

ON SPARING THE ROD

I Samuel 4:10-22

April 26, 2009 Sunday am

INTRODUCTION

- A. The lone surviving Somali pirate who took an American ship captain hostage arrived in New York earlier this week. He will stand trial for the attack. The teenager's arrival came on the same day that his mother appealed to President Obama for mercy and his release. She says her son was coaxed into piracy by gangsters with money.
- B. We probably don't feel sorry for this young man, but we may for his mother. As parents or prospective parents, how can we be sure will too will not raise a pirate, or even worse?
- C. In I Samuel 4, the priest Eli raised two sons who were worse than pirates who steal from ships. Eli's sons grew up to steal from God.
- D. Today, lets notice a couple of truths about parenting we can see in this story.

I. FIRST, IF YOU SPARE THE ROD YOU MAY SPOIL YOUR CHILD.

- A. This phrase doesn't actually come from the Bible.
 - 1. It comes from a Charles Dickens book.
 - 2. The closest the Bible comes to saying something like this is in Proverbs 13:24.
²⁴ He that spareth his rod hateth his son:
- B. Too bad Eli didn't read this in the Bible, because he definitely spared the rod on his two sons.
 - 1. We read this in 2:12.
¹² Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD
 - 2. An example of their wickedness is found in 2:13-17. Priests were allowed to take a portion of the meat being boiled as an offering to the Lord. Eli's sons, however, must have been tired of boiled roast and wanted fried steak instead, because they took the meat before it was boiled, by force if necessary. The point is not the meat, but their disobedience to the Lord.
 - 3. If that wasn't bad enough, they were also promiscuous, according to 2:22.
²² Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
 - 4. Eli talked to his sons, but they didn't listen, perhaps because he never did anything except talk to them about their behavior—2:23 & 25b.
**²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours.
....His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke.....**
- C. The Bible says that parents have the responsibility to discipline their children.
 - 1. Discipline doesn't always mean corporal punishment. Some children were born compliant. (Lets see, there was Jesus and.....) If you have one of those, thank God. They are a very rare breed.
 - 2. Even if you discipline your children with a rod, not all rods are the same. Sometimes you can discipline by just talking to them, not necessarily shouting, but that's easier said than done. Sometimes you can discipline by grounding them or taking something away for awhile like the television, cell phone or the Wii.
 - 3. The point is not "how" you discipline, as long as it doesn't get out of hand. The point, rather, is "that" you discipline.
 - 4. Failure to do so can have dire consequences as Eli found out—2:34 & 4:11.
³⁴ ""And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you--they will both die on the same day
¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

II. SECOND, IF YOU DON'T SPARE THE ROD, SOMETIMES CHILDREN STILL TURN OUT BAD.

A. The prophet Samuel, Eli's successor, is an example of this.

1. Although he was a better man and father than Eli, his son's still turned out bad—8:1-3.

¹ When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

2. Unlike Eli, however, Samuel took action and refused to let them lead Israel as Eli's sons had—8:4-5.

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

(Note: Samuel agreed and appointed a King instead of his two wicked sons).

B. Both Eli and Samuel had tried to provide a godly home for their children, but all four sons turned out bad.

1. No matter what you may hear from television or best selling parenting books, parents aren't always the problem.

2. Although children may be influenced by their parents or peers, they each make their own decisions—Gal. 6:7-8.

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

3. By all means parents, do all you can to help your children grow up to be godly adults, including praying for them all their lives, as Samuel must have—12:23-24.

²³ As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴ But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you

4. But stop beating yourself up about your children. Unfortunately you can do everything right and they may still turn out bad.

5. The grief of watching an ungodly child is heartbreaking for any parent. But I have some good news for you. Sometimes bad kids turn out good. Just consider King David, Simon Peter, the Apostle Paul and even the Thief on the Cross).

6. Illustration: "She Said Yes" by Missy Bernall (story attached).

CONCLUSION

A. Our prayer is that none of us raises young people who grow up to be pirates or worse.

B. By all means, we must discipline our children and then trust God to do the rest.