

Topic	Emotionally Healthy Spirituality
Reference	1-Samuel 2
Date	4 February 2018
Speaker	Arnold Lim

Healthy families do a lot of things together and so it is true on the physical plane, it is true also on the spiritual plane.

- The way we function as a father, wife, husband, son, daughter, etc. is more often shaped by our culture and family upbringing rather than in our new identity as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Spiritual discipleship is both the responsibility of the church and the family.

Every ministry needs a theological statement and that's our statement. You will get point 1 wrong, you will get point 2 wrong, they interconnect.

Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

He didn't say 'ask the Sunday School to do it', he didn't say 'ask the youth to do it', I will teach my kids math and science and do well in school, we are going to subcontract that out to the church. So it is very-very important. Here is a simple example, Paul's key disciple was Timothy. The up building of Timothy came from his grandmother. It was Eunice who brought up him, then the mother and then Paul top over it. We didn't see Timothy's dad, so it is very likely that he came from a dysfunctional family, but the grandmother took over and so did the mom. We are going to look at

- *Generational Identities*
- *Generational Relationships*
- *Generational Strongholds*

THE GENEALOGY OF ELI:

Eli had two sons. He had a protégé (apprentice). Out of the apprentice he had two sons and that he had another son called Heman. Eli is a big shot, he is the descendant of Aaron, the high priest. He come from an important family and his line had the privilege of being high priest. In fact, the generation comes from the time of Egypt. From the time of Moses God has picked his family and this entire family were the high priests. On top of that, this is the time before the line

of kings enters Israel before Saul ascends the throne and he was the judge. Now that's very important. In not so many words Eli was probably the single most influential and powerful figure in Israel.

He had a protégé called Samuel. Samuel was the son of Hannah and she dedicated the son to the Lord service. In many ways, Eli raised Samuel as an old man. So Samuel is not just an apprentice, is very much like a foster son, get the family line right and we can get to the story. Now we look at the two sons and the father is such an important man, the two sons are bad news. Chapter 2, the verse starts, *The sons of Eli had no regard for the Lord (2:12)*

In the Hebrew version it says, *The sons of Eli behaved as the sons of Belial,*

That's the son of the devil. They were not just bad; they were really bad. Their father was a big personality in the nation, they were the toll keeper. Any meat that came to the offering to the God, they check the meat first and they took the best, the one with all the good things they took, the leftovers they gave to God. Nobody could stop them, if someone opposes, they do it by force. Who is going to stop them? Actually only their father could have stopped them. After that nobody stopped them, they go and sleep around with woman in the temple and so the text says,

"The sin of the young men were very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt." 2:17

The high priest basically represents the covenant with Israel, but it was a severe sin. Eli didn't do anything about it, so the practice went on unabated and God's anger was very high and God sent a man of God to pronounce a curse. The punishment was onto Eli, to the sons and to the generations. He put a generational curse onto the line.

When you are son of somebody important you tend to have an attitude, the word is called entitlement. So it was with Eli's sons, son of the most important person. When you are rich, you got an attitude, because you are not used to struggling and entitlement often comes with abuse. What is it saying is that? Your identity as a person is framed by your family background and you don't realize it. You think you are special because your father did many great things.

In Genesis after Abel passes on, two lines come out, Seth and Cain. If you look at the line of Cain; the first town planner he built Putrajaya, the first musician they build all the music instruments. The first guy who did agriculture, all of them. The line of Cain is a line of achievers, but there is only one problem with the line of Cain, they had no respect for God, they were playing around with women, they started polygamy, they started vengeance, they started boardroom politics. The line of Seth if you read it, all nobody one, but the line of Seth is a

Godly line. So here is the lesson to us. God doesn't care if your father is very important, God is not saying that is wrong but don't let that unconsciously effect your identity. Remember behaviour is 90% unconscious.

Now we look at his protégé, Samuel. He got two sons also. If Eli's two sons were priests and Eli was a priest and a judge, Samuel's sons were judges too. Every commentator picked it up, the sons of Samuel were also bad and every commentary picked up the parallel. The sons of Eli used their position for greed and so did the sons of Samuel and they did this very good. They were corrupted to the core.

The text tells us that the line is cursed and the house of Eli will lose its priesthood. Before that all things will happen, they will all die young, they will become poor, they have to beg but finally in Kings we find the last priest is replaced by the house of Zadok and the line ends. The same way the line of Cain ends at the flood, but the line of Seth continues on to Christ and you find that genealogy in Luke.

Now we find that Joel has a son, now following the same theory, is the son cursed. Now here we want to talk about something which people like to tell out there that you got a generational curse, you got a soul tie and you got to break it. They tell you, your behaviour can be traced back to your great-grandfather because he was a priest in the Hindu temple and you have the spirit of Siva and they will get three people to lay hands on you and break that. So that's why in some churches when you become Christian, they go to your house, they go and clean the whole house out. Chinese New Year, you cannot had dragon, because there is the tie and they come and tell you, a lot of your problem is you need to break that generational curse, you break it your life is okay. ***I want to suggest humbly, there is no biblical basis for this.***

The curse is actually found in the second part of chapter 2, God sends a man of God to put pronouncement on the house of Eli but before that Eli talks to the sons, like any good father he tries to rationalize and after Eli tells the sons what they did was wrong, the verse tells us

His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death. 2:25

Meaning the sons choose not to listen to the father, but the next verse was interesting. So this two goes in parallel;

1. one God made a decision on the destiny of the sons,
2. In parallel the sons rejected God.

You can almost hear echoes of the story of Pharaoh, because we are told at the time of Moses, God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, but Pharaoh has decided to turn away and not listen to

Moses. So there is something you must understand about divine providence and human decision. If God says, you know I curse your line, it means that line also decides to disobey God. It is never a case of a person where God curses that line, that line honors God, the curse still goes on them. That is nonsense, but more importantly I want to pick up this verse.

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; the report I hear spreading among the Lord’s people is not good. 25 If one person sins against another, God may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the Lord, who will intercede for them?”

If you sin against someone else, God can intercede, but you sin against God, the only person who can intercede for God is God and so when we look at that we remember the words of 1-Timothy

For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. 1 Tim 2:5

Generational curse is what we call covenant language, is a covenant curse. It is unbiblical to go to everyone to say, you got a bad temper because you have a spirit of a snake in you because of your mom or your dad. You have this lustful behaviour because I trace it back to somewhere in your uncle and he had a very bad addiction and so that line came to you. That’s unbiblical. What we are having here is covenant language, which says, God says I have given the line to Eli and Eli must go in obedience and

30 “Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.’ But now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.

Meaning God has covenant with Eli, you disobey the covenant breaks. Same pattern, God says Saul here is the covenant, you didn’t destroy the Canaanites, I break that covenant. Israelites, I will bless you, I will be your God and you will be my people, you disobey me, I break that covenant, it goes to the gentiles. The issue is not about curse and blessings, the issue here is about obedience and disobedience. Now in the New Testament, we are all in the covenant with Christ, that covenant is dependent on obedience. If you willfully break that covenant, there is no covenant.

If you feel you have a struggle, claim the power of Christ. There is no curse that the power of Christ cannot break, because Christ mediates for us. We see this Heman becomes somebody very respectable, he breaks the line and lot of people believe it is the same Heman who wrote Psalm 88 and when you read it one of the interesting verses it says, ‘I was afflicted since young’.

He had a bad father but he grew up right. It is same with the story of Ruth, Moabite, widow, bad line and out of Ruth comes the line of Jesus.

Some Christians say,

- My family ran a very successful company for many generations. I need to take the company to higher heights or I would be a failure. ***Your identity is framed by family pressure.***
- My dad beat my mum and we grew up poor, just like my grandfather. I am destined to be a nobody. I can never succeed. ***This curse is self-generated. You are letting your family line define your identity.***
- In my family and culture we cannot lose face. We don't talk about our issues with outside people. I cannot bring shame to my family name. ***You got problem, you bury it inside, thus has it been for generations.***
- I was divorced twice. My fortune teller told me I would be lucky in business but not lucky in love. ***Thinking that my genes are bad.***

Christ says we are a new creation. When you are in the world, you have a conflict. Your family ties pull you, they outside friends pull you, the good news for us as sons and daughters of God is that our identity is in Christ and there is no Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female, single parent, abused family, whatever, you are sons and daughters of Christ. You really got to never realize the extent of how your family background just shapes you.

GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- Beware of family idols.
- Beware of a compartmentalized life.
- Beware of living in denial to family issues.

When we think of family idols we think of handmade idols, but let's go back to the text again.

27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, ...

30 "Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.' But now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. 31 The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your priestly house, so that no one in it will reach old age,

The basis of this is in verse 29

“why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?” 2:29

Now that is a subtle idol. Idols don't have to come with you with a red sign and blinking lights, what was Eli's idol, his sons and God charged him that you put your sons above me. Eli is not just a priest; he was a judge too. If it wasn't his sons, he would have put whoever was doing this to death.

We have a lot of subtle idols; we don't take up. Marriage, children, your perfect family, children's education. We will do everything for our child's education. All these idols are very subtle, but they are very real, but put God first and God assures you that if you honor him, he will honor you.

We have a lot of subtle idols we don't pick up; marriage, children, your perfect family, children's education. The moment God is above all, when you honor God these things don't grapple you, because nothing messes up your day than a family argument. You try to have a fight with your wife or your father and then you go to work, the whole day you cannot think properly, but the moment God is your anchor, you pull yourself away from that, because as you are driving to work, you say God did I honor you in that fight, when you honor God you will have a better day. Honor God and God will honor you.

COMPARTMENTALIZED LIFE

Eli was just so thick skin, god doesn't just send a prophet to warn him, God uses Samuel and the story goes is that God speaks to Samuel but he doesn't get it. So Eli train Samuel to hear the voice of God and even he rebuked Samuel when Samuel doesn't want to tell him certain things. Eli was a great mentor, lousy father. He was a great preacher in church, lousy dad. He was a great bible study leader, great worship leader, he was great, Eli was fantastic, really-really messed up at home.

The bible is full of dysfunctional fathers. The mothers are much better, Ruth and Naomi, Eunice. The Bible is telling that fathers had to step up to be the head of the household. Now compartmentalized life is one of the biggest problems of the church. What it does, you think because you are serving in church God is pleased with you, but the church has just become your idol.

Scripture is teaching us to be authentic. Some of us think that we have to be very good, actually this is a lie. Kids when they look at you, they don't want to see parents always smiling, they want to see real life, fight but makeup, because when you makeup they learn forgiveness, because they see forgiveness and if mom and dad can forgive then you tell your kid Jesus died

for your sins, they get it, but if they don't see forgiveness at home, they don't see grace between mom and dad, husband and wife anything you teach them is academic. So we got to tie the two together and this is really center to our faith.

Beware of living in denial:

This is what God says to Eli through

At that time, I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family -from beginning to end. For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. 3:12-13

Now you can't say he did do anything. He tried to reason with them, but he didn't restrain them. We have a culture of silence in our society. Sometime the truth is so horrible, we choose not to believe it. Because we get emotionally involved we cannot see the wrong. In Malaysian families you don't talk about these things. Eli couldn't come to terms, his sons were that bad because he loved the boys and he paid dearly for that. This morning I want to challenge you in a very difficult truth that all of us have issues from our childhood and I think sometimes what we do as evangelical, we bury them inside because we don't want to talk about it, but they will spring out, they will come out occasionally and they will damage your life and this morning I want to challenge you to pull this out.

We understand that there is no such thing as this generational curse but let's give our charismatic friends some respect, at least they talk about it. We evangelicals, we don't talk about these things. Now let's a look at some;

- Abraham **lied** about his wife's identity when there was a famine.
- Abraham's son Isaac **lied** about his wife's identity when there was a famine.
- Isaac's son Jacob **lied** to his brother Esau and deceived him twice.
- Isaac's wife Rebekah taught Jacob how to **lie** to the father using tasty food.
- Jacob's uncle Laban **lied** to him about his marriage using a wedding feast.
- Laban's daughters **lied** to him in order to steal from the father.
- Jacob's 10 sons **lied** to him about the fate of their brother Joseph for 10 years.
- Joseph **lied** to his brothers and accused them of theft.
- Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael were **estranged**.
- Isaac's sons Jacob and Esau were **estranged**.
- Jacob's sons were all **estranged** from Joseph, his favorite son.

There is a pattern and God is telling you, that same generational pattern happens today; to me, to you. Why do some of us have anger management issues, why do some of us have bitterness issues, lust issues and you trace back, you find your family, some of them had the same issues. They call these nurture versus nature. In the same way good traits can be passed on, bad traits can also be passed on and we call this strongholds and failure to recognize this you become like Eli. He passed that onto Samuel and he went onto to the sons.

The devil works in many ways, our charismatic friends are not that wrong when they say, lets pray and release the stronghold, we get all worked up theologically, but at least they are doing something about it.

If there are issues in your family and you have buried it so far down deep inside, take it out, that is not the life God wants you to have. Do not think that we are immune, anything you read out there, the abuse or everything happens in every church, generational identities, relationship stronghold and this morning God is saying, he has a better plan for you, for when the son of man came to set you free, he sat you free.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. 4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

This morning I want to challenge you to take every emotional wound to take it to the cross. All of us need an encounter with God and when you encounter God's love, when Paul says this

Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

If you are at least do it for your children, but more so do it for your walk. After Paul prayed that he said that

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

When you are blessed you pass it to your children and your children will pass it to their children and this is what we all want.