

AFRAID

TO

TELL

ELI

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To refresh your memory of the story of the child Samuel and Eli (which is not printed here for the sake of space), please read 1 Samuel 3:1-19. In our text, young Samuel had every right to be afraid to tell Eli about the Lord's judgment. Eli's wicked sons profaned the temple and were not restrained by Eli. Because of this lack of restraint, God made an oath to bring calamity upon his house. These were certainly harsh words for young Samuel to relate. Notice the wording in verse 15: "And Samuel *lay until the morning*, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel *feared* to shew Eli the vision." I tend to think he didn't sleep very much—if at all—that night, after receiving this revelation from God. Perhaps he tossed and turned, worrying about what God told him to do. I began to ponder that a bit, as it relates to our telling one another the "hard things." Are we afraid to tell our brother or sister things which the Lord has revealed to us about them? It may not be from a dream or a vision, but it is definitely something that God has revealed through the Word, experience, or observation.

Many times things are very clear to us ... we know we should say something to others, but we "**fear telling Eli**" about ... a character flaw that could hinder their growth; mannerisms or sinful habits that distance them from their brethren, their children, or their wife; sayings that are not becoming of a Christian (e.g., slang, soft curse words); actions that do not show forth Christ in the community and that damage the witness of the church; words that have hurt and have "separated very friends" (e.g., critical, judgmental remarks); foolish jesting; lack of parental guidance of their

children; worldliness, materialism, covetousness, and debt; dishonesty; lack of submission by a wife or daughter; immodesty of dress and tendency toward the world's fashions; improper music; lack of zeal for the Lord ...

Sometimes we see these things, and we are rightly concerned, but we don't say anything to the brother or sister ... because we are "afraid to tell Eli." Sometimes we have trepidation when it comes to confronting a brother or sister with sins, or even just to clear up a misconception. We fear it. We may even lay awake at night worrying about it. Maybe we don't mention it. Often we don't bring these things forth because we are timid and don't want to confront someone. Many, like me, are just *non-confrontational*. We'd just as soon not bloody our nose in a matter, so we just avoid the issue. Maybe we know that we have a beam in our own eye, and don't bother with the mote in other's eyes. Perhaps we want to "protect" them from hurt feelings or angry feelings, and in so-doing, we *enable* them to continue in their transgressions. Maybe we feel so insecure about our relationship that we fear they may not want to fellowship with us anymore. Or, could it be that we don't want to appear as if we have all the answers, and are holier in some way than they are?

Sometimes, we are like the man described in Proverbs 22:13: "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets." The spiritually slothful man avoids "telling Eli" because of fear. After all, there are lions just waiting to slay us! *He will bite my head off! He'll put me in my place! He will point out greater sins in my own life! He will question my motives and expose my own wick-*

edness. Because of these ferocious “lions,” we find ourselves “afraid to tell Eli.” Whatever the reason, if we don’t go to a brother or sister, we don’t help them. That should be the main goal—to help someone be closer to Christ. But, we find ourselves paralyzed by fear.

Fearful people in Scripture

Friends, if this describes you, rest assured that you are not alone in this debilitating fear. Scripture tells of others who have walked in your shoes. At least nine months had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and he was not inclined to repent of his sin, but chose to conceal



**If I confront him with his sin,
he will bite my head off!**

it. Nathan could have lost his head for confronting David with this rebuke, but masterfully presented a word picture to David that brought him to full repentance. Certainly Nathan could have “feared to tell David,” but he boldly told him, “Thou art the man!”

Elijah could have *feared* to confront Ahab and Jezebel with their sinful ways, but instead, he called down fire from heaven upon the offering of bullocks. The results of that confrontation were not readily apparent to Elijah, but all things were revealed in God’s timing.

Young Daniel could have *feared* the King and agreed to eat the King’s meat and drink his wine, but he made a clever appeal to authority, worked within that authority structure, and God gave him the desire of his heart. The main thing is that Daniel did not fear his master to the point of doing something that violated his conscience and his religion.

Namaan’s servants could have *feared* to confront their master with the good advice to dip seven times in the muddy Jordan, but did what was best for their master and for them. They could have been slain for such boldness, but this did not deter them. “And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, *My father*, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?” 2 Ki. 5:13 Notice their reverence and honor in saying “*My father*,” but then they skillfully reasoned with him.

In Jesus’ parable of the talents, we see how the unprofitable servant *feared* his master as a man who was “hard” and who reaped where he had not sowed. He saw him as unapproachable. With this perception, he stayed clear of confrontation and did what he thought was the safest thing. In so doing, he did not profit or benefit the master and he lost any reward he might have realized! Why? Because he was “afraid to tell Eli”!

In these examples, we see that we can either be frozen by fear, and not confront sin—or be bold, and expose it.

Genuine love demands confrontation

If I truly love my brother, I will put aside all of my “fears” and go to him in love, for his benefit. This love will outweigh all fears or reservations that I might have. Agape love is a self-sacrificing love; it is a love that loves without expecting anything in return. If we love with agape love, we will want to see that others are right with God. “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: *thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*” Le. 19:17 Clearly, then, my love demands that I do not “suffer sin upon him.” The writer of Proverbs tells us that we are being faithful when we bring the tough words of rebuke: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” Pr. 27:6

Faithful rebukes and admonitions stem from agape love. They are genuine, not pretentious, and never malicious or judgmental. Their only purpose is to reconcile our brother back to a holy God. On the other hand, if we are “*afraid to tell Eli*,” we will be deceitful and be no friend at all. Godly confrontation is born of self-denial; we must die to our selfish desire to avoid confrontation and to have others feel badly about us. Let’s be honest—when we choose to avoid godly confrontation, we are thinking about *our* situation, not *theirs*. When we avoid the unpleasantness of confrontation, our brother is denied life-changing admonition; and that is not love, but selfishness. We must deny self. “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Pr. 27:17 Self-denial will allow us to overcome being “*afraid to tell Eli*,” because we want to sharpen one another ... not leave the other spiritually dull.

Danger in holding back

In 1 Samuel 3:17, Eli said, “What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he said unto thee.” Eli had good reason to believe that Samuel had bad news for him, because God chose to speak to young Samuel rather than to him—God’s priest. He knew he had neglected to heed the admonition, and he expected the worst. Obediently, and boldly, “Samuel told him every whit, and *hid nothing from him.*” 1 Sa. 3:18a

Eli threatened Samuel with a curse if he held anything back from him, so he shared the revelation. That’s how we need to be with each other. We should not harbor wrong ideas and let them color our perceptions of others. We should not “overlook” other’s faults or sins in the guise of love. When we “hold back every whit” we get into trouble; relations degrade and become shallow. This only weakens the body.

There is a great danger in hiding things from one another. If the Lord has revealed something to you, and you keep it from your brother, his blood is on your hands. The apostle Paul said in Acts 20:26-27: “Wherefore I take

you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God.*” When we hold things back, we are guilty of feigned fellowship. Our fellowship is pretentious and hypocritical. 1 Pe. 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit *unto unfeigned love of the brethren*, see that ye love one another with a *pure heart fervently.*” When we feign fellowship by holding back needed admonition, we are guilty of the three D’s:

Dishonesty: Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things *honest in the sight of all men.* Ro. 12:17

Deceitfulness: A true witness delivereth souls: but a *deceitful* witness speaketh lies. Pr. 14:25

The heart is *deceitful* above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Je. 17:9

Defrauding: That no man go beyond and *defraud his brother in any matter:* because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 1 Th. 4:6

If I have anything against a brother, or see something amiss in his life, or have a wrong perception of something he did, and yet act as if all is fine, it is *dishonest, deceitful, and defrauding.* We cannot hide behind the excuse that we are “afraid to tell Eli.” “*Bread of deceit* is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.” Pr. 20:17

Biblical correction

Clearly, we do not want to have the motive of exposing a brother or placing evil motives on him. In Scripture, this is a shown to be a form of reviling. Regarding “correction,” there are three ways to properly correct—*reprove, rebuke, and exhort*; and there are two ways that are not proper—*reviling and railing.*

In 2 Timothy 4:2, we see the three acceptable types of correction: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; *reprove, rebuke, exhort* with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Let’s examine these a bit closer:

Reprove (*elegcho*) to tell someone of his fault, to admonish, to convince someone of his error; to give evidence; to convict.

Rebuke (*epitimao*) to command, to charge, to order; to admonish

Exhort (*parakaleo*) to beg, to urge; to encourage, to request, to ask, to appeal to; to console, to comfort, to cheer up; to call to one side and urge to pursue a course of action.

The basic motive for reproofing must be to restore the offending brother, not to expose him. If our motive is to expose, it is reviling. If it is to belittle and ridicule, it is

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railing. Let’s look at these terms:

Revile (*oneidizo*) to reproach, to denounce, to insult, to taunt, to chide, to reproach, to speak evil of, be abusive

Rail (*blasphemeo*) to vilify; to speak impiously; to defame; to speak evil

Because it is imperative that we know how to properly “tell Eli,” let’s examine the concept of reproofing versus reviling.

1) Be redemptive. The basic motive behind a loving reproof or rebuke is that of restoring a brother by our admonition. We must first and foremost seek to be redemptive.

“Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering.” 2 Ti. 4:2

“Wherefore rebuke them sharply, *that they may be sound in the faith.*” Ti. 1:13

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Ga. 6:1

On the other hand, the motive behind reviling and railing is to expose a brother whom we have already judged. This brings shame and disgrace and, most likely, will turn a brother away from God or cause him to harden his heart. This is certainly not redemptive. Let’s look two examples of this. “And one of the malefactors which were hanged *railed on him*, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and

us. But the other answering *rebuked him*, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" Lu. 23:39-40 "And they that passed by *railed on him*, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." Mr. 15:29-30

Brothers, while it is vital that we "*tell Eli*," let us be sure to search our hearts and motives beforehand. Our purpose must only be to restore a brother, and to be redemptive, not to expose or ridicule. If we are "afraid to tell Eli" as it were, perhaps it's because we have the wrong motive at heart. If our motive is to expose or revile, we will most likely do this in a public setting, with the intention of exposing him before other brothers. That is sin. If we have a pure heart that sees reproof as *redemptive*, then we will go to that brother or sister privately and share our concerns. This is all borne out of love for his soul. Here are some questions to ponder:

- Do we desire to expose a brother, or to expose sin?
- Do we secretly desire to bring them down a peg, or to build them up in the faith?
- Do we want to "exact a pound of flesh," or to "provide a pound of cure"?
- Do we seek to condemn, or to encourage?
- Do we purpose to lecture, or to counsel?

If we have the wrong motives, the Lord may still "do what seemeth Him good" ... but more than likely our efforts will fail utterly! Misplaced motives are iniquity. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will *bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, and will *make manifest the counsels of the hearts*: and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Co. 4:5 If we have the proper motives, which are born of love and godly concern, it will be *redemptive* in love.

2) Employ both truth and love. One who reproves or rebukes must be sure to combine both love and truth when correcting a brother. Truth without love is harshness. Love without truth is compromise. "As many as I *love*, I *rebuke* and *chasten*: be zealous therefore, and repent." Re. 3:19 Paul reveals one key reason for upholding *truth with love* in 1 Timothy 5:20: "Them that sin *rebuke before all*, that others also may fear."

One who reviles or rails—sanctimoniously judges others—does his deed and then washes his hands of the matter. He is definitely not redemptive in motive! "Then they *reviled him*, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." Jo. 9:28-29

Friends, redemptive admonition will demand that we rebuke with both truth and love!

We must love enough to deliver truth to others. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Ep. 4:15 "Wherefore putting away lying, *speaking every man truth with his neighbor*: for we are members one of another." Ep. 4:25 Charity is the key. It will help us overcome the "fear of telling Eli." When we realize that their soul suffers because of our inability to open our mouth and speak truth, then we realize the need to let charity have its perfect work.

3) Know the limitations. One who reproves or rebukes must be aware of certain limitations. Consider these passages:

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." 1 Ti. 5:19-20 There may arise occasions when a minister must be rebuked, but there are clear

guidelines that must be followed. Depending on the severity of the matter, it might be permissible to "tell Eli" of a simple concern. More serious matters would dictate "telling Eli" in the presence of two or three witnesses.

This parameter of two or three witnesses was established in Deuteronomy 17:6.

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren." 1 Ti. 5:1 Here, Paul speaks about the aged, not the ministry. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* says this word is *presbuteros* and is "used in the usual sense of an older man, not a minister, as is shown by *as a father*." Paul advised Timothy that if aged persons transgressed, they must be rebuked fraternally, with humility and gentleness, giving deference to their years.

Another limitation is found in Jude 8-9: "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, *durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee*." We learn here that even though dignitaries may be evil and deserve rebuke, they should never be the subject of reviling or railing. Jude says that the archangel Michael himself did not rail against Satan—the chief of wickedness—but said, "*the Lord rebuke thee*." Again, we need to know the Scriptural boundaries and bring a godly and Scriptural reproof.

Abigail and Nabal

Let's look at an example that shows the points we have brought thus far, but where less than ideal actions were tak-

Do we secretly desire to bring them down a peg, or to build them up in the faith?

en. In 1 Samuel 25 we read of an evil man named Nabal, who had many sheep. Nabal's shepherds had traveled with David's men, when David was fleeing from Saul, and David's men provided a wall of safety for them, and "hurt them not." When it came shearing time, David sent ten men to Nabal, seeking a reward of food for their efforts. But, Nabal railed against them saying "Who is this David, and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?"

David's men related that Nabal railed against them, so David made ready for war. Then, one of Nabal's servants who had been with David, appealed to Abigail. 1 Sa. 25:14-17 The servant was "afraid to tell Nabal." Then Abigail, rather than going to her husband, prepared 200 loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep, five measures of parched corn, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 cakes of figs, and took them to David. Abigail too, was "afraid to tell Nabal."

We read of her appeal to David in 1 Samuel 25:23-26.

Because of Abigail's intervention, David's wrath is averted and all seems well. When Nabal sobered up from his feasting, Abigail shared what she had done. The Bible says that when he heard it, "his heart died within him and he became as a stone." The Lord smote him ten days later and he died. Then David took Abigail to wife. What lessons do we learn from this account?

1. **Nabal was not approachable.** Proper appeals should have been made to him by the servant and also by Abigail, but he had a reputation for being a churlish man and a "son of Belial." Things may have gone much differently for him if he had been kind and open to reproof.
2. **Not redemptive to Nabal.** The results of the servant and of Abigail were not redemptive in nature toward Nabal. They wanted to preserve their lives and prevent destruction at the hands of David and his men, but they did not seek to achieve this through Nabal. And, neither party sought to preserve Nabal's reputation, but exposed him and reviled him.
3. **Nabal was not appealed to.**

i. David sent ten men to Nabal rather than make the appeal himself in person

ii. The servant made his appeal to Abigail rather than to Nabal

iii. Abigail made her appeal directly to David, rather than to her husband Nabal

4. **Nabal was judged.** Nabal was not given the opportunity to explain himself. Both the servant and Abigail judged him for being a "son of Belial" and never went to him.



**Had Nabal been more approachable,
Abigail may have felt more like appealing
to him, rather than stepping out from
under his authority and appealing to David.**

The fact is that Saul had the priests killed just for giving a few loaves of bread to David. What more would Saul do to him if he were to provide as much food as Abigail gave to them? Saul was still King, and Nabal was still under him. No wonder his heart died within him when he heard what had been done!

5. **Not under authority.** Abigail stepped out from under her husband's authority by making this gesture to David without her husband's approval; all because she was afraid to tell Nabal. The result was that David's men were fed, and no harm came to Nabal's household. We will never know whether this

could have been accomplished by Nabal, had he listened to godly appeals and saw the wisdom in their pleas. If the appeals had been presented in the right spirit, they might have changed Nabal's mind. We gain some valuable lessons on 1) being open to reproof, 2) being approachable, and 3) being redemptive in motives.

Unheeded admonition

In 1 Samuel 2:22-25, we read that Eli had already been warned by the people that his sons were wicked and that they profaned the temple; yet he heeded not that warning.

"Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the

voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.” 1 Sa. 2:22-25

The people were not afraid to “tell Eli” what his sons were doing. And Eli was not afraid to tell his sons that they were doing wrong. But he did nothing more to stop them, and he allowed them to continue sinning. Hophni and Phinehas, Eli’s sons, did not heed their father’s admonition, but continued in sin. “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men,” 1 Sa. 2:26 We conclude that the evil practices of Hophni and Phinehas continued for some time, as Samuel grew. Clearly, we see that they rejected admonition.

This brings up an interesting question—what do we do when advice, admonition, or rebuke is not heeded? Sadly, that is going to happen in some instances. Advice falls on deaf ears for various reasons:

- brothers are preoccupied with other problems or have more pressing matters
- perhaps they are too proud to hear from one younger, or one of lesser “stature” in terms of spiritual knowledge or leadership
- maybe they will justify their present actions or characteristics
- perhaps they just don’t see the matter as being sinful, unproductive, a bad example, etc.

First, just because brethren may discount what we say does not relieve us of the duty to say it. “When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” Ez. 33:8-9 People who are “afraid to tell Eli” have blood on their hands, and they will be held accountable. Do we need any greater incentive? It must first be born of love for their souls, and second, out of concern for ours! Any rebuke or reproof must be first and foremost *redemptive* in nature. Our primary purpose is to redeem that brother, not to expose or condemn him. We are concerned with his spiritual welfare.

Second, we must discern the nature of what is to be “told.” If it is a matter of him conforming to our personal preferences, then we should let it lie. If it is a matter that affects their soul’s salvation, or it brings reproach upon God’s name and the body of Christ, then we must do much more than simply admonish in word. We cannot be like Pilate and simply wash our hands of the matter. We cannot just say “the blood is off my hands.”

In this case, Eli—as the priest—had the obligation to physically remove these sinful men who profaned the temple. He could have had them brought before the elders and stoned. Instead, he whined at them, “Oh, why do you do this?” That was not good enough. He should have restrained them.

In 1 Samuel 2:27-36, a man of God pronounces doom upon the house of Eli. “And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.” What could Eli do? Punishment sounded certain. Recall how the fervent prayers of Abraham caused God to spare Lot and his family. Recall how the fervent prayerful intercession of Mo-

ses spared the children of Israel from destruction more than once. We have no such record where Eli fasted and prayed and implored God to change His mind and give his sons a space to repent. Was the blood off Eli’s hands, simply because he “told” them their sins? No.

Let’s apply this to ourselves. If we have discerned the matter to be one of a sinful nature, simple admonition will not suffice to rid the blood from our hands. Please read Matthew 18:15-17 for a discussion of our further duties to deal with issues of sin. Are we through, after following the Matthew 18 steps? No! Fervent prayer should still be made that their eyes will be opened, and that God will soften their heart to repentance, and that they have time and space to repent.

Seven characteristics to develop

Let us consider some character qualities that we need to develop in order to not be “afraid to tell Eli”:

1. **The ability to discern a brother or sister’s heart.** We achieve this through prayer, discernment, spiritual ma-

Instead of actually doing something about his son’s sins, Eli only whined at them, “Oh, why do you do this?”

turity, and help from the Spirit (e.g., *Is there malice, or just simple ignorance?*). We don't want to be guilty of placing motives on people and surmising what is behind their actions. That is sin on our part. Let's be discerning.

2. We need to learn tact and skill at bringing the admonition to others. We don't want to shut doors before we can provide the assistance. "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." Pr. 2:11 We need a calm head, pure heart, and a controlled tongue that ministers grace to the hearers.

3. We need to possess the close relationship of a "friend" to be able to inflict the wounds of a friend. We must cultivate friendships and build the relational bridges required to administer both the *soft* and *hard* sides of love. If we have a close relationship with others, then we can more easily bring reproofs and correction; it will be accepted more readily.

4. We need to know what approach to take. We must know one another well enough to know whether the straightforward approach works best or whether we need the Prophet Nathan's approach. Sometimes we need to be creative and use a word picture or some other avenue. "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out." Pr. 20:5

5. Approachability depends on timing. When someone has just suffered a traumatic event or tragedy has befallen them, or other evident problems exist ... maybe this advice can wait till a more suitable time to achieve the desired results. It has been said that "the heated mind resists the chilled, relentless touch of scrutiny."

6. We need to cultivate the characteristic of "approachability" within ourselves. Rather than say, "I didn't ask for this advice," we should say, "please give me any admonition/rebuke that I need." It is a matter of spiritual growth and wanting to change. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility ..." 1 Pe. 5:5 "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." Pr. 12:15 "*Only by pride cometh contention:* but with the well advised is wisdom." Pr. 13:10

7. We must love the one who brings the message of admonition to us. We must never have animosity, anger, or disgust, but love and appreciation. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." He. 12:11

Are you still afraid to tell Eli?

I realize that even after this discussion, I still may not have convinced the "non-confrontational" brothers and sis-

ters of the need to confront sin in others. Please consider the following ramifications of not doing so:

- You foster enmity between God's children.
- The body is weakened.
- Satan is allowed to erect fortresses of bitterness in your heart, upon foundations of misconceptions.
- Your fellowship is feigned.
- You are defrauding your brother with smiles of hypocrisy.
- You don't help your brother.
- This brother's influence on the community may bring reproach on the church.
- He may lose his soul.
- His blood will be on your hands, and
- You may lose your soul.

One thing is for certain. If we get in the habit of "telling Eli" when the admonition is needed, or the perception needs clarifying, then it's much easier the next time, and the next time, and the next time. It's like detecting a cancerous cell in the early stages. If we will not overcome this "fear to tell Eli," then these concerns will mount up. The cancer will spread and consume the entire body. The choice is up to us. But, how can I muster the courage to approach a brother or a sister in this manner? Is this too hard a thing to ask? Philip-

pians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Or, through Christ, the One who gives me strength.) Christ will give you the strength, the courage, and the ability to overcome your "fear to tell Eli," because it is something that honors His name, blesses and strengthens His body, and glorifies His Father.~



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