

# John Bevere: How Can God Use Corrupt Leaders?

Many people ask, “Why does God put people under leaders who make serious mistakes and even some who are wicked?”

Look at the childhood of Samuel. (See 1 Samuel 2–5.) God, not the devil, was the One who put this young man under the authority of a corrupt priest named Eli and his two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were priests as well. These men were very wicked. They took offerings by manipulation and force, and they committed fornication with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle.

Can you imagine if you were serving a minister who lived this kind of life? A minister who was so insensitive to the things of the Spirit that he couldn't recognize a woman in prayer and accused her of being drunk! So fleshly that he was grossly overweight. So compromising that he did nothing about his sons, whom he had appointed as leaders, who were committing fornication right in the church.

Most Christians today would be offended and search for another church, telling others as they went of the wicked lifestyle of their former pastor and his leaders. In the midst of such corruption, I love the report of what young Samuel did: “Now the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli” (1 Sam. 3:1).

But corruption took its toll: “And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation” (1 Sam. 3:1). God seemed distant to the entire Hebrew community. The lamp of God was about to go out in the temple of the Lord. Yet did Samuel go look for another place to worship? Did he go to the elders to expose the wickedness of Eli and his sons? Did he form a

committee to put Eli and his sons out of the pastorate? No, he ministered to the Lord!

God had placed Samuel there, and he was not responsible for the behavior of Eli or his sons. He was put under them not to judge them but to serve them. He knew Eli was God's servant, not his. He knew that God was quite capable of dealing with His own.

Children do not correct fathers. But it is the duty of fathers to train and correct the children. We are to deal with and confront those whom God has given us to train. This is our responsibility. Those on our own level we are to encourage and exhort as brothers and sisters.

In this article, I am dealing with our response to those in authority over us. Samuel served God's appointed minister the best he could, without the pressure to judge him or correct him. The only time Samuel spoke a word of correction was when Eli came to Samuel and asked him what prophecy God had given him the night before. But even then it was not a word of correction from Samuel, but from God. If more people would get hold of this truth, our churches would be different.

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