**1. Motivate**

What is something you learned through failure?

* my oven is hotter than what the temp setting shows
* this skillet gets too hot, too fast
* don’t set the choke on this string trimmer motor
* don’t spend so much time on Facebook, it’s a waste
* you need to study for exams more than just the night before
* as a new public school teacher, don’t smile until Christmas

A video introduction is available to view at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/t/1_6ble71vu> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/yckmxbaz>

* buy low, sell high
* don’t click on a link in a suspicious email
* it’s a good idea to take the lint out of the filter for every load
* don’t try to warm a hard-boiled egg in the microwave

**2. Transition**

Today we consider Eli’s initial failure.

* Yet he did do well in one task – mentoring Samuel.
* Don’t let past mistakes prevent you from being an effective mentor.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Listening to Wise Counsel – or Not

Listen for a response to reprimand.

1 Samuel 2:22-26 (NIV) 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. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24 No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. 25 If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death. 26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

Eli’s sons were involved in sexual misconduct. What did Eli do about his sons’ sinful practices?

* confronted them
* why do you do such things
* I’m hearing about these wicked deeds from all kinds of people
* this is not a good report
* the stories are spreading among the Lord’s people

How would you evaluate Eli’s response to the problem?

* too little, too late
* should have been proactive, not reactive
* too wimpy of a response to them

Even though his approach to his sons may have been weak and nominal, what was one statement of wise counsel he delivered to them?

* sinning against another person was bad enough
* forgiveness was possible
* sinning against God was dangerous
* such a person was in bad trouble

How might Eli have responded differently to reports of his sons’ behavior?

* kicked them out of the priesthood
* replace them with honest, honorable men
* acted preemptively when they were much younger
* train them to act correctly at an early age instead of letting it get out of hand

They rejected their father’s rebuke. What would be the inevitable result?

* it was the Lord’s will to put them to death
* God would deal with them
* God would exercise justice on them

Eli’s sons rejected their father’s counsel. Where do some people in our culture prefer to find counsel?

* the internet
* friends
* some seek out horoscopes or use Ouija boards
* go along with what they see on TV news or reality shows
* mimic what they see in entertainment
* they repeat the same mistakes of their parents – substance abuse, child abuse

Why do people ignore *wise* counsel?

* don’t want to know Truth
* think they can do as they please
* don’t want someone else telling them what to do
* ignore any possible adverse outcomes to their behavior

3.2 Helping to Discern God’s Counsel

Listen for Eli’s direction to Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:7-10 (NIV) Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

We are told of the status of communication with God in those days.

* Little direct personal communication with God
* Samuel was young and inexperienced
* God had yet to reveal Himself personally to Samuel

Why might Samuel have mistakenly identified the call of the Lord for the cry of Eli?

* he’s sleepy
* didn’t realize God could or would speak audibly to a person
* as far as he knew, no one else around to be calling his name

How will God speak to us today?

* certainly, God *could* speak to us audibly (day or night)
* we have the whole of Scripture through which God speaks
* God’s Holy Spirit dwells within every believer
* the Holy Spirit will impress God’s communication upon our minds
* most often through the reading or the teaching/preaching of scriptural Truth

 What favorable advice did Eli offer?

* it’s not me calling to you
* it is Jehovah God who wants to communicate directly to you
* next time you hear someone calling your name like that, answer to God
* tell God you are listening and ready to hear what He has to say

How can others help you discern God’s voice, God’s message to you?

* preaching, teaching God’s Truth
* pointing out a specific scripture that speaks to a situation in your life
* share how God worked in their life in a similar situation
* enumerate spiritual principles that have to do with your question or concern

How can we distinguish between God speaking and other voices competing for our attention?

* only pay attention to voices that speak in agreement with Scripture
* God will not direct us in ways that are in conflict with His Word
* we are called to act only in ways that glorify and honor God

3.3 Share God’s Words with Others

Listen for Eli’s response to God’s message.

1 Samuel 3:15-18 (NIV) Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16 but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son." Samuel answered, "Here I am." 17 "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."

How did Samuel feel about the message revealed from the Lord concerning the house of Eli?

* says he “lay down” … doesn’t say he slept … maybe he couldn’t sleep with what he had heard
* Eli sensed that Samuel might not want to reveal it
* in the verses preceding these, we know it was bad news for Eli
* Samuel may not have wanted to be the bearer of bad news

How did Eli urge Samuel to speak openly and honestly?

* tells him that this was God’s message
* don’t hold back or you’ll be defying God Himself
* God would deal with him severely if he didn’t communicate what God had told him

How did Eli respond to the truth he heard?

* God is God – He is sovereign
* God will do what God pleases to do
* God will accomplish His good will, no matter what we do or think

How can we follow Samuel’s example in sharing God’s Truth regardless of the consequences to us?

* be sure what you share is, indeed, God’s Truth
* share it in a loving and kind way
* share it in an understandable way
* work to be effective communicators of God’s Truth
* make sure you are living in such a way that shows you believe and have your own life in line with God’s Truth
* you can be a “sermon in shoes”

God continues to speak. What spiritual practices do you have in place to help you to continue recognizing the voice of the Lord when He speaks to you?

* daily reading and meditating on God’s word
* regular gathering with fellow believers to praise, worship, hear teaching of God’s word
* daily communication with God – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

Evaluate.

* Evaluate how well you are listening for the voice of God.
* Make a commitment to read God’s Word daily to gain insight and direction from His Word.

Thank.

* Thank others who have shared God’s Word with you and helped you discern God’s direction for your life.
* In a note, email, or text, be specific how they have helped you.

Speak up.

* When you see others going astray from Scripture and God’s will for his or her life, talk with this person.
* With gentleness and respect, encourage this individual to seek God, trust Him, and be obedient to Him.



Cryptogram Puzzle



Two Christians in Slandsja Falombral risked their lives to get these two scraps of paper to us. The partial key at the top should give you enough of the letters to determine the text of the message. Our decoding staff is busy mowing lawns to earn money to give to Operation Christmas Child and fill shoe boxes with toys for kids. Help and further Fun Family Activities are available at <https://tinyurl.com/yckmxbaz> When you complete the decryption, pass the message on to your Christian Education committee.