



# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

### Shattered Parenting

When life goes to pieces | Part 2

Tim Badal | October 4, 2015 | 1 Samuel 2:12–15



This is a difficult passage of Scripture. First Samuel is not the easiest book to work through. It's very apropos that our series is entitled "Shattered" because that's what we're going to see over and over again. Today we're going to talk about shattered parenting, which for many of us is an arena of life that hits so close to home.

It doesn't take long to recognize that your motto as a parent should be "safety." I remember heading home with Noah when he was a day old and being worried about every moment of his life. We would go into his room and make sure he was breathing because he was so quiet at times. We made sure that all of the outlets were covered because we didn't want his little fingers to go in places that could cause electrocution. We made sure every door and cupboard had a childproof handle on it. We did everything in our power to make sure that wherever Noah went and whatever he did that he would be protected in every way. That's what parents do. Our motto is safety!

But as the days continue to go on and they grow older, we teach them what it means to cross the street and ride their bike. We put helmets, elbow pads and kneepads on them and maybe even pillows on each side of the bike just in case they fall. Then they get older and we talk about the danger that comes with strangers and the dangers of drugs and peer pressure. As they grow older we talk about Internet and social media safety. We talk about sexual safety. We talk about safety when they start driving. The parental life is one continually given over to the issue of safety.

One thing that is rare in our day is parents who teach their children the safety that comes in a vibrant and healthy relationship with Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:31 tells us a very important truth that should grip the hearts of parents. *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* While it's important to keep your kids safe from household accidents, it is far more important that we teach, train and model for our children the utter disaster that can happen in an individual's life when they are out of step with God and His will and plan for their lives.

We rarely think about the danger that can come when our children risk losing their souls. But that's what happened in our text. We come to a man named Eli who was, by many accounts, a wonderful man. He was a man who was respected as one of the high priests of God's priesthood. No doubt he impacted lives. We know from the first part of our series that he impacted the life of Hannah. He blessed her and announced to her that she no longer needed to cry but that God had heard her petition and prayer. No doubt that encouraged this young woman.

After Hannah had been in the temple some time has passed and we find ourselves in chapter two. Eli is an older man and has adult children who are also serving in the temple. As we look at 1 Samuel 2:12–17 we begin to see the fault lines of Eli's parenting. We're also going to see that some of the things that we are lax in doing with our children can become serious issues as our children grow older.

Eli had two sons: Hophni and Phinehas. They grew up and were men who were described as dirty, rotten scoundrels (verse 12). Eli heard horror stories from people about what they did. No parent wants to hear that. Every time someone comes up and says, "I want to tell you a story about what your kid did," there's a part of me that shrinks because I know that children (especially those with the last name Badal) have a way at times of getting into trouble and that other people are going to see some of those deeds.

Eli failed to address many of these issues and this eventually ended in the death of his sons. They learned once and for all a truth that is important: young people will reap what they sow. Parents will do the same. If we fail to raise our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord then we are failing our children where their safety matters most.

I could pull out a hundred different parenting books, but I see six lessons in my first point and five lessons in my second point that will help children and parents alike to recognize the importance of what it means to live upright and godly lives. But if you're not a parent you may tune me out and think, "These things don't apply to me." But these things apply to every Christian in their personal lives, as well as in the lives of those who are closest to you.

## 1. Leading Your Children

If we're going to keep our families safe from becoming shattered, parents must be heavily involved in leading their children. Proverbs 22:6 says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."* But let's remember this comes from the book of Proverbs, not the Book of Promises. If you go about doing your best to train your children in the way they should go under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, it is a generally true statement that they will not depart from it.

But it doesn't always work out that way. Some of you are heartbroken right now because you've done all that you can to raise your kids in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and as they've grown older they want nothing to do with it. You say, "Wait a minute. I thought that was a promise!" No, it's a general proverb.

What does the training and leading look like? We're going to look at Eli's life and see some areas where I think he failed in being a good parent. Hopefully in these six areas we will be reminded and warned not to grow lax as Eli did.

### Reach for a good reputation

We lead our children into a godly relationship by teaching them to reach for a good reputation. Verse 12 says there was a man named Eli who had two sons who are described as *"worthless men."* No parent wants to hear their children described in that way. "Hi, my name is Tim. This is my wife Amanda. Here are my three worthless children." Nobody wants to describe their children that way. But that is how the author described Eli's two sons. It literally means good for nothing.

This must have been an agreed upon evaluation of Eli's sons. The author does little to change the fact articulated. He minces no words and gives no disclaimer. He doesn't say, "It was said they were worthless men," or, "There were certain people who thought they were worthless men." No, he just addresses it as if it was true as could be. They were worthless men.

I'm going to be very hard on Eli because he was the high priest. As the high priest he had the job of assigning men to their priestly duties. Eli could have not given his two sons the job of priest. What man would choose two worthless men for the job of spiritual leadership over God's people? Why did he permit such a thing? Priests were supposed to be men above reproach and viewed as spiritually mature in all matters. The defining word for these so-called priests was "worthless."

What does that mean for us as parents? Leading your children to pursue a good reputation means teaching them to recognize that their name has great value. Once it is obtained it should be retained all the days of their lives. Proverbs 22:1 says, *"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold."* Parents must teach their children to be known not for possessions, not for their degrees, not for their positions of authority, but for being trustworthy men and women of integrity whose word is their bond.

It's very difficult to regain a good name when it has been lost. We see this in the pursuit of John Wilkes Booth after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. As you know, Booth jumped from the presidential balcony in Ford's Theater down to the stage. He yelled some words of tyranny and anger toward the northerners and then ran into a back alley not to be seen for a couple of days. As he fell from the balcony onto the stage he broke his leg. While avoiding the police, he needed someone to tend to his leg and found the help he needed from a Virginia doctor named Samuel Mudd.

Not knowing who Booth was, Dr. Mudd fixed his leg because, under the Hippocratic oath, he was to take care of those who were hurting. When it was found out that Dr. Mudd had done this procedure on John Wilkes Booth, he was brought in as one of the conspirators in the plot to kill the president. He was the only alleged conspirator found innocent after a whole process and investigation. Here's the problem: Samuel Mudd never practiced medicine again. Why? Because his name had become mud

(that's where the phrase comes from). His name was dirtied. Even though he was innocent, he had lost his good name and he could never restore his reputation again. Because his name was associated with something evil his life ended in utter turmoil.

Brothers and sisters, as we minister to our children remind them it is important to speak of people with respect and honor. "He is a trustworthy man." "She is a person of integrity. "You can count on her."

No parent wants their child to be called worthless. We should make sure our children reach for a good and godly reputation.

## **Revere God as the One and Only**

Our children need to understand and relish in the fact that they are to revere God as the One and Only. The text says that they were worthless men and it goes on. In verse 12 it says, "*They did not know the Lord.*" As if being worthless wasn't bad enough! The most heartbreaking words that a parent could ever hear or utter to another individual are that their children don't know the Lord. Even though their father Eli knew the Lord, that knowledge was not passed on to his sons.

Some of us think, "If I just put my kid in church each Sunday he'll learn it there." Or we think if we just talk about it here and there and say certain things are important they'll grasp it. Or maybe they'll gain it through osmosis or the genetic code. You must be training your children in godliness. While no parent is held responsible for their child's salvation, we are responsible to give them every opportunity to know whom God is and to trust Him with their lives.

How do you do that? How could Eli have done that with his children? He could have shown them a living example. You and I can do likewise. Do your children see you trusting God? Do they see you talking with God? Do they see you studying His Word? Do they see you fellowshiping with His people? Do they see you worshipping Him on a daily basis? When they see and hear these spiritual disciplines they will recognize that a relationship with God is important.

The Jewish people were told to teach and train their children the things of the Lord when they were lying down, when they were getting up, when they were at a table and when they were walking down the road (Deuteronomy 11:19). At all moments they were to teach their children Who God is and the place He should have in each of our lives.

In verse 17 we learn that it's not just that they needed to know about Him but they needed to revere Him. Verse 17 says they treated the offering of the Lord with contempt. That's a very sad commentary. It literally means to acknowledge that one was there. They knew God was there but they showed a blatant disregard for His presence. "Yeah, I know God's here, but I don't care. He's not important to me."

A byproduct of allowing your children to just be part of Christian activities and not part of a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ is that it can create religion where they acknowledge that God is there but they have no relationship with Him. They will hold God in contempt. "God's the One Who kept me from this. God's the One Who kept me from that." "My parents forced me to do this. My parents forced me to do that."

I'm standing here today because I had flawed parents who were faithful to show me the place that God was to have in my life. I saw the joy they had because He was a part of their lives. We need to teach our children to revere God as the One and Only.

## **Renounce greed and revel in generosity**

In verses 13–17 we see that we need to teach our children to renounce greed and revel in generosity.

<sup>3</sup>The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, <sup>14</sup>and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. <sup>15</sup>Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." <sup>16</sup>And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." <sup>17</sup>Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

Imagine you're coming to worship and as you walk in you see Pastor Keith and he says to you, "Give me your money. Open your wallets. God wants money today and I want you to give me my money. If you don't I'm going to go get Tim. Tim will come and we're going to pull your wallet out of your pocket and we're going to take it." That's exactly what Eli's sons were doing. They were the godfathers—the Tony Sopranos, the gangsters—of the Israelite worship at Shiloh. The people were coming with a heartfelt desire to meet God, and the priests who were supposed to help them meet God and facilitate their worship experience were coming and robbing them of what they had brought.

The people would bring an animal sacrifice and the priest was given the right to take a portion of the offering, based on the Law of Moses. But they had taken that opportunity and changed it altogether. They said, "We're going to take what we want, when we want and how we want. And if you don't let us we're going to beat you up." So greed began to take over. The men who were given the job of serving and giving and ministering to the people of the Lord were the ones taking from them. It was about them. It was about their greed. It was about their selfishness.

This is a reminder for us to teach our children that even though they may never be Levitical priests, greed rots the soul. It's always better for our children and for us as individuals to give than to receive, especially if that receiving involves sinful actions.

One of the greatest highlights of my parenting life so far (I'm only about 13 years into it) was when Noah was about six or seven years old. As a little boy Noah struggled with Attention Deficit Disorder. While we were eating at Olive Garden one time, he was sitting there, looking around and enjoying dinner. But all of a sudden he started looking sad. His mom said, "Your demeanor has changed. What's the problem? Do you not like your food?" He said, "No, the food is great. I'm sad." We said, "Why?" He said, "That lady is eating alone." He leaned over and pointed to an elderly woman who seemed fine having dinner by herself. But our little boy didn't think people should eat by themselves.

He said, "We should do something for the lady." I said, "What do you want to do?" He said, "You should buy her dinner." So I said, "Okay. How should we do it?" He said just to take money over to her. I said, "That's not how you do it in a restaurant. If you want to buy someone's dinner you have to tell the waitress who is serving her that you want to take care of the bill." So that's what we did. Noah was all excited. "She's going to be so happy. This is going to be great!" He wanted to give and he didn't have to pay a penny for it. It's always great to give someone else's money.

Afterwards the woman was so persistent in wanting to know who paid for the meal that the young waitress pointed over to our table. The woman came over and said, "You don't know what an encouragement that was. My son was supposed to meet me for dinner. This is the third time now he has stood me up. I used to live in the city but my son said it was too far for him to travel so I moved out closer to him because I was told I would see him more. But I don't see him any more than I did when I was in the city." I said, "It was my son who wanted to buy you dinner." She said, "This little boy cares more about me than my own son does." What joy that brought to each of us!

Now that's not the only good thing we've had happen in the Badal family but that's our one good story. If you know the Badals then you know we don't have a picture-perfect family. But that brought us so much joy.

We live in a world of absolute greed. It's all about what we get. Let's teach our children to show the love of Christ by teaching them what it means to give. How do they learn that? By you modeling it and showing them that you revel in giving to others. Show them your money is not yours but the Lord's. You are freely giving of your time, talents and treasures to other people so that others may be impacted by it. It will change the way they look at their lives. It will bring them incredible joy because it is always better to give than to receive.

## **Resist sexual temptation**

Another principle we see from Eli's life is in verse 22 where the story gets even worse. Eli was a very old man and he kept hearing from other people all the things his sons were doing and then they told him even more problems. When women would come to offer their sacrifices to the Lord and serve at the temple, Eli's sons saw it as an opportunity to flirt, make advances and then have relations with these women. Their job was to minister to them as ones who led in worship, but they were sleeping with the women instead. It couldn't get any worse. Eli's sons were drawing women to themselves instead of helping people draw closer to God. Where these men should have been fleeing sexual immorality, they were feasting upon it. The anger of God must have been severe as they practiced such deeds. What would make them think that this was acceptable? Where was the clear teaching from Eli that this was wrong? Where were the lessons of the importance of being sexually pure?

It is vitally important for us as parents, and even grandparents, to be teaching our children a sexual ethic that honors God. We should endorse modeling the joy of sexual activity that is done within the bonds of marriage and the danger of that sexual activity outside of that arena. As parents we need to teach our children the tangible ramifications of sexual impurity that involve both the heart and body.

We should also remind them that sex outside of marriage is an affront to God. It dishonors our bodies, it dishonors God and it reduces our relationship with other people to animal instinct. We must teach our children not to play fast and loose with their

bodies. Let's be clear with our children and young people about what it means so that we may spare them the sorrow and pain that comes with sexual immorality. Let's train our children what it means to honor God with their bodies.

## Receive good counsel

In verses 23–25 Eli said to his two sons:

**"Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. <sup>24</sup>No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. <sup>25</sup>If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.**

We need to help our children receive good counsel. After hearing from others about the shenanigans of his two sinful sons, Eli went and talked with them. *"But they would not listen to the voice of their father."* Why was that? We could think that maybe Eli's private life was different than his public life. Maybe his sons had every right not listen to their father because maybe they saw him as a hypocrite. We don't know. There's nothing in here that says Eli was a hypocrite in any way. He was a seemingly upstanding priest who just failed at being a very good parent. What we do know is that when they were told things that would be good for them to hear, they would not listen.

Parents, we must teach our children to listen to us as well as to those who are in authority over them. In times of their own rebellion I've told each of my sons that they have two choices in life: listen to me or law enforcement personnel will deal with them. The difference between the law enforcement and me is that I love them. Policemen and law enforcement have a job to do, which is not to love people in that moment but to enact justice.

We need to help our children recognize that there is good counsel to be had. The book of Proverbs tells us that we are to make wisdom our kinsman (Proverbs 7:4). We need to help our children recognize what godly wisdom is. Where does it begin? It doesn't begin by their listening to you but by their listening to God.

Parents, how much are you teaching and training your children in the Scriptures? *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word"* (Psalm 119:9). Memorize Scripture. Hide it in your heart. We need to teach our children some of these difficult stories of people who said they had a relationship with God but then went haywire which resulted in trouble and turmoil. Let them hear stories of when you went against godly wisdom and the things that happened. Let them understand that what may seem right to a man or woman at times could lead them to death (Proverbs 14:12).

## Repent from their sins

This story reminds us that we must lead our children to repent of their sins. Nowhere in the text do we see any repentance on the part of Eli's sons. I'm speculating, but maybe they wouldn't have died had they repented and said, "God, we are sorry. God, we have wronged You. God, we will do all that we must to show You that we are sorry for our sin and will change our ways." We don't know if that would have prevented their death, but here's what I do know: even when God has put forth judgment on people's lives, He has relented when they repented. Repentance could very possibly have saved Eli's sons' lives, but sadly they did not turn back to God. They died in their sin.

We must teach our children that God is holy. God does not condone sin in His children. God is faithful when we confess our sins to forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). So how do we teach this? When your children do wrong, even against other human beings, teach them what it means to repent. Teach them what it looks like to own up to their sin and make things right. Don't make excuses for your children when they blow it. Let them own it. Don't gloss over it. Let them experience godly sorrow that leads them to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

We see here six things in which we should be leading our children. This is not an exhaustive list but we're only dealing with a couple of verses in the Bible. How fruitful the Word of God is in the arena of parenting! There's much for us to do but we must never think, "If I do these six things it will be a magic formula." We must humbly plead with God to lead and direct us to be godly parents.

## 2. Loving Your Children

What does that lead to next? It leads us to loving our children. It's hard to think that any parent wouldn't love their children, but loving a child doesn't mean that they get what they want or get to set the terms. Loving your child may mean they hate you at times. At times that's okay.

My parents loved me and there were times that I absolutely despised being in their home. You think they learned? Nope. I did. I've learned a lot as I've grown older. The love they showed me was their trying to save me from a myriad of pains and sorrows even though I thought they were just trying to make my life difficult.

Eli was very similar to many parents today. Parents think loving their children means letting them set the rules for the family, but that can never be. So what are we to do? Here's another list of ways to love your children. Hopefully these will resonate with you.

### **Remaining connected to them**

It seems as if Eli was an absentee father. You would think that Eli was living in a different area code when he heard these reports. He heard from many different people about all the things his sons were doing, as if he was somewhere else and unable to see it firsthand. I was amazed to learn through my study that throughout this entire time Eli was living in the same town of Shiloh where his children were living. I can't imagine that Shiloh was all that big and that Eli wouldn't have seen firsthand what was going on in his sons' lives. They were right there. He did not see these things and had to hear them from other people? It gives me the idea that Eli was busy doing his own thing and the only way he knew what was going on in his children's lives was hearing it from someone else.

I understand that there will be times when even the best parents will hear of their children doing something outside of their presence that they will learn about from others. But Eli gets all of his information from others. He's disconnected. I get that he was busy serving the Lord; he had a lot of irons in the fire. But we can't be like Eli. We need to remain connected with our kids even as they grow older.

My middle son, Joshua, once asked his grandfather, "I saw you in the neighborhood. What were you doing?" My father said, "I'm checking in on your dad. I'm making sure he's loving your mom and taking care of you boys." Joshua said, "You do that with dad?" He said, "Yes, he's still my son." When I heard that I kind of laughed it off but then I thought, "God bless my dad." He has remained connected. He hasn't said, "My parenting is done. Tim is a grown man. He's going to do what he wants." My dad is actively involved in my life because I'm important to him and because he knows I will need help and wisdom from him as I raise my children and minister to my wife. He remains utterly connected.

As parents we cannot get so busy and allow our teenagers to push back and say, "Everything is fine." "How was school?" "Fine." Dig deeper into their lives. Pray that God would allow you to have ways to engage with your children so that you may be connected with them. Connect with them in prayer. Pray with them. Talk with them. If you haven't done it start it today. It may be awkward at the beginning but it will get easier as you go on. Remain connected to your kids.

### **Showing concern for them**

How do you love your children? Show concern for them. Nowhere in the text do we see that Eli was concerned for his children. He was worried about what other people were saying. He made some veiled comments about God's judgment but there's never a moment in the text where he said with deep pain, "I love you boys. You're my flesh and blood. I raised you. The way you're living is not going to go well for you. I do not want to lose my sons. Turn! You're dishonoring God. Turn! You're sinning against His holy ways. Turn!" Nowhere did he show fatherly concern. He gave no words of help. "You're in too deep. Let me help you out." He didn't give them words of guidance. He just said, "You're on your own. Stop producing such bad press for me and our name."

Our children must know without a shadow of a doubt that we love them. While we may be angry and disappointed with them at times, they need to know they're important to us. They need to know we're there to help them in their times of need.

### **Choosing God as first and foremost**

Eli's problem doesn't come up until verse 29 where we find out that he was seen as a bad father by the most important individual—God Himself. In verse 29 God says, "[You] honor your sons above me." What an indictment! Oh, the sin of too many American Christians! We worship our children more than we do our God. How do we do this? Our joy is found in our kids' grades and their performances in the arts and athletics. We're willing to get up at the crack of dawn to drive our kids to events. We'll spend hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on their activities and toys but when it comes to God we don't have the time. We don't have the money. We invest all that time and energy on their activities and are absent when it comes to doing the Lord's work.

The greatest truth that you and I can learn is that we will only be the best parents we can be when we are the best followers of Jesus Christ. Parenting begins with your walk with God and will rise and fall on that relationship. Are you choosing your children or are you choosing God?

### **Challenging them spiritually**

Amidst all their sin, Eli apparently never reminded them what he had taught them in their childhood and the lessons they should have learned then. "Remember we talked about this, boys. This is what God was talking about." There's no rebuke in the text that calls them out of the mess that they made. We must challenge our children to grow as believers and become mature. Eli stopped doing this at some point and because of that they coasted farther and farther away from God until one day they didn't care anymore.

### **Giving them consequences**

So what do you do? When you see your children going down the wrong path you need to give them consequences. "Eli, your boys are sleeping around with women when they should be taking sacrifices and leading in worship. What are you going to do?" "I'll go have a talk with them." "Eli, your boys are a bunch of gangsters when it comes to the offerings of God. What are you going to do with them?" "I'll have a talk with them."

As the chief priest, Eli should have brought down the hammer. "You're done, boys. No more being priests for you. You've disqualified yourself from that. Here's the consequence: you're no longer going to prey on people. I will see to it that it never happens again." Had he done that he may have saved his children's lives. But he doesn't. He just said, "This is not good."

The Bible says if we spare the rod we will spoil the child and it will cost us dearly in the end (Proverbs 13:24). I have views on discipline that may differ from yours. When your child does wrong, teach them the right way and correct them with measures that will cause them to cease and desist the wrong behavior. Do it and it will save their lives.

## **3. Some Guiding Principles**

There is so much to pull from this text that I could have come up with seven more things. Here's another list of just five applications. This is an ugly story of a relationship that could have gone far better if only Eli had been a little more connected to the spiritual upbringing of his children.

### **God is deeply concerned about the condition of your family and you should be, too**

Fathers, your number one priority is to raise your children in an atmosphere that honors God and teaches them about Him every day. You are to provide for them. Making sure they have fun is way down the list. Your number one job is to be a priest who draws them closer in their relationship with God. If you're not doing it that's what Village Bible Church is here to help you do. We want to teach and train you. Maybe you didn't see that modeled in your life. The job of elders is to help show you what mature fathering looks like. You need to be concerned about the spiritual condition of your family. If you're not, then you have no idea what may be coming along the way. These are scary thoughts in light of what we're learning here in 1 Samuel 2.

### **Parents' godliness does not guarantee spiritual children**

You may have done everything right—and God bless you for it—but it hasn't changed anything. In those moments you just release your children into the hands of God. "I wasn't perfect but I did everything to the best of my ability. Lord, I give my children to You." We don't see that with Eli. Eli doesn't plead on behalf of his children and say, "Lord, I know I've messed up. You know I failed in some ways. Lord, I pray that You would do something in my children's lives that would effect change and good works in them so they might see You." He doesn't do any of that.

Maybe you're doing the best job of living a godly life that you can, showing and modeling that example to them, but nothing has changed. Recognize that there's no guarantee that if you are a spiritual person that your children will be also.

### **God reserves the right to place the blame for sin**

From a human standpoint God does some pretty heinous things. As you fast forward in our passage you'll see that in one day Eli learned his two sons died and a daughter-in-law would die in childbirth. Eli became so distraught (which was prophesied by the man of God in our text) that he fell over and broke his neck. In one day four individuals lost their lives.

God was completely right in doing all of that because God does all things well; even things we don't think are fair. Maybe today God is putting the blame on you as the parent. Take it! Use it as an opportunity for repentance. Maybe today He's saying, "The blame is on you." As I worked through this I recognized that as a teenager I made my parents lives miserable at times. Are there things that maybe they could own up for? Sure! They've got some things that they have to wrestle through with God. They weren't perfect parents. Neither am I and neither are you. I know the part that I played.

Maybe there are some teenagers here who have some work to do because they're sitting there thinking, "I'm the one to blame. It's my attitude and actions that are causing turmoil in the family. I need to bow my knees to Jesus in repentance because I am bringing upon this family not only a dishonored name but calamity in the future." God reserves the right to judge, and He will when He deems it right.

### **Rebellion can bring terrible repercussions**

When we sin it can bring forth terrible consequences. My older brother Chris was an incredibly rebellious son. I remember as a younger brother watching my father do all that he could to try and stop Chris from sinning. Chris would have nothing to do with it. Nothing! He would fight my dad. There were times when my father would literally have to grab my brother in the garage and say, "You're not going out again. This isn't going to happen! Not under my roof." My brother, who was bigger than my dad, would say, "I'm out of here! You can't tell me what to do." As a younger sibling, I wrestled with that.

Less than a year after some of these experiences my brother died in a car accident when he fell asleep behind the wheel. But shortly before that he got right with God and confessed his sin. After his death we were made aware of a video that came out at a church camp where he gave his testimony. My sixteen-year-old brother had said this: "I had an accident not too long ago. This is what I learned from the accident: God was warning me that He does not allow His children to rebel against their parents. It's a command that comes with a promise. If you rebel against your mom and dad you will not live long on this earth. You may think I'm a legalist. You may think I'm a fundamentalist. I don't care what you think!"

My family believes the reason that my brother died at the age of 16 is because he rebelled against mom and dad. He rebelled, but God was gracious because his testimony was used in great ways.

The Bible doesn't have commands just to fill space on the pages. God says, "If you want your life to go well with you don't rebel against your mom and dad." What a reminder for young people to recognize that rebellion brings forth terrible repercussions. Will it mean death for you? Maybe; maybe not. I don't know. But it does at times and God is the One Who chooses. What a painful message!

### **God is gracious even when we are guilty**

Here's the great thing though: even in the Old Testament we see that God is gracious even when we are guilty. At the end of the text it's as if God says, "There's hope at the end of the tunnel. There's light there." In verse 35 He says, *"And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever."*

Many believe that this is a prophecy that was partly fulfilled in Samuel himself. We've been concentrating here on the parts of Scripture regarding bad parenting, but we need to keep in mind that Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord (verse 21) and continued to grow in stature and favor with the Lord and men (verse 26). Samuel was the one who would carry on the name of the priesthood.

But even greater than that, scholars believe this is an inference to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was soon to come, and in our shattered and broken lives He would come and make all things new (Revelation 21:5). Jesus would come and intercede on our behalf. Jesus would come and bring fathers back to their children and children back to their parents (Malachi 4:6). It is Jesus Who will do it.

Whether parent or child, or somewhere in between, Jesus is the answer to our shattered family lives. When we give our lives to Him, He will make things new. He will change our circumstances and allow us to see the good even in times of suffering. "Shattered: When life goes to pieces"—Jesus is the answer.