

A Tale of Two Families

Two Options for Gaining Significance in Life – 1 Samuel 2:12-36

Introduction: In this chapter, the author of 1 Samuel contrasts two families as they each search for ways of being significant: One family's search ends in tragedy. The other family's search results in blessing. Key Idea: Personal significance comes through principled sacrifice for kingdom values.

1. *THE DYNAMICS OF ELI'S FAMILY – They choose immediate gratification as their pathway to significance. 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25, 29*

- A. Pleasure area #1 – They seek significance through prosperity. 2:12-15
 - 1. They took food in the wrong way and burn fat in the wrong way. 2:12-14
 - 2. The result – They were growing not just wealthy but obese on the food. 2:29, 3:18
- B. Pleasure area #2 – They seek significance through power that comes with position. 2:16-17
 - 1. Godly Israelites who knew the law challenged the two priests: Hophni and Phinehas.
 - 2. Hophni and Phinehas threatened the people with physical harm.
- C. Pleasure area #3 – They seek significance through sensuality. 2:22-23, 29
 - 1. The surrounding nations had temple prostitutes, but God's law prohibited it.
 - 2. But Hophni and Phinehas use temple volunteers for their own pleasure. 2:22
- D. Pleasure area #4 – They seek significance through generational pride. 2:25
 - 1. Respect for parents was of utmost importance. Note its placement in the law (Ex. 20:12).
 - 2. Hophni and Phineas refused to respect their father.
- E. God's assessment – They had no significance (lit. "sons of worthlessness" [2:12]). See Rev. 3:17.

2. *THE DYNAMICS OF HANNAH'S FAMILY – They choose humble service as their pathway to significance. 1 Samuel 2:18-21, 26*

- A. Notice two observations from this section, 2:18-21, 26
 - 1. We see a contrast in "payoffs" – Eli's family finds significance now; Hannah's later.
 - 2. We see a progression from humility to greatness: child, mother, family, and legacy.
- B. A child – Samuel serves God. 2:18
 - 1. Action: Samuel is undoubtedly doing menial tasks. Nothing significant about him!
 - 2. Attitude: He is sensitively aware of the holiness of God ("before the Lord").
- C. A mother – Samuel's mother serves God as she serves her son. 2:19
 - 1. She saw him once per year, and what did she do during that year?
 - 2. She made him clothing, so that he could be clothed in righteousness, and she prayed.
- D. A family – Samuel's family receives the blessing from God mediated through his high priest. 2:20
 - 1. Although Eli was a corrupt, God honored his position; his blessing was God's blessing.
 - 2. Note the significance of God "visiting" Hannah.
 - 3. Note the significance of the number of her children.
- E. A legacy – Samuel's growth prefigures the growth of Jesus Christ (2:21, 26). This is unseen significance (See Luke 2:52).

3. *AN UNNAMED PROPHET COMES WITH A CHALLENGE – His lesson: the pathway to significance is very clear. 1 Samuel 2:27-36*

- A. *First Lesson* – Do not take the grace of God for granted. Prize it above all else! 2:27-29
- B. *Second Lesson* – Pay attention to the spiritual law of honor and dishonor. 2:30-34, 36
- C. *Fourth Lesson* – Resist passivity like the plague! 2:22-24