NLT

Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly the Lord called out, “Samuel!” “Yes?” Samuel replied. “What is it?” He got up and ran to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you,” Eli replied. “Go back to bed.” So he did. Then the Lord called out again, “Samuel!” Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” “I didn’t call you, my son,” Eli said. “Go back to bed.” Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. “Here I am. Did you call me?” Then Eli

realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. So he said to Samuel, “Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’ ” So Samuel went back to bed. And the Lord came and called as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel replied, “Speak, your servant is listening.”

“God often grows the faith of children through faithful adults who intentionally train and guide them.”

1. Learning New Voices.

2. Samuel Learns to Hear God.

3. Why Training Children Matters

Truth 1: Children Can _____ From God

“Children are not too young to know God.”

**Truth 2: Children Need _____ to Help Them
Recognize God’s Voice**

**“Kids often experience God through
the guidance of adults.”**

**Truth 3: When Adults Train Children,
God Shapes the _____.**

**“What we invest in children today shapes who they
become tomorrow.”**

Church-Family Challenge:

What would happen if every adult in our church saw themselves as someone who could help a child learn to hear God?

What would happen if every child knew there were people here who cared about their faith?

Life Group Discussion

1. Get to Know You

Who was an adult (parent, teacher, coach, mentor, or church leader) who influenced you spiritually when you were younger?

What is one specific thing they did that made a lasting impact on your faith?

2. Digging Deeper

Samuel was serving in the house of the Lord, yet he did not yet recognize God's voice (1 Samuel 3:7).

Why do you think it's possible to grow up around faith without personally knowing God yet?

What role did Hannah and Eli each play in Samuel's spiritual formation?
What does this show us about the shared responsibility of parents and the faith community?

Eli was not a perfect leader, yet God still used him to help Samuel hear God. How does this challenge the idea that we need to be "spiritually impressive" to influence others?

3. Living It Out

God used ordinary, faithful adults to shape Samuel's faith before Samuel ever knew how to listen for God himself.

What is one practical way you can help invest in the faith of a child or younger believer this week (prayer, encouragement, presence, modeling, or intentional conversation)? What would that step look like practically this week?