

How To Respond When Someone You Love Makes Poor Choices

1 Samuel 8 & 12

Have you ever been saddened when someone you love makes poor choices?

How do you help someone who is making poor choices?

What Does The Bible Say?

Samuel, the prophet.

- **A prophet to Israel. (1 Samuel 3:20)**
- **He led Israelites away from idolatry. (1 Samuel 7:4)**
- **A judge over Israel. (1 Samuel 7:15-17)**

However, Samuel son's were not like him.

As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel. 2 Joel and Abijah, his oldest sons, held court in Beersheba. 3 But they were not like their father, for they were

greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.

4 Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. 5 “Look,” they told him, “you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.” (1 Samuel 8:1–5 NLT)

Israel got their king. The first king of Israel was Saul, who also was a disappointment during Samuel’s lifetime.

How Can You Obey?

6 Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. 7 “Do everything they say to you,” the Lord replied, “for they are rejecting me, not you. They don’t want me to be their king any longer. 8 Ever since I brought them from Egypt they have continually abandoned me and followed other gods. And now they are giving you the same treatment. (1 Samuel 8:6–8 NLT)

Don’t take their poor choices personally.

9 Do as they ask, but solemnly warn them about the way a king will reign over them.” (1 Samuel 8:9 NLT)

Have an honest conversation.

19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel’s warning. “Even so, we still want a king,” they said. 20 “We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle.” (1 Samuel 8:19 NLT)

Even if you do everything right, your loved one may still continue down a bad path.

You cannot change the people you care about no matter how much you want to help them.

Then Samuel addressed all Israel: “I have done as you asked and given you a king. 2 Your king is now your leader. I stand here before you—an old, gray-haired man—and my sons serve you. I have served as your leader from the time I was a boy to this very day. 3 Now testify against me in the presence of the Lord and

before his anointed one. Whose ox or donkey have I stolen? Have I ever cheated any of you? Have I ever oppressed you? Have I ever taken a bribe and perverted justice? Tell me and I will make right whatever I have done wrong.” 4 “No,” they replied, “you have never cheated or oppressed us, and you have never taken even a single bribe.” 5 “The Lord and his anointed one are my witnesses today,” Samuel declared, “that my hands are clean.” (1 Samuel 12:1–5 NLT)

Live your life as an example of what a godly life looks like.

16 “Now stand here and see the great thing the Lord is about to do. 17 You know that it does not rain at this time of the year during the wheat harvest. I will ask the Lord to send thunder and rain today. Then you will realize how wicked you have been in asking the Lord for a king!” (1 Samuel 12:16–17 NLT)

Pray for signs in their life that will help them see their poor decisions.

23 “As for me, I will certainly not sin against the Lord by ending my prayers for you. And I will continue to teach you what is good and right. 24 But be sure to fear the Lord and faithfully serve him. Think of all the wonderful things he has done for you. (1 Samuel 12:23–24 NLT)

Never stop praying, instructing by word and deed, and pointing your loved ones to God.

Recap:

Don't take their poor choices personally.

Have an honest conversation.

Remember, you cannot change the people you care about no matter how much you want to help them.

Live your life as an example of what a godly life looks like.

Pray for signs in their life that will help them see their poor decisions.

Never stop praying, instructing by word and deed, and pointing your loved ones to God.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Notes:

Today's Deep Dive Into The Bible comes from Heiser, M. S. (2014). I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible. (J. D. Barry & R. Van Noord, Eds.) (p. 55). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Bible Study Magazine.

Explore:

The genealogy of 1 Chronicles shows that Samuel was a Levite from the descendants of Kohath (1 Chr 6:16–28). As a child, he served at the tabernacle with the priest Eli. He is often described as a prophet or seer (1 Chr 9:22; 2 Chr 35:18) and is associated with Moses (Psa 99:6; Jer 15:1). He was also a judge who went on an annual circuit to judge Israel (1 Sam 7:15–17). The New Testament writers associate Samuel with the prophets (Acts 3:24; Heb 11:32) and describe him as both a prophet and judge (Acts 13:20).

Birth

Samuel is one of the few biblical characters to have a detailed birth narrative. First Samuel records that while she was at a yearly festival in Shiloh, Hannah, who was barren, vowed to give any son she had to Yahweh as a Nazirite (1 Sam 1:11). Yahweh answered Hannah's prayer, and she gave birth to Samuel. After

she had weaned him, she fulfilled her vow by bringing Samuel to the priest Eli at the tabernacle in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:22–25).

Childhood

Samuel was raised by the priest Eli. First Samuel 2:18 indicates that as a child, Samuel ministered before Yahweh and wore an ephod. The text further notes that the young Samuel was a faithful servant who had God's favor (1 Sam 2:26; 3:1, 19).

The narrative in 1 Sam 3:4–14 records an instance in which Yahweh spoke to Samuel while he was sleeping, and the young boy mistook His voice for Eli's. This happened three times until Eli realized that it was Yahweh speaking. That night, God spoke to Samuel and told him that He was punishing the house of Eli because of Eli's sons (1 Sam 3:10–14). Samuel then gained the reputation throughout Israel as a prophet of Yahweh (1 Sam 3:20).

Ministry

There is a gap of 20 years in the record of Samuel's life following the death of Eli (1 Sam 7:2). When he next appears, he had become a leader in Israel. First Samuel 7 describes how Samuel led the Israelites away from idolatry (1 Sam 7:4), judged Israel (1 Sam 7:6), and interceded on behalf of the nation in a priestly fashion (1 Sam 7:8–10). He also led Israel to a national repentance and victory over the Philistines (1 Sam 7:5–14). After this, he became judge over Israel (1 Sam 7:15–17). Several mentions of Samuel in the biblical text offer a positive portrayal of him as a leader. Second Chronicles 35:18 indicates that Samuel led the people in keeping the Passover, indicating that he led Israel faithfully in religious ordinances. Both Psalm 99:6 and Jer 15:1 compare Samuel to Moses and indicate his prophetic status, as do three New Testament references to Samuel (Acts 3:24; 13:20; Heb 11:32). First Samuel 3:20 describes his sphere of influence, stating, "all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet from the Lord."

Establishment of Monarchy

As Samuel aged, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. His sons were corrupt, however, prompting the leaders of Israel to ask Samuel to appoint a king (1 Sam 8:1–9). Samuel reluctantly agreed and anointed Saul as Israel's first king. Samuel continued to be active during Saul's reign, acting as a priest and prophet (1 Sam 13:8–15; 15:1–3). In 1 Samuel 11:14–12:25, he led Israel in a covenant renewal ceremony at Gilgal, where he gave what is known as his farewell address (1 Sam 11:14–12:25; Vannoy, *Covenant Renewal*, 160–191). In this address Samuel expressed his feelings about the monarchy and cleared himself of any wrongdoing. He also encouraged Israel to pray to Yahweh and serve Him faithfully. Additionally he expressed that he would continue to pray and instruct the nation in the right way (1 Sam 12:23).

After Saul disobeyed God's instruction to destroy the Amalekites, God rejected Saul and instructed Samuel to anoint David instead (1 Sam 15:26–16:13). Samuel obeyed and then returned to his hometown of Ramah. After Saul began to threaten David's life, David fled and lived in proximity to Samuel at Naioth in Ramah (1 Sam 19:22). When Saul attempted to find David there, Saul and his servants prophesied and were unable to capture him (1 Sam 19:18–24).

Death

Following his death, Samuel was buried at Ramah, and all Israel gathered and mourned his death (1 Sam 25:1). However, there is one additional narrative concerning Samuel after his death: 1 Samuel 28:8–14, in which a necromancer conjures the spirit of Samuel for Saul. In this episode, Samuel foretells the death of Saul and his sons, the victory of the Philistines over Israel, and David inheriting Saul's kingdom. This forms a fitting end to the

narratives concerning Samuel, as his ministry begins by prophesying the end of Eli's house and ends by prophesying the end of Saul's house.

Diffey, D. S., & Custis, M. (2016). Samuel the Prophet. In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Explore:

Divine-human interaction

The books of Samuel have a subtle view of yhwh's involvement in Israel's history. This is clear in the narrative of the people's request for a king (1 Sam. 8–12). The request displeases yhwh, for it is a rejection of his own kingship, but he grants it nonetheless, and the consequences are worked out to the bitter end, till Saul's death and even beyond that. Presumably yhwh

could have brought Saul's reign to an end sooner, striking him down like Nabal or Uzzah (1 Sam. 25; 2 Sam. 6). But he does not do so. And 2 Samuel 24 suggests that what is true of Saul is also true of David: even he is not fit to be king of Israel in every respect, and when he falls into sin, the people, who have chosen him, suffer. The books of Samuel highlight the importance of human choices: people get what they ask for, even if the result is that judgment falls on them, or that yhwh's purposes are temporarily thwarted. As a result, Israel's history does not proceed in a predictable or linear fashion.

Barton (pp. 7–11) makes a similar point when he notes that events in 2 Samuel 11–20 are presented from two different perspectives: on the one hand, the violence that befalls David's house is the outworking of the judgment threatened through Nathan; but on the other hand it takes place as the result of a

series of seemingly free human actions and choices, not all of them made with bad motives. The section 2 Samuel 11–20, Barton suggests, may be called a ‘philosophical narrative’ (p. 9), a story designed to explore moral themes, specifically the interaction of human choice and divine will. The same point could be made of other parts of the book.¹

Satterthwaite, P., & McConville, G. (2007). Exploring the Old Testament: The Histories (Vol. 2, p. 136). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Explore:

Samuel served as the pivotal transitional figure between the time of the judges and the inauguration of the monarchy. He led Israel in several roles:

- Prophet
- Seer

- Priest
- Judge
- Father

Prophet/Seer

Samuel is referred to as a prophet one time in the Old Testament (1 Sam 3:20) and three times in the New Testament (Acts 3:24; 13:20; Heb 11:32). However, he is referred to as a seer on multiple occasions (1 Sam 9:11, 18, 19; 1 Chr 9:22, 26:28, 29:29). First Samuel 9:9 indicates that the terminology of “seer” and “prophet” are synonymous and used to describe the same office. Yet the term “seer” is the favored term when discussing Samuel’s prophetic activity. As a prophet, Samuel’s ministry included such things as (Leuchter, Samuel, 51):

- interceding for Israel (1 Sam 7:3–14)
- giving prophecy from Yahweh (1 Sam 3:21)

- instituting legislation concerning kingship (1 Sam 10:25)
- commissioning civil leaders (1 Sam 10:17–27; 12:1–2)

Priest

The biblical text never explicitly refers to Samuel as a priest.

Psalm 99:6 seems to refer to him as such indirectly, as it describes Moses and Aaron as priests and then places Samuel in parallel with them, referring to him as “among those who called upon his name” (Steussy, Samuel, 29). First Chronicles 6:1–28 also traces Samuel through the lineage of Levi. Samuel is also presented as a priest by his undertaking of priestly duties.

Multiple texts describe Samuel as offering sacrifice:

- In 1 Samuel 7:9 Samuel offers a whole burnt offering
- First Samuel 10:8 records that Samuel was going to Gilgal to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings. Samuel, under Yahweh’s direction, uses the offering of sacrifices as a way to distract Saul when he goes to Bethlehem in 1 Sam 16.

- First Samuel 7:17 indicates that Samuel built an altar in his hometown of Ramah.

Judge

Samuel was the last judge presented in the Bible. He is described as a judge in two places. In 1 Samuel 7:6 he judged the people at Mizpah. Also, 1 Samuel 7:15–17 records that he judged Israel all of the days of his life and travelled on a circuit throughout Israel. Additionally, in 1 Sam 12:6 he tells the people that he is entering into judgment with them. Samuel is also presented in a list of judges who presided over Israel in 1 Sam 12:11 (Stuessy, Samuel, 35–36). Part of his duties in being a judge seem to have been calling Israel to battle (1 Sam 4:1) and subduing the Philistine threat (1 Sam 7:13).

Father

Samuel was the father of two sons, Joel and Abijah (1 Sam 8:2; 1 Chr 6:28). Samuel appointed Joel and Abijah to the office of

judges (1 Sam 8:1–2), but they are described as taking bribes, perverting justice, and not walking in Samuel’s ways (1 Sam 8:3, 5). This description appears to serve as a comparison between Samuel and Eli, whose sons were also described in unfavorable terms (1 Sam 2:12, 22).

Kingmaker

Robert Gordon designates Samuel as the kingmaker, referring to his role in anointing both Saul and David as king (Gordon, “Who Made,” 255–70). However, Samuel has strong personal objections to a king being appointed over Israel (1 Sam 8:6; 1 Sam 12) and his role in the rejection of Saul as king (1 Sam 13:1–13; 15:1–35).

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Question 1 of 5

Why do you think lying is so easy for people?

Question 2 of 5

Why is it so important for us to be truth-tellers?

Question 3 of 5

Why do you think God was against Israel having a king?

Question 4 of 5

Why is it hard not to take it personally when your loved ones make poor choices? Why does it hurt so bad?

Question 5 of 5

Why should we never give up on people? We know God never gives up on us. Who else in your life has never given up on you?