

1 Samuel 2:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

Analysis

Eli's rebuke to his sons appears reasonable but proves ineffective. His question 'Why do ye such things?' seeks explanation rather than demanding cessation. The phrase 'I hear of your evil dealings by all this people' shows concern for reputation rather than holiness. Eli addresses their behavior's impact on public perception, not its offense against God. His approach is pastoral rather than prophetic, remedial rather than decisive. Sometimes situations require not discussion but decisive discipline - a lesson Eli never learns.

Historical Context

Eli's mild rebuke contrasts sharply with the severity required by Mosaic law. Sexual misconduct by priests warranted death (Leviticus 21:9 addresses priests' daughters; the principle extends to priests themselves). Eli's failure to act decisively constitutes dereliction of duty.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. When does pastoral gentleness become compromise with evil?
2. How do you distinguish between situations requiring discussion versus decisive action?

Interlinear Text

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