

Life Lesson 58  
*Samuel as a Child*  
Text: I Samuel 1-3

Introduction

“When I grow up, I’m going to serve the Lord.”

Have you ever said that to yourself? Maybe you have thought sometimes, “When I am older, then I’ll be saved.”

Did you know that God doesn’t want you to serve Him when you are grown? He wants you to love and serve Him right now. If God deals with you in your heart and you know you need to be saved, God doesn’t want you to wait. He saves children as well as adults. He isn’t held back by ages. No matter how old you are, God can use you.

The Story

There were a lot of adults around in ancient Israel, but God chose to use a little boy to give his message to the nation. That little boy is the one we learned about last week, Samuel.

Remember, his mother promised God that if only He would give her a son, she would give that son to God, to serve Him. God heard her prayer and gave her Samuel. When he was still a little boy, she took him to the tabernacle in Shiloh.

“Do you remember me?” she asked Eli, the priest. “I am the woman who stood here praying for a child. God answered, and this boy is the child the Lord gave me. I have loaned him to the Lord for as long as he lives.”

It must have been hard, but Hannah left her little boy there with Eli and traveled the long journey back home. She knew she would only see Samuel one time a year when they made their journey to Shiloh to make sacrifices to the Lord.

Do you think she forgot about Samuel? No, every year she spent long hours making him a special coat for him to wear. When it was time for the yearly sacrifices, she brought it to him.

The Bible says that Samuel started right away to serve the Lord. He didn't wait until he was older. What can a child do to serve God? First of all, he obeyed Eli. Eli, the priest, was in charge of him since he was away from his parents. When Eli called him, he came running to see what the priest wanted him to do.

When you are quick to obey your parents and your teachers, you are serving God, in a way. When you don't whine about having chores to do and cheerfully do what they ask, God sees you and is pleased.

We don't know for sure what else Samuel did. Maybe he swept out the tabernacle, or washed dishes for Eli. Maybe he ran errands and brought Eli things he needed. Maybe Eli taught him to read and write and to memorize Bible verses. They didn't have the whole Bible then, but they had at least the first five books.

We do know that he was busy learning about God, worshiping Him, and serving Him.

The people were wicked in Israel in those days. Even Eli's sons who were priests were evil and did things that grieved God.

One night after Samuel had gone to bed he heard someone calling him.

"Samuel," the voice called.

Samuel jumped up and ran to Eli.

"What would you like me to do?" Samuel asked him.

I hope you are that quick to serve when your parents call you!

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "You must have been dreaming. Go back to bed."

Samuel obeyed, but, again, he heard a voice. "Samuel," the voice called again.

"Here I am," Samuel said to Eli again. "I'm sure you called me this time."

"Go back to bed," Eli said. "You're dreaming again."

The third time it happened, Eli realized it must be God speaking to Samuel.

"Next time," Eli told him, "Say, 'Speak Lord, for your servant hears You.'"

Samuel did as Eli said, and God spoke his message to Samuel.

“Some bad things are going to happen in Israel,” God told Samuel. “Things so bad that it will make people’s ears hurt just to hear them. Because Eli’s sons have been so wicked and Eli didn’t stop them from being bad, they will all be punished. The whole nation will be punished for turning away to false gods.”

This was such an awful message that Samuel didn’t go to sleep for the rest of the night. In the morning he dreaded to tell Eli the message, but Eli insisted.

“It’s from God,” Eli said at last after Samuel told him what God had said. “Let God do what seems to Him right.”

Soon the very thing God had prophesied happened. The Israelites lost a battle with the Philistines and both sons of Eli were killed. Even worse, they had taken the ark of the covenant, which held the ten commandments into battle without asking God’s permission. The Philistines captured it. It was a sad day for Israel.

#### The Life Lesson

The people learned to listen to Samuel because his words were from God. He grew up to be a great prophet. But, he didn’t wait until he was grown to serve God. God began using him when he was just a little child.

You don’t have to wait to grow up to serve God, either. You can get to know God better by reading your Bible and talking with God in prayer. You can listen to the messages your preacher preaches and hear what God has for you to learn from Him. And you can tell other people about God. God can use you just as He did Samuel.

## Review Questions

Why did Hannah leave Samuel with Eli the priest?

*Because she had promised God that if He gave her a little boy, she would give him to serve God all his life.*

Who spoke to Samuel in the night?

*God*

What message did God give Samuel about Israel?

*Because the people were so wicked, they would be defeated by their enemies.*

*What message did God give Samuel about Eli's sons?*

*Because they were wicked, and because Eli didn't stop them from being evil, they would die.*

Did the terrible prophecy happen?

*Yes, the Israelites were defeated and the Ark of the Covenant was captured.*

What happened to Eli's sons?

*They were killed in battle.*

Do you have to wait until you are grown up to serve God?

*No, I can be like Samuel and serve God from a child.*