

**Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer**  
**They Answer the Call**  
**1 Samuel 3**

**Introduction:** One of the common traits of people who truly influence others to know and follow Christ is that they answer the call of God in their life, whatever that call may be. This is not only true of the Godly influencers in Biblical history, but of every single person God has used throughout history to influence vast multitudes to Christ, right down to the unwritten histories of the millions of Christ followers that answered the call to influence their own family and neighbors. One such story is a man named Hudson Taylor. I'm not going to take the time to give you his entire story this morning, but I do encourage you to learn about it.

Hudson Taylor was born in 1832 in England. At the age of seventeen he surrendered his life to Jesus and soon thereafter to the work of bringing the Gospel to China. That call later became a vision to specifically bring the Gospel to the inland areas of China that missionaries generally never ventured. His absolute tenacious commitment to excellence in everything he did was a testimony of who He believed called Him and to what He was called to do. He used the study and practice of medicine, not to earn great wealth for himself, but rather to earn the trust of the Chinese as he served the poor. The truly sacrificial commitment he and his entire family had to this calling completely revolutionized missions as we know it. Two of my favorite quotes from Hudson Taylor are,

**“Christ is either Lord of all or He isn't Lord at all.” – Hudson Taylor**<sup>1</sup>

**“There are commonly three stages in the work of God. First impossible, then difficult, then done.” – Hudson Taylor**<sup>2</sup>

One website, committed to documenting the history of Christianity in China, noted of Taylor,

**“At the time of his death in 1905, the CIM had 825 members in all provinces of China, more than 300 mission stations, more than 500 local Chinese helpers, and 25,000 Chinese converts. It was the largest and most international of all the missions in China ... with over 800 members from a number of nations, who had taken the gospel into every province of the empire and had gained the respect of other missionaries, many British government officials, and thousands of Chinese. Churches, schools, and hospitals dotted the land, staffed by not only missionaries but by an equal number of Chinese Christian helpers. Several other missionary societies had been brought into**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bdconline.net/en/stories/taylor-james-hudson>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bdconline.net/en/stories/taylor-james-hudson>

**being largely as a result of Taylor's itinerant work of promoting the cause of China in Europe, North America, and Australia."**<sup>3</sup>

There is perhaps no one in modern history that has influenced more people to the cause of Christ than Hudson Taylor. In addition, his influence started a much-needed revolution in missions itself as he refused to align with the efforts to westernize cultures rather than evangelize and disciple them. As a result, Taylor Hudson revived the Pauline approach to missions, also known as Biblical Missions, through his commitment to creating self-sustaining missions' movements within cultures that are ultimately led by the indigenous people of that culture.

My point however in bringing up the incredible life story of Hudson Taylor, is that it started with a call, first to surrender his life to Jesus, then later to live his life for the cause of bringing the Gospel to those who had no access to it in China; both of which he answered with a resounding yes. For every person who has ever rightly influenced a person to know and follow Jesus, the process has been the same. At some point in their life, they finally believed the Gospel and surrendered their life to Jesus. However, in addition, whether at the moment of their salvation, or later in their spiritual growth, they also realized God was not calling them to live in an isolated relationship with Him, but rather to be used by Him to influence others to know and follow Him as well; to bask in the glories of HIS LIFE FOREVER!

**17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)**

In 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter three we see this clear simultaneous call happen with Samuel. However, Samuel is not only called into a personal relationship with God, and as such, an influencer of others to know and follow Him, but more specifically, God calls Samuel to something very rare, and powerful, and heavily burdensome—be a Prophet.

**Proposition: 1 Samuel 3:1-21 gives us 4 unique insights about the calling of Samuel as a prophet.**

**The first unique insight is in verses 1 through 3.**

**(1) The Lord called Samuel at a time He rarely spoke to His people. (3:1-3)**

- A. 1 Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://bdconline.net/en/stories/taylor-james-hudson>

- B.** “young man” - “As a term for relative age, it denotes a male above the age of infancy and young childhood (דָּלֵךְ, *yeled*), but not yet a full-fledged “man” (אִישׁ, *ish*, גֶּבֶר, *gever*). It is not clear where Josephus got his information that Samuel was twelve years old (πεπληρωκὸς ἔτος ἤδη δωδέκατον, *peplērōkōs etos ēdē dōdekaton*, *Ant.* V 348) at the time of his prophetic call.”<sup>4</sup>
- C.** “Ultimately, it is unclear why Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary where the ark of God was located. The expression does not require that he was sleeping near the ark, merely that he was in the same large hall where the ark was housed. If there was no separate chamber available for him to call his own, perhaps that was the only place left for him to sleep in. It is unthinkable that he was given a preferential place, better than what was set aside for Eli. The fact that Eli slept in a room (מִקְוֹמוֹ, *meqomo*, “his place”) close by the sanctuary and not in a separate house with his wife suggests that he was now an elderly widower. His female caregivers may have been his daughters-in-law, the wives of Hophni and Phinehas.”<sup>5</sup>
- D.** “When Samuel heard God’s voice, the lamp was still alight, *i.e.* it was just before dawn.”<sup>6</sup>
- E.** “The ark was a gold-plated wooden box that contained the two stone tablets of the Law with the engraved words, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2, 3; also see Exodus 25:10–16).”<sup>7</sup>
- F.** The job of the prophet is to correctly and authoritatively speak and apply the Word of God to His people. Biblically, it is not something you sign up for, but rather something you can only properly do for God if you are called and gifted by God to do it. False prophets do it for themselves, even if they are speaking God’s Word, which consequently, they only speak enough of to fool everybody into believing the things they say that are not God’s Word. Point being, in Samuel’s day, it wasn’t as if God had not used anyone as a prophetic voice in Israel, but rather that it was rare. For instance, in the previous chapter an unnamed prophet came to Eli an announced God’s condemnation on Eli and his family.
- G.** “... the rarity of revelation through prophets hints at Yahweh’s displeasure with his people (Psa 74:9; Lam 2:9; Amos 8:11; Mic 3:6–7) and an accompanying lack of moral restraint on the part of the people (Prov 29:19).”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 3:1–3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>5</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 3:3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> Payne, D. F. (1994). [1 and 2 Samuel](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 300). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>7</sup> Woodhouse, J. (2008). [1 Samuel: Looking for a leader](#) (pp. 73–77). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>8</sup> Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (1 Sa 3:1–3). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- H. When I was growing up one of the tactics some of my teachers would use when we weren't paying attention was to talk real quiet and even just stop talking until the classroom realized we were creating a real problem for ourselves. If the teacher's not teaching, we aren't learning, and the pop-quiz she's going to drop on us is going to be real ugly!
- I. The people of God had continued to worship idols, and its spiritual leaders, the men God had blessed to mediate between He and the people, were completely corrupt, including Eli. Is there any wonder then why God rarely spoke; in general, nobody was interested in listening!

**The second unique insight is in verses 4 through 9.**

**(2) When the Lord called Samuel, Samuel had been serving Him but did not know Him. (3:4-9)**

**A. 4 Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" 5 and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. 6 And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.**

1. This is kind of comical. Twice, God calls Samuel and both times he jumps up and runs to Eli's room thinking it was Eli!
2. Verse seven however takes us from the comedy of the moment to a much more serious matter. Samuel is running to Eli's room because He doesn't know the Lord yet. He doesn't recognize the voice at all, but because it's a male voice, he assumes it must be Eli. In addition, God had not yet revealed His WORD to Him. Now, when it comes to the written word of God, Samuel would have heard it read every day of his life and by this time he would have learned to even read it for himself. However, its one thing to audibly hear the word of God read, or in this case God Himself speaking audibly, but it's an entirely different thing to truly comprehend and be influenced by it as God's Word. How is that possible? Well,
  - a. **11 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I will send a famine on the land-- not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. (Amos 8:11)**

**Note:** It's not the Word of the Lord will not be available, but rather it won't be able to be heard!

**b. 14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)**

3. Until God opens our ears to hear, we can't hear! Until He opens our eyes to see we can't see. We are spiritual deaf and blind because we are dead in sins and trespasses. As such, up to this point in Samuel's life He knows what the Law of God commands and he's been doing it, but his heart has not yet been quickened to the voice of God, to truly know Him. Samuel's been serving Him, but he doesn't have a relationship with Him. So, the comedy is repeated one more time.

**B. 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the young man. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.**

1. At this point, Eli realizes something significant is happening; that, or he's just tired of Samuel waking him up! Most scholars believe that despite Eli's sin and rebellion, he's still nonetheless knowledgeable of who God is and how He works, therefore he recognizes something of a spiritual nature is taking place.
2. Eli is a man that we see do Godly things while being completely ungodly. For instance, with a true empathetic heart he prays for Hannah and Elkanah but does so while being completely complicit in the greedy, materialistic and totally sinful practices of the priests in the temple. It's that simultaneous spiritual bipolarism that we see in this passage as well. Eli, whose living a hypocritical life, recognizes that God is speaking to Samuel, but Samuel, who is faithfully serving the Lord, doesn't.
3. On the other hand, in telling Samuel to go back to bed and respond to God the next time, there doesn't seem to be any personal interest in what God is saying or doing. God, who rarely spoke to His people, was speaking to Eli's servant, and Eli didn't seem to be energized or alerted by it at all! Perhaps it was because Eli already knew what God was likely going to tell Samuel based on the last time somebody brought him a word from God. This leads us to the third unique insight of Samuel's calling.

**The third unique insight is in verses 10 through 18.**

**(3) The first Word God gave Samuel to preach was heavy. (3:10-18)**

**A. 10 And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." 11 Then the**

**LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. 14 Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." 15 Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. 16 But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." 17 And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you." 18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him."**

- B. I don't believe Samuel is afraid because he thinks Eli is going to lash out at him, but rather, because the word Samuel is supposed to give Eli is so brutal! Likely, especially given the fact Samuel was young, there was some degree of admiration for Eli. Eli is the High Priest, and he seems to treat Samuel and his parents with dignity and respect. There is no doubt Samuel had to have known and even witnessed the depraved actions of the priests with the sacrifices. He likely even knew about the sexual abuse committed by Eli's sons, as well as Eli's refusal to do anything about it. So, knowing that, why wouldn't he be eager to go lay it on Eli?
- C. It's important to remember Samuel is a young man at best, and given the special relationship Samuel had with Eli, Samuel would have seen all the good that Eli was doing as well, and likely given him the benefit of the doubt in some way; wrestling with what his eyes were seeing in one place that contrasted so starkly with what he saw elsewhere. The relationship Samuel had with Eli would have certainly caused a great deal of mental and emotional conflict for Samuel. That internal conflict, and potentially even denial, happens when we are exposed to the depravity of those we view as our heroes. There is no wonder that Samuel didn't want to tell Eli that God was done with him.
- D. This presents an important question we need to address. How can God turn on Eli like this? How can He say there is no atonement left for Eli and his sons? Let me explain. When Israel violated the covenant God made with them (sinned), the laws of the Covenant stated they were no longer eligible for the blessings of the Covenant. However, the Law also provided a way to atone, that is, cover, or pay for those sins. Through various specific sacrifices and rituals that were prescribed in the Law, a person who REPENTED could receive forgiveness and still enjoy the promised blessings. However, God tells Eli that he and his sons have gone beyond what He will allow the sacrificial system to cover, and the reason is they have refused to repent. God had made it very clear in the law that He would judge their sins. The sacrificial system certainly gave them the

opportunity to repent, but Eli and his sons had participated in and propagated a custom of using the atoning sacrifices for selfish gain! God was done with their abuse.

- E.** Now a person might say, “but what about King David? What he did was terrible.” We are going to learn a lot more about that later in our study of Samuel, so let me just say the Scriptures are clear that David sinned, but David also had a heart after God and repented! There is no heart of repentance in Eli and his sons at all.
- F.** Even this side of the cross there is no atonement without repentance. If you and I want the blood of Christ to be applied to our life and rescue us from our state of being under the judgement of God, then we must repent! You don’t go to heaven because your parents or grandparents were good Christians; nor do you go to heaven because you lived a moral life and helped people. You go to heaven only if the blood of Jesus atones for you being a sinner, and that only happens if you repent and surrender your life to Jesus!
1. The Bible is clear that the blood of Jesus atones for our sin. **28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)**
  2. However, the atoning work of the blood of Christ is limited to those who repent! Luke records Jesus teaching His disciples this very truth,
  3. **45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:45-47)**
  4. The blood of Jesus does not atone for those who refuse to repent and surrender their lives to Him!
  5. Its why Peter preached,
  6. **38 "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)**
- G.** And listen, to those who read this passage and get all excited about God audibly speaking, what we need to understand is that the experience of God audibly speaking is never what’s important, it’s what God says when HE SPEAKS that’s important! I posted this to my Facebook and Instagram this past week. John Woodhouse wrote,

- H. **“When God speaks, it is not some kind of mystical experience, in which it is the experience of hearing that matters. When God speaks, what matters is what God says.”<sup>9</sup>**
- I. We live in a world where everybody wants to have a supernatural experience of hearing God speak to them, all while the fact remains that He has spoken very clearly through His Son. The problem isn’t that God has not spoken, but rather that we don’t listen! We want an experience, not the truth. Its why so many can leave a worship service where God was stirring in a magnificent way and walk right out the door the same person they were when they came in! They want to witness and experience the spiritual, not be transformed by the truth! This was Eli and his sons! They witnessed and experienced the spiritual at a certain level everyday they served in the temple, but they had no desire to actually know and follow God! God’s word meant nothing to them, but for Samuel it meant everything! This leads us to the fourth unique insight about his calling.

**The fourth unique insight is in verses 19 through 21.**

**(4) The Lord established Samuel’s ministry. (3:19-21)**

- A. **19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.**
- B. The emphasis is on the LORD, not Samuel! THE LORD was with him, THE LORD let none of his words fall to the ground, and as such everybody knew Samuel WAS ESTABLISHED as His prophet, as in, it was done to him, but not by him. God is the one who established Samuel, not Samuel! Samuel wasn’t even “established” by the people. He wasn’t elected to be the prophet, but rather because God demonstrated that He had called Samuel to be a prophet the people followed him.
- C. On that, be sure and understand that verse 19 does not mean that whatever Samuel spoke came to pass, in that Samuel got to decide what would come to pass. “Word of faith” ministries will use this verse as part of a proof text method to say if you are a born-again believer you can speak things into existence as Samuel did. They say because you are now a child of God, God will do whatever you declare Him to do. If you declare it to be so then God has already made it so. So let me be clear, that ain’t so! The calling of a prophet was not to declare to the Lord, but rather declare to the people, “what sayeth the Lord,” because the LORD Himself actually said it! Declaring anything as God’s Word, or as having God’s authority, other than what GOD has actually said, is called false prophecy! This is

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<sup>9</sup> Woodhouse, J. (2008). [\*1 Samuel: Looking for a leader\*](#) (pp. 79–82). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.



why we can confidently declare what we read in our Bible. Those are HIS Words! However, we don't get to say something we want God to do and then expect Him to submit to it!

- D. So, when God calls God declares! All knew Samuel was called, not because Samuel declared it to the people, but because God demonstrated it! This is true not just in a calling to ministry, but more prominently in being called to HIM as His child! He testifies through His children that they are HIS so that all know it!! I don't tell people I'm Christian to make it so, I tell people I'm a Christian because it is so! Furthermore, when I tell people I'm a Christian, they only believe, or should believe it, if God is declaring it to be so by demonstrating His life in and through me! This takes me right to the challenge.

**Challenge: Are you embracing the privilege, purpose and responsibility of your calling as a Child of God or tossing it aside as Eli and his sons did?**

**9 (Privilege) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, (Purpose) that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 (Responsibility) Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:9-12)**

If you repented and believed in Jesus you did so because God called you. – **“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,”**

If He called you to be His child then He also called and equipped you into His purpose. – **“that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”**

However, we cannot forget that our privilege to be HIS and be used in His purpose, comes with the responsibility inherent to His calling and purpose! Therefore, Peter said, **“11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”**

In chapter two, we saw that the immoral and unethical actions of Eli's sons were being talked about to other nations. The news of their sin had traveled abroad! Oh, that the news of our transformation would travel abroad; the news of the life we have in Him, that only comes from Him, and is fully available to all who repent and believe in HIM. May that be what is said of us so that heads and hearts are turned to the **excellencies of Him who**

**called** us! May we be the Godly influence to our generation and the ones to come that He has blessed us to be! May we answer the call!