

Eli's Failures

Eli is often an overlooked Bible character. He was a priest and judge in Israel. He also had two sons who were priests, and he mentored and raised the prophet, Samuel.

While Eli did many good things in the service of God, he also experienced many failures. He made many bad decisions that impacted his family, the people of Israel, and his relationship with God. Consider three failures of Eli.

He failed to be a good father.

- There are many bad fathers found in the pages of Scripture. Among these include Jacob, David, and Samuel.
- Eli had some evil sons (1 Samuel 2:12-17). Hophni and Phineas stole from the sacrifices of God and committed sexual immorality with women at the tabernacle.
- Eli knew about their wicked deeds and did nothing! He also stole from the sacrifices, honored his sons more than God, and refused to rebuke and restrain them (1 Samuel 2:22-29; 3:13).
- Good and godly people can raise wicked children. This is possible because God made every person with the ability to make choices (Joshua 24:15).
- While Eli couldn't force his sons to serve God faithfully, the Lord rebuked him for setting a bad example and not disciplining them (Proverbs 13:24; 22:15).

He failed to consider the seriousness of sin.

- Eli did acknowledge that their sons were committing evil in the eyes of God, but his lack of discipline demonstrated a level of indifference.
- People throughout Israel heard about the sins Hophni and Phineas were committing at the tabernacle (1 Samuel 2:23-24). Their actions certainly had an impact on the nation!
- Hypocritical behavior always impacts others (2 Samuel 12:14; Galatians 2:11-14). Jesus demands that His people live in such a way that others can see their godliness and be drawn to God (Matthew 5:16).

He failed to heed God's warnings.

- God warned Eli numerous times about the consequences of his sins and his family's (1 Samuel 2:30-36; 3:1-21). Eli refused to heed those warnings and allowed his sons to continue defiling the tabernacle. God promised to remove Eli's family from the priesthood, and both of his sons died in battle (1 Samuel 4:15-18).
- Are we heeding the warning of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3?
- Are we heeding the warning of Ecclesiastes 12:14?
- Are we heeding the warning of Matthew 5:27-30?

Conclusion:

Eli's story did not end well for him or his family. How will your story end?

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