

## **From Childhood: The Bible for Kids**

David Flatt

In January, we began a monthly sermon series entitled, “From Childhood: The Bible for Kids.” We considered the importance of teaching our children the Scriptures. The apostle Paul wrote about how Timothy’s mother and grandmother had taught him the Scriptures: “From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

The Scriptures will make us wise, build our faith, and lead us to salvation in Jesus. There is nothing more important we could teach our children than the Scriptures. As Paul continued, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

This month, we are going to consider a memory verse from the current Shaping Hearts lesson book. This quarter’s lesson book is entitled, “Loving Hearts & Working Hands.” The material uses Samuel and the days of the United Kingdom to teach about serving God with a humble heart.

### **The Memory Verse**

“Be sure to have respect for the Lord. Serve Him faithfully with all your heart. Remember the great things He has done for you.”

#### **1 Samuel 12:24**

#### **About Samuel**

Samuel is a prominent figure in the Old Testament. Samuel’s parents were Elkanah and Hannah. Elkanah was a Levitical priest. Hannah had been unable to have children. In time, God blessed Hannah with a child. She had promised to give her child to the Lord, dedicating him as a Nazarite.

Surprisingly, Hannah honored her vow. When Samuel was a toddler, she entrusted him to the care of a priest at Shilo: Eli. It is hard to imagine how difficult this must have been for Hannah; yet this demonstrated her devotion to the Lord. She made a vow to God and was determined to keep it.

Eli must have been diligent in the rearing and training of young Samuel. As the boy grew, he developed an honorable reputation throughout the entire country (1 Sam. 3:20). One night, Samuel was called by God. He was given a disturbing message about the death of Eli and Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phineas. As difficult as this message was, Samuel faithfully delivered the news to Eli.

After the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel became the leader of Israel. He served as a civic and spiritual leader of the people. He was at the nexus of a tumultuous time in Israel. The people grew rebellious and demanded a king to be their ruler. They wanted to be governed like the other nations. Fearfully, Samuel took this demand to the Lord. The Lord permitted Israel to have a king. Samuel anointed a young man from Kish to be their king: Saul.

Afterwards, Samuel gathered the people at Gilgal. He gave what some have described as a farewell address. Others have described this as a coronation address on behalf of the new king Saul. Samuel reminded Israel about their past and how God had taken care of them. He warned them against turning to idols. They needed to take responsibility for their rebellion against the Lord in demanding a king.

Samuel prayed to the Lord to send thunder and rain as a sign of His power. The thunder and rain terrified the people; yet Samuel assured them that the Lord would be with them if they were faithful to Him. He told them, “Be sure to have respect for the Lord. Serve Him faithfully with all your heart. Remember the great things He has done for you” (1 Sam. 12:24).

### **Lessons from Samuel’s Warning**

**1). Be sure to have respect for the Lord.** Like Israel, we must respect the Lord. We must reverence Him as our Creator. King Solomon would later write, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7). Respect for the Lord is to guide our lives and inform our decisions. Eventually, Israel would disrespect the Lord. They would reject Him and worship idols. They would pay a price for their rebellion. We too will pay a price for ours.

**2). Serve Him faithfully.** The Lord is faithful to us. His loyalty to us has been demonstrated many times. In return, He asks us to be faithful to Him. Too often, we serve God only when it is convenient and or easy. We must follow the example of Samuel and faithfully serve the Lord throughout the course of our entire lives; especially when serving is difficult.

**3). With all our hearts.** The Lord wants our hearts. If He does not have our love and affection, we will grow cold toward Him and His word. Like Israel, we will want to be like the world. We will rebel against Him. The Lord wants us to enjoy a relationship with Him held together by love.

**4). Remember the great things He has done for you.** Having respect for the Lord and serving Him faithfully with all our hearts is the only logical response to what He has done for us. As Samuel recounted in his address, the Lord had proven His unfailing love for Israel. The Lord has proven His unwavering love for us in more ways than He did for Israel. The Lord has sent us His Son to save us from sin and eternal death. He has done great things for us and has promised to do even greater things for us in the future. We must never forget.

## **Conclusion**

There are important lessons everyone can learn from the life and times of Samuel. As parents, we can learn from the devotion of Hannah. She was determined to give her only son to the Lord and to the service of the Lord's people. Our children can learn from the godliness of Samuel in his youth.

In his old age, Samuel was concerned about younger generations. He wanted their hearts to be shaped by the knowledge of the good works the Lord had done for them. Let us use the Scriptures to teach our children about the good works the Lord has done for us. This is how the Lord, through us, will shape the hearts of our children.