

# The Generational Curse

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## Part I) The Generational Curse is Biblical.

- “Like father, like son.”
- “He is a chip off the old block.”
- “The fruit does not fall far from the tree.”
- “He comes from good genes.”

What do people mean when they use phrases like these? What these sayings are referring to is the observation of the passing of characteristics and conditions from one generation to another. These common societal behavior patterns seem to be the norm in our culture and throughout the world. There is even something known in some sociological circles called the fifth generation, describing a pattern an established, passed down behavior.

When we look long enough with honesty at ourselves and our culture, we find patterns of behavior, both good and bad. The other thing we find is the patterns have come directly from our predecessors. We see these patterns concerning work ethic, alcohol, dishonesty, lasciviousness and many other moral areas. When learning about a drunk dying of liver disease, the odds are that you will find a pattern of drunkenness through their family history. When you meet someone with a poor work ethic, the odds are they came from a family with poor work ethic. When you meet someone with an abuse problem, the odds are you will find a history of abuse for many generations from that family. Though this is not always the case, for the most part, people are following a pattern.

The Bible identifies this as the generational curse. Exod 20:5-6 is an example of this.

Exod 20:5-6 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

The people of Israel lived in Egypt for 400 years, lusting after idols and needing to break the practice of this type of behavior. At the time of the above text, Israel had been out of Egypt for only a short time, having witnessed the many miracles and wonders. Surely they should have believed enough in order to not whore after the false idols, but the problem remained. God is saying to them that if they chose to hate Him, there will be consequences placed on the third and fourth generation from those individuals.

Does that seem fair of God to punish a generation of souls for something that they did not do? Is it right for a people to inherit a curse for something their ancestors did? Is this saying that there are people born in this world that have no option to do right? In order to answer that, we must understand how the curse works.

The first thing to understand is that the son is not directly paying for the sins of the father. The Bible is very clear concerning this. We will be judged for our own sins and not for the sins of someone else.

- Jer 31:29-30 "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' 30 "But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.
- Ezek 18:1-4 Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, 2 "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel saying, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge'? 3 "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore. 4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.
- Ezek 18:20-21 "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

There is a generational curse just as the Bible states and there is also nobody that can force someone else to directly pay for the sins of another. So what is this curse and how does it continue? How is it that people are continuing sown generational destructive paths of society? The key to understanding the generational passing of sin and the consequences is in the indirect route it is spread. Look at another verse concerning the same.

Exod 34:6-7 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave {the guilty} unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

**The generational curse is practiced.** This curse is not something directly passed down, but willingly accepted, for the scripture links the curse to a guilty party. The ones who are dealing with the curse are also part of the guilty; therefore they are paying for their own sins. The same message is communicated in another verse.

Num 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear {the guilty,} visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth } generations.

**The generational curse is practiced.** The generational curse is on everyone who is guilty of their own sinful behavior. The curse comes in the form of natural consequences as a result of the modeled behavior from parents and society. When a son or daughter faces the building of their moral inventory on the backdrop of willful rebelling to God, their job proves difficult. There are natural consequences to the one that chooses a sinful life apart from God. The decisions that each and every Christian and non-Christian parent makes will influence the future decisions of our children and society. Many of the issues we face today as a Christians are a result of the decisions the generation ahead of us made.

**We all pay for our own sins in the curse.** *Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

Another way to view the curse is through the following. In the days of the writing of the Bible, it was common to have three or four generations to live in the same home at the same time. The result was a model of behavior being exhibited everyday to the youngest from the oldest. If the great grandfather was a drunk, that behavior was commonly carried down to the observing generations, particularly in a society that honors age. When a young child is growing up, they are having their role models chosen from among who is around them the most. If the people that the child is surrounded by are drunkards and sluggards, then that image is burned into their minds. Once that occurs, there must be some ways to cope with it or it will cope with the recipient. Immediately this young lad will have to overcome a mindset of poor bodily behavior being mentally acceptable. "Real men get drunk!" is an image of acceptance burned into the young one's mind, resulting in a course of behavior for rest of their life if something is not done.

We see the same things occurring today in the world. Generations of people embracing that which God is not pleased with, only to subject their sons and daughters to the rigors of a curse and the ensuing consequences. Generations of drunkenness, lewdness, perversion, dishonesty, violence, disrespect, gluttony, racism, laziness and a thousand other sins. There is a generational curse as spelled out in the Bible and the things that we are doing today will be paying a visit to the great grandchildren. **The generational curse is practiced.**

#### Closing Story for part one

Jonathan Edwards was born in 1703 in East Windsor, Connecticut. He attended Yale University at age 13 and later went on to serve as president of the college of New Jersey (now Princeton). When he was just 20 years old he wrote a list of personal resolutions. Among them was "ask myself, at the end of every day... wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better."

In no area was Edwards' resolve stronger than in his role as a father. Edwards and his wife Sarah had eleven children. Despite a rigorous work schedule that included rising as early as 4:30 a.m. in order to read and write in his library, extensive travels, and endless administrative meetings, he always made time for his children. Indeed, he committed to spending at least one hour a day with them. And what if he missed a day because he was traveling? He diligently made up the hour when he returned.

Numerous books have been written about Edwards' life, his work, and influence on American history and his powerful professional legacy. But the legacy that Edwards would probably be most proud of is his legacy as a father.

The scholar Benjamin B. Warfield of Princeton has charted the 1,394 known descendents of Edwards. What he found was an incredible testament to Jonathan Edwards. Of his known descendents there were 13 college presidents, 65 college professors, 30 judges, 100 lawyers, 60 physicians, 75 army and navy officers, 100 preachers, 60 authors of prominence, 3 United States senators, 80 public servants in other capacities including governors and ministers to foreign countries, and one vice-president of the United States.

The story of Jonathan Edwards is an example of what some sociologists call the “five-generation rule.” How a parent raises their child – the love they give, the values they teach, the emotional environment they offer, the education they provide – influences not only their child but the four generations to follow. What fathers do will reach through the next five generations. The example of Jonathan Edwards shows just how rich that legacy can be.

But the five-generation rule works both ways. If we fail to work at being good fathers, our neglect can plague generations. Consider the case of Max Jukes, a contemporary of Edwards. As an adult, Jukes had a drinking problem that kept him from holding a steady job. It also kept him from showing much concern for his wife and children. He would disappear sometimes for days and return drunk. He made little time for loving and instructing his children.

Benjamin Warfield has also charted Jukes’ descendants. They offer a stunning contrast to the Edwards’ legacy. What he found further supports the five-generation rule. Max Jukes married a godless young woman, and from this union authorities have studied 1026 descendants. Three hundred died prematurely; 100 were sent to the penitentiary for an average of 13 years each (including 7 murderers); 190 became prostitutes; 100 were drunkards; and 310 died as paupers. The descendants of Max Jukes cost the state \$1,200,000.00.

This is why we have to be very careful concerning our practices, for it could start a behavior pattern that will be shared by our descendants for many generations. There is a generational curse and the decisions we make today are going to affect the generations to come.

## Part II) The Generational Curse: Examples

*Num 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear {the guilty,} visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth } generations.*

In the last lesson we established that the Bible confirms there is a curse and that it can be identified in our culture and our lives. As discussed, the curse is carried out not through some genetic way, but through exposure to the next generation and their means of trying to cope with it. When a generation has an ungodly behavior modeled to them, their coping mechanisms in life will reflect that of the family and society. In this lesson, we will be covering some of the prominent areas that these curses are prominent today for our society.

### A) Anger: The Line of Cain

The line of Cain is a good example of generational sin in the category of anger and violence. There are two primary genealogical lines coming from Adam starting as stated in Genesis chapter 4. There was Cain and Abel, the first being a tiller of the ground and the second being a keeper of the flock. The first thought he did not have a problem with God and the second knew that he needed redemption from God, for their offerings said so.

He was angry with his brother because God appreciated Abel's offering instead of Cain's, for the latter recognized dependence to the Jehovah and the latter did not. Cain suffered from an anger problem and God addressed it in Gen 4:6-7

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 "If you do well, will not {your countenance} be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

God was warning Cain to deal with the anger problem or it would deal with him. Instead of heeding the advice of God, he offered God a replacement sacrifice in the form of his brother Abel. *1 Jn 3:12 not as Cain, {who} was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.* Cain had an anger problem and it manifested itself in the form of murder. God stated that there was a curse of the ground on Cain to where the crops would not grow for him like they did before and that he was a marked man.

Did the story end there or was there more lingering that would have to be dealt with later? There seemed to be a problem that was hanging around, that is Cain was feeling remorseful, but not repentant when he left that day. The punishment that God dealt out was not going to be accepted by Cain. *Gen 4: 13-14 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is too great to bear! 14 "Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me."* Cain and God were not in agreement concerning the problem during and apparently after the departure. To Cain, the problem was God's punishment instead of his ungodly attitude. This is a death curse. *2 Cor 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to {the will of} God produces a repentance without regret, {leading} to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.* This deadly path of a bad attitude toward God, making God the problem instead of the solution, would continue through the line of Cain. This is the nature of the generational curse, for in the shifting of the blame, the problem is not taken care of, but intensified.

What follows is quite interesting. God saw fit to share a line of genealogy directly following the departure of Cain and in the following chapter showed the line of Seth, the third mentioned son of Adam. Why would He do this? The reason for this is because God wanted to point out that there were two lines, worldly and saintly, waiting for a date of intermingling and destruction. Watch how the anger is carried throughout the generations.

When the sons of God, those of the line of Seth intermarried with the daughters of men, those of the descendents of Cain, both lines ended up in prevailing wickedness. There was only one that God saw was righteous and that was Noah. Cain left God carrying an attitude of indignation and it destroyed his ancestors and corrupted the neighbors. The sin continued for it says so in *Gen 6:13 Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.* The anger and violence of one man had corrupted

generation after generation, to the point that God would have to wipe them out in the flood.

Is it possible to have the generational curse of anger and violence today among the people of God? Does this generational curse exist in your family history? If so, then is it being dealt with? Are we working on dealing with our anger or are we giving the curse a foothold for future generations? **The generational curse of anger is a prominent curse among the people of God** and we need to identify it.

## B) Materialism

Another area that is prominent for a curse in the lives of the people of God is in the area of materialism. An example of this type of curse being cut off before it could become a problem is in the life of Achan. In chapter six of Joshua, the people of Israel were victorious in the battle of Jericho and were riding on an all-time high, for the Lord made them victorious. The Lord wanted them to have the victory, for the falling walls confirmed it. The only thing that the Lord asked was to not take any of the booty for themselves, for doing so would curse the nation. *Josh 6:18 "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, lest you covet {them} and take some of the things under the ban, so you would make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it."* God knows the heart of the individual and the natural curse that follows.

In the next clash, the battle of Ai, the children of Israel thought it would be a cakewalk, but they were wrong. *Joshua 7:1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the LORD burned against the sons of Israel.* Achan had a problem with coveting and as a result, people died and Israel was humiliated. They should have wiped Ai off the map, but were clobbered instead. Joshua fell on his face, crying to God and wondering what happened in this loss. *Joshua 7:10-12 So the LORD said to Joshua, "Rise up! Why is it that you have fallen on your face? 11 "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put {them} among their own things. 12 "Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn {their} backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst.*

Through the process of elimination, they discover the source of the curse, Achan. Joshua asks Achan if he did it and received a confession. *Joshua 7:20-21 So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."* He had a problem with coveting the material things of the world rather than the command of the Lord, which resulted in a buried treasure in the floor of the tent. What follows next is something of great interest.

Joshua 7:24-26 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 26 And they raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.

It was Achan that took the goodies, yet it was the entire family that paid the price, including the his livestock and personal possessions. Why would this be? I am persuaded the reason for the utter destruction of it all was because of the potential curse that would remain otherwise. Remember that the items were buried in the floor of the tent; therefore it would not have been a secret to the household. The three or four generations of souls in that home were already carrying the coveting attitude into the Promised Land, for their family silence indicates this. There were already thirty-six families that would not have a father in them due to the coveting of one individual; imagine what the price would be like for the nation down the road if they were not going to take it seriously. The price at this stage of the generational curse would be too high if they would not deal with it right away. *Eccl 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.* They dealt with the problem and the result was a direct blessing of God over the enemies at Ai.

Materialism is a generational curse is prominent among the people of God today in this country and it will come with a price. *1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.* Satan wants our eyes to be focused on the material things of the world rather than the eternal things of heaven. *Matt 6:33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."* What is the true price of the material goods in our lives? What will be the price that the next generation will pay for the material coveting we chase today? God seeks to bless us through Him and not apart from Him. Look at all the blessing we have sought out apart from God. Look at all the times we have robbed the storehouse of God for our own material needs. Look at all the areas that our worldly passions have stepped in the way of our view of the cross. Our materialism today can and will carry into the future generations unless we change it.

The Lord is seeking to be first in our lives, but we have to allow Him to be in that position. *Ps 115:13-14 He will bless those who fear the LORD, the small together with the great. 14 May the LORD give you increase, you and your children.* The Lord will help in this area if only we will trust Him. *Ps 112:1-3 Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments. 2 His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.*



Does materialism play a large part in our life? Are we living for the blessings of God rather than the God of blessings? Are we willing to flee this area of our lives for the sake of those who follow? **There is a prominent generational curse of materialism** and it must not be allowed to carry to the next generation.

### Part III) The Generational Curse: Examples

#### C) Lewdness

##### The Generational Curse of Ham

Did the flood end the curse? Yes, the flood wiped out the curse that Cain started, but there was another curse lurking in the shadows. In Gen 9:20-27, we find Noah planting a vineyard, drinking himself to inebriation and passing out naked in the tent. Noah's middle son, Ham, came upon the naked body of his father. The following is what happened next.

Gen 9:20-27 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. 25 So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants He shall be to his brothers." 26 He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. 27 "May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."

Why would Noah be upset with Ham? After all, the text simply states that Ham saw the nakedness of his father and reported it to his brothers, right? Obviously there was something more to the story. Some have proposed that Ham committed some kind of homosexual act to Noah, but that does not seem to fit the context. Others say that Ham just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, but that does not meet Biblical principles. A systematic review of the facts exposes the following:

- 1) Noah was found passed out and naked in the tent by Ham.
- 2) Ham said or did something concerning the nakedness of his father.
- 3) Shem and Japheth showed reverence by covering their father, which suggests that Ham was doing the opposite concerning the same.
- 4) Whatever problem that Ham was suffering was linked to Canaan.
- 5) Conclusion, the only plausible explanation would be that Ham was saying and/or doing something irreverent and lewd about what he had seen. Canaan seems to have not fallen too far from the tree.

I am persuaded as many are that there was a streak of accepted lewdness on the behalf of Ham that spread to the youngest of his four sons, Canaan. The following pattern also seems to suggest this pattern as well.

Gen 10:15-18 states that Canaan became the father of Sidon, Heth, Jebusite, Amorite, Gergashite, Hivite, Arkite, Sinite, Arvadite, Zemarite, Hamathite and that his family was

spread abroad. The area that they were taking residence is defined as the region that includes Israel and the surrounding vicinity. The Amorite region and people as a whole are commonly referred to in the Bible as the “Amorites” for they seemed to be the most prominent (Deut 1:27; Josh 10:5; Judg 6:10; 1 Sam 7:14; 1 King 21:26). Simply put, during much of the early history of Israel, Amorite was slang for Canaanite. The same region is also referred to as the “*land of Ham*”, for they were collectively the descendents of Ham (Ps 105:23, Ps 105:27, Ps 106:22).

With this in mind and logically assuming there was a generational curse of lewdness in the line of Canaan, we find the same vulgarity being embraced and spreading to his descendents. Abraham was told something of great interest by God concerning the return of his descendents to the Promised Land in *Gen 15:16* “*Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.*” The groundwork of lewd, lascivious acts was already laid and the wicked fruit was coming in the near future generations. Ham set the precedent, Canaan followed, and his descendents did a great job nurturing the same curse.

Take the residents of Sodom for example. The Lord told Abraham concerning their sin in *Gen 18:20-21* “*The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. 21 “I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.*” The sin of the Amorites was so wicked that God had to wipe them out. When the angels of the Lord arrived in the city to visit Lot, the situation was grave concerning lasciviousness and lewd behavior. The men of the city, old and young alike, wanted to go as far as to ask for permission to rape the visitors.

Gen 19:4-5 Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; 5 and they called to Lot and said to him, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.”

They were exceedingly wicked, yet there would be four more centuries for the rest of the region to catch up to them. By the time the Jews entered Israel, the sexual sins had escalated to that of regular community orgies while sacrificing babies to the fire of Molech. This is what happens to an entire society when a generational curse is repeated over and over again.

A dirty joke may not seem like a big thing today, but let it run the course and it will snowball to destruction. It may be a seemingly innocent peek at pornography today, but your family and friends will be dealing with it for years to come. It may be a lustful look at a woman crossing our path, but to the generations to come it will lead our daughters and granddaughters down a path of premarital relationships, unwed pregnancies, abortions, diseases and abuse. It may be a filthy-mouth song sung by a rapper named Enema or the Beastiality Boys, but when Satan is through, the curse is on its way. It may be a quick glance at porno on the Internet, but the devil uses it for a foothold. There is a generational curse of lewdness.

What are we doing today to facilitate the generational curse in the lives of our future generations? What is the ramification for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the lewdness that we have this day? Are we willing to change our lives this very moment for the sake of our family heritage? Are we willing to put away the lewd behavior to avoid the generational curse in this area? **There is a generational curse of lewdness and it must be dealt with or passed down to our children and those around us.**

#### D) Ignorance

So far we have seen that the generational curse is prominent in our society in the areas of anger, materialism and lewdness. The same curse is waiting for those who choose a path of ignorance. Hosea mentions the following:

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

God blessed the northern kingdom with great economic times, despite the nation's position of being willingly ignorant of the word of God, for they were following a path of sin. God was telling the people of Israel through the prophet Hosea that He was going to clobber them because they have chosen a position of ignorance. They did not want to know the truth and their ignorance was not going to work for an excuse. This was further proven when Judah fell to Babylon not long after. They chose the path of blocking God out of the formula for everyday life and they paid the price for it in the form of the curse.

Before we go on any further, there needs to be some clarification concerning the definition of ignorance. The ignorance in question is not is not that of having never been taught, for we are all ignorant in that way in many things. The ignorance that brings on the curse is that of a willing decision and neglect. It is like what is referred to in *2 Pet 3:5 (KJV)* "*For this they willingly are ignorant...*" People throughout time have possessed the choice to be learners of the word and ways of God or to be ignorant of it. They either want to "ask...seek...knock" for the answers or ignore the abundant evidence that God surrounds them with. When we fail to seek for the answers and embellish ignorance of that which saves us, we naturally become cursed. *Rom 1:28* *And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,*

What it really boils down to is the desire to do the will of God or the will of self. *1 Pet 1:14-16* *As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts {which were yours} in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; 16 because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."* They are cursed for the law of the blessing and curse must occur.

How does the curse of ignorance work? When someone refuses to learn through the "things that were written aforetime", the natural consequences will kick in. If a person does not want to take sound advice about looking both directions before crossing the street, they deserve and will eventually be hit by the car. The person who

will not listen to sound information about drugs and alcohol, but follows a lifestyle of abuse, deserves to have disease, sickness and death. The person that chooses to ignore knowledge drinking and driving will eventually kill someone or themselves in a traffic accident. The same strategy applies in the area of the Bible when we choosing to be willingly ignorant.

The account of Acts 17 is an example of this type of curse being adopted. At Athens in the first century, they had a god for any and everything under the sun. So much so that Paul said to them in Acts 17:23 *"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you."* They were so idolatrous that they had altar to the unknown god just in case they missed one. Paul calls their worship *"in ignorance"* for they had not had the gospel preached to them.

Paul shares the word of God with them, confronting their ignorant worship in Acts 17:32-34 *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some {began} to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this."33 So Paul went out of their midst. 34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them."* Some of them said "Yes", escaping ignorance; others said "We need more information", postponing ignorance; and the rest sneered saying "I don't want to hear anymore nonsense", willingly embracing the ignorance. The latter would never leave their idolatry unless they open up their minds, allowing to be changed by the word of God.

When a nation does not take the position of educating her citizen's in the true word of God, that nation is put under the curse. *Ps 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.* The pursuit of ignorance was so rampant prior to the days of Josiah, the people actually did not have a copy of the Law in which to follow. It was not until they were in the temple restoration process that they found a copy of the Law, resulting in massive changes to the structure and the people. All this was the generational curse of ignorance.

1 Kings 22:8-11 Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it... 10 Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king. 11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.

The forefathers of Josiah neglected the writings of the Lord and it resulted in the loss of direction for the generations to come. It was only at the point of finding the scriptures were they able to make the changes that are pleasing to a God.

Is it possible to have a curse of ignorance in the Church today? What will be the price that our kids are going to pay because of the times of being willingly ignorant? Think

about all the times that we chose the television over a family devotion to the word. **There is a generational curse of ignorance.**

### Closing sectional story:

F.P. Paden was a Christian man from the post-American Civil War era who married a godly woman and bore six children. He spent quality time everyday in the Bible, in church, in service to the Lord and in quality participation with his family. As a family, they loved the Lord and did what was right in His eyes.

One of the six children was Oscar Paden, who also married a God-fearing woman. Together they bore eight children, six of which survived to adulthood. Oscar Paden was an elder in the church and a leader among his family. Growing up on a west Texas farm during the Great Depression, they learned to live off the farm as a family. The Paden's taught their children the Bible and stressed devotion to the Lord on a daily basis. All the children would spend many hours a week memorizing scriptures and studying the Bible, praying and singing Christian hymns together. Shortly after retiring to bed in the evening, it was not uncommon for the father to start quoting a passage of scripture, then stop in the middle of a verse, resulting in another member of the family continuing to quote the passage where it left off. When there was a gospel meeting, a debate or some other church event, the family would attend, participating in and sharing the joy of Christianity. The center of the Oscar Paden family was Christianity; therefore the center of the children's lives was Christ. What happened to the six children of Oscar Paden when they grew up?

- All six stayed very faithful to the Lord and active in the church.
- Five of them were either preachers or married to a preacher.
- Four of the six became full-time missionaries.
- Two became elders and one of them was married to an elder.
- Two taught at preaching schools and one married a college professor.
- One started several preaching schools over the globe, resulting in the training of several thousands of preachers which have been sent throughout the earth. These preachers have resulted in hundreds of thousands of souls worldwide.
- The six children of Oscar Paden produced twenty-one children of their own. Most of these twenty-one became missionaries, preachers, married preachers, became elders or deacons, or is married to an elder or deacon. All twenty-one are faithful Christians today.
- Those twenty-one grandchildren produced nearly fifty great grandchildren, resulting in dozens of more preachers, missionaries and leaders in the church. There is not one known unfaithful great grandchild to Oscar Paden.
- At this rate, F.P. Paden's decision to follow Christ would have resulted in over five-hundred faithful, serving descendants.

What we are doing today will make the difference for the future generations. If we will simply take the time to lead our families, God will have great things for your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Stop living for today and start living for the future.

## Part IV) The Generational Curse: Examples

Prov 23:19-22 Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way. 20 Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, {or} with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe {a man} with rags. 22 Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

In the above verse we are told that the drunkard and the glutton carry with them contagious consequences for those who care to share in the same. As mentioned prior and throughout the Proverbs, the appeal to sound advice is through parental guidance. Parents are to be the frontline of protection for the next generation and that includes moral protection in the area of discussion for this section, drunkenness and gluttony.

### E) Drunkenness and Gluttony

Although it is alcoholism that the Bible keys in on, addiction to any drug is inclusive to the same principle. Addiction, whether to prescription drugs, illegal drugs or alcohol, is a very prominent curse among our culture today. Make no mistake; dependence on substances brings with it a natural generational curse that is crippling the present society. Some interesting generational curse statistics are as follows.

- Seventy six million Americans, about 43% of the U.S. adult population, have been exposed to alcoholism in the family.
- Almost one in five adult Americans (18%) lived with an alcoholic while growing up.
- There are an estimated 26.8 million COAs in the United States. Preliminary research suggests that over 11 million are under the age of 18.
- Children of alcoholics are four times more likely than non-COAs to develop alcoholism.
- Children's perceptions of parental drinking quantity and circumstances appear to influence their own drinking frequency.
- Children's alcohol expectancies reflect recognition of alcohol-related norms and a cognizance of parental drinking patterns by a very early age.
- Alcohol expectancies appear to be one of the mechanisms explaining the relationship between paternal alcoholism and heavy drinking among offspring during college.
- Parental alcoholism and other drug dependencies have an impact upon children's early learning about alcohol and other drugs.
- Parental alcoholism influences adolescent substance use through several different pathways including stress, negative affect and decreased parental monitoring. Negative affect and impaired parental monitoring are associated with adolescent's joining in a peer network that supports drug use behavior. After drinking alcohol, sons of alcoholics experience more of the physiological changes associated with pleasurable effects compared with sons of non-alcoholics, although only immediately after drinking.
- Family interaction patterns also may influence the COA's risk for alcohol abuse. It has been found that families with an alcoholic parent displayed more negative

family interaction during problem-solving discussions than in non-alcoholic families.

- Children of alcoholics are more likely than non-COAs to marry into families in which alcoholism is prevalent.
- Separated and divorced men and women were three times as likely as married men and women to say they had been married to an alcoholic or problem drinker.
- Almost two-thirds of separated and divorced women, and almost half of separated or divorced men, under age 46, have been exposed to alcoholism in the family at some time.
- Compared with non-alcoholic families, alcoholic families demonstrate poorer problem-solving abilities, both among the parents and within the family as a whole. These poor communication and problem-solving skills may be mechanisms through which lack of cohesion and increased conflict develop and escalate in alcoholic families.
- Young COAs often show symptoms of depression and anxiety such as crying, bed wetting, not having friends, being afraid to go to school, or having nightmares. Older youth may stay in their rooms for long periods of time and not relate to other children claiming they "have no one to talk to." Teens may show depressive symptoms by being perfectionistic in their endeavors, hoarding, staying by themselves, and being excessively self-conscious. Teenage COAs may begin to develop phobias.

(National Association for Children of Alcoholics)

There is a move today to try and blame genetics for the addictions that people are in concerning drugs and alcohol. Is addiction to substances genetic or not? Yes and no. Yes, it is genetic for a person may experience a greater effect of the drug over another individual, for we know that drugs often do this. This is why one dose of medicine for someone will not be the same dose for another. Often, a drug may work for one person because of their genetics, yet on someone else it might have a harmful consequence. That is what is meant by the genetic connection.

On the other hand, genetics does not explain chosen behavior. There is not a Budweiser or Jack Daniels gene in the body that causes someone to drink. When a person chooses to drink, there is absolutely nothing in the genes that has ever been discovered that eliminated the element of personal decision. By far, the largest contributing factor to a person becoming an addict or alcoholic is the natural path of the generational curse.

I want to state before going any further that the Bible is clear in its teaching that drinking is not a sin, but drunkenness. The Bible is also clear that God desires our leadership and Satan wishes for our jumping ship concerning our children. It may be a couple of chasers to wash down the meal, but your children will not be ready to hear your explanation. That innocent beer in the fridge is no longer innocent if it causes someone from the next generation to stumble. No matter how you slice it, the parents are the number one influence on the children. Decisions we make are for the most part magnified in the lives of our offspring. The best way to skip alcoholism in a culture like the one that we live today is by skipping the first drink. What is Satan's goal concerning this curse?

- 1 Corinthians 6:10 lists drunkards among those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, NOR DRUNKARDS, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

And even though society tells you that drinking is fun, that people who drink are social and attractive, and that a little wine is good for your health, the Bible tells us something very different:

- Proverbs 20:1 "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
- Isaiah 5:11, 22 "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. "
- Hosea 4:11 "Harlotry, wine, and new wine take away the understanding." (NAS)

We have to be careful not to pass the generational curse down to the next generation when it comes to the alcohol. The same thing applies to other drugs as well, including abuse of prescription drugs and cigarettes. If we set a negative pattern for our children, they will most likely take it or blessedly break it. We truly have influence over whether the generational curse will influence our children. Parents have the ability to make or break the curse in the family.

What do you do if you are living in a situation if one spouse is the drunk and the other one has not taken that path? Even though God designed the child to have two parents, there are provisions for those who would like to break the curse. Children can be protected from many problems associated with growing up in an alcoholic family.

If healthy family rituals or traditions, such as vacations, mealtimes or holidays, are highly valued and maintained, if the active alcoholic is confronted with his or her problem, if there are consistent significant others in the life of the child or children, and if there is moderate to high religious observance, children can be protected from many of the consequences of parental alcoholism. (National Association for Children of Alcoholics)

What about gluttony? There is a reason that drunkenness and gluttony are mentioned together in the Bible, for where you find one; you find a tendency for the other. They are the sins of excess concerning nurturing of the body.

- Deut 21:20 "...he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.'
- Prov 23:21 "For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty..."
- Luke 7:34 "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!'



The same desire to use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism for getting through life, the same applies to those who are addicted to food. God has blessed us in our nation to have plenty of food and we as a result eat plenty of food. Have you noticed that the nation is getting heavier and heavier all the time? In our prosperity we have become gluttons and are training gluttons.

- 31%, or about 59 million Americans are obese, which is defined as roughly 30 or more pounds over a healthy weight.
- 65%, or about 124 million Americans are either obese or overweight, 10 to 30 pounds over a healthy weight.
- Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese.
- More people in the US die from the results of alcohol, smoking and obesity every year than all other known causes of death combined.

2003 International Obesity Task Force (IOTF) Research

How does the curse of gluttony carry down to the next generation? When we are raising our kids in an “All you can eat” home, they are going to learn to “Eat all you can.” Now not every one who is a glutton will have children who are gluttons, but the odds go up dramatically. Gluttony is a curse as much as drunkenness and both are generational curses. **There is a generational curse of drunkenness and gluttony. We must identify it as a viable force against the church.** If the little changes we make in our lives today will reap great benefits, then big changes will reap enormous blessings.

#### Closing Story

In 1888 on small Iowan farm, a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Elvin Jackson; his name was Pearl. Not much is known of the parents, but what became of the son is of interest. Over the next couple decades, Pearl began to drink and display his temper when doing so. It was not much at the beginning, but would increase as time went on, for he liked the way alcohol helped him cope with life’s troubles.

Before he was thirty, he married Anna Leightor, the daughter of social drinkers, and they bore two children, Elizabeth and a much younger sister named Shirley. The children were often terrorized by the drunken rage of their father, witnessing the beatings and screaming at their mother. Elizabeth married at age 18, deeply desiring to escape the home, and that union ended in divorce from her drunken husband. She married again at age 21 and went to Washington D.C. with her new husband to be further from her father.

Her sister Shirley followed the same marital path of escape a few years later and moved about 20 miles away in a neighboring town with her husband. She was also dealing with problems of her own, for she married an alcoholic, Bob, the son of an alcoholic, and had bore two children, Robert and Danny. Shirley adopted a

path of *anorexia nervosa* and would be dead at age 35. Her husband would die of alcoholism a few years later; and her sons are also both alcoholics and parents of alcoholics.

Back to the other side of the family, after about three years of marriage, in 1941, Elizabeth died in Washington D.C. from complications of childbirth, leaving behind her one month old daughter named Jane. Elizabeth's husband felt it best to allow the Pearl and Anna, the grandparents, to raise the child, so he arranged for the adoption.

Over the next fifteen years, Jane grew up in a worse home than her mother did, witnessing the violence which resulted when her grandfather would drink it up. By the time she was a freshman in high school, she witnessed the violent divorce of her grandparents and her personal disowning by her grandfather. When Jane turned eighteen, she met and married an alcoholic named Gary, the son of social drinkers. Together they bore three children, Sherry, Reid and Jeff.

Gary liked to drink so much that they opened a bar in Omaha, NE. Their marriage would also end in drunken violence in less than eight years, forcing Jane to go back to northwest Iowa with the three kids. What did Jane do for employment? She opened a number of bars and nightclubs, resulting in the exposure of her children to the same life that she left behind in Omaha. Not long after, she would marry another violent alcoholic named Terry. That man would reap havoc on the children through drunken rages, beatings and domestic terrorism.

What happen to the three children of Jane? The first one, Sherry would run a couple of strip clubs and bear three sons out of wedlock with patrons of that perversity. The only adult son of Sherry is already on his way to being the alcoholic his ancestors were.

The youngest of the three, Jeff, would end up going through a series of alcohol related offenses including being jailed many times and even nearly dying in a drunk driving related incident. He has cleaned his act up somewhat, for he gave up the bottle out of fear.

The middle son, Reid, was starting out on the wrong path as well. He used to drink and party like the rest of them, but something happened that would change the course of the future. Reid ended up hitting bottom before the bottom hit him. He was introduced to Jesus Christ, was baptized and went on to be a preacher of the gospel. He married a godly woman named Jana and has four children, Adam, Natalie, Andrew and Abbie. His full name is Douglas Reid Hamilton. And now you know the rest of the story.

### III) The Generational Curse is Preventable.

Num 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear {the guilty,} visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth } generations.

So far in the series of lessons on the generational curse, we established the following points in order.

Part I) The Generational Curse is Biblical

Part II) The Generational Curse is Prominent

- A) The Generational Curse of Anger
- B) The Generational Curse of Materialism
- C) The Generational Curse of Lewdness
- D) The Generational Curse of Ignorance
- E) The Generational Curse of Drunkenness and Gluttony

Though we only covered five of the curses that seem to be prominent in society, there are many other issues in life that will lead to a generational curse if we allow it.

By this point in the series, there are many who have become aware with how powerful and obvious a generational curse or curses can be in their family. Being cognizant of this, there are many that desire to do something about it, for all the information in the world is of no use to anyone if there is nothing that can be done concerning the problem. Therefore, in the final two lessons of the series, we will analyze the steps that are necessary to deal with the curse and stop the cycle from continuing to those whom we hold near and dear.

#### 1. Recognize

We must recognize what the problem is in order to deal with it. In doing so, it will not only help us to deal with the situation at hand, but also confront the denial problem that often accompanies a curse.

##### a) We must recognize what “TYPE” of curse.

The first thing to do in recognizing a family curse is to have a self examination of one's life. The way that one dismantles a generational curse in their life concerning a sexual issue is probably different from that of an alcoholic issue. The flavor of the curse must be identified to properly address the spiritual plague.

Here is a list of generational curse indicators that exist when there a curse that is either just starting in that generation or already well-established for many generations. Though this is not a complete list of all the possible struggles, it will point us in the right direction in identifying it. Check the behavior and conditions that have plagued and/or are plaguing you in your life today.

## Generational Curse Indicators

- abusiveness
- alcoholism
- anger
- argumentative
- complaining
- depression
- dishonesty
- drug addiction
- eating disorders
- gambling
- gluttony
- greed
- homosexuality
- impulsiveness
- ignorance
- insecurity
- laziness
- materialism
- nightmares
- nervousness
- over-competitive
- parental-disobedience
- panic attacks
- perfection
- phobic
- pornography
- procrastination
- sexual promiscuity
- vengeful
- violence

It is in this stage that we are to put ourselves under the microscope and do a little self-analyzing and trying to identify any curse that is in the family line. We might not find a curse; we might only see one or we might see a number of them running through this line.

It is important to know how these curses begin. When a person is under the stress of life, he or she is forced to come up with different methods of coping with it. Some will choose good coping mechanisms and others will choose poor ones. When we choose the positive solutions to dealing with a situation, like prayer, thinking a problem through, using the Bible as the guide and others of the like, the result is a line of blessings to be passed down for the next generation. It is when we are choosing the poor means of coping with life's stress that we are running into the generational curse. The above are all examples of the latter, which in turn brings on the curse.

### b) We must recognize the “DEPTH” of the curse.

Once the type of curse is identified, it is necessary to find the depth of the curse. What is meant by the depth of the curse is to see what stage it is in concerning the “Generational” part of it. Not every generational curse that we are in is from the influence of those before us. Many times we could be starting a new curse for our family, one that may not have existed prior to the present time. Ask yourself the following questions concerning the behavior to figure the depth of the curse.

### Yes or No

Y/N Were any of the above selected behaviors in the lives of your parents?

Y/N Were any of the above selected behaviors in the lives of your grandparents?

Y/N Were any of the above selected behaviors in the lives of your great grandparents?

Y/N Are there other descendents from your generation struggling with the same issues?

Y/N Did you demonstrate this weakness before age 10?

Y/N Did your closest peers develop the same behavior?

Y/N Are your children exhibiting some of the same characteristics?

If you answered “YES” to three or more of the above questions, there is probably a well-established generational curse working its way through the family. These answers would also have a tendency to help you figure out what level the curse is at. If the identical behavior existed in the lives of the grandparents, then you may be on the fourth generation. The curse may have started in the generation above you. It is very important to recognize the depth of the curse.

- Ps 106:6 We have sinned like our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have behaved wickedly.
- Jer 3:25 "Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, since our youth even to this day. And we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."
- Lam 5:7 Our fathers sinned, {and} are no more; it is we who have borne their iniquities.

Why would this be important to understand the depth of the curse? This is because the challenge of defeating the generational curse is usually in proportion to the length of it. Usually when the curse is three or four generations deep, the number of people contaminated with the learned behavior is much larger. The family support often used to break the curse is not in play and the incentive to change is lowered.

If you answered “NO” to two or less of the questions, then the curse that you are going through may be starting in your own generation. Curses that are starting in your own generation are generally easier to deal with and the damage can be better dealt with.

### c) We must recognize the “PARTICIPANTS” of the curse.

The third recognition is concerning the participants of the curse. This refers to the present living members of the family line that are involved in the curse in one form or another. The reason it is important to identify the participants is because Satan will use them to corrupt the youngest generation, resulting in fruitless labors concerning your ending the curse. There cannot be a successful treatment of the generational curse unless there is recognition of all the parties involved, from great-grandfather to great grandchild. Countless Christians struggle their entire lives with the same problem many times because they are allowing the cursed generation to interfere.

## 2. Repent

It is not enough to only recognize the curse and those who are involved, be to repent from that very thing. Before going any further, we must clarify the definition of repentance. Strong’s defines it as the following: 3340 metanoeo (met-an-o-eh'-o); to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider. Repent does not mean to change one’s life, for that is the result of repentance. Repent means to make a new decision based on new information. Once that decision is made, action is taken but not the other way around.

How does one apply repentance to a generational curse? Now that we have identified a generational curse, we must reflect on what that means concerning our lives and the lives of those that we love. As we meditate on where the curse has led us and the many ways

that we have allowed it to serve our lustful ways, we should become sorrowful. This is not the type of sorrow that leads to hopelessness, but change in our everyday lives and how we are living for the Lord. *2 Cor 7:10 For the sorrow that is according to {the will of} God produces a repentance without regret, {leading} to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.* Deep reflection on evil in our lives should lead us in the right way.

The process of repentance does not only end there, but we should also have a godly sorrow for the participants who came before us. Nehemiah in his prayers concerning the sins of his generation and the generations that came before him.

Neh 1:5-7 I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 6 let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned. 7 "We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Nehemiah could see the path of sin and condemnation that was drifting down through the generations and lodging on his doorstep. He repented not only for his sins, but the sins of his generation and the sins of those who came before him. This deep reflection led him to see where he fit into the path of the curse.

Are we willing to have godly sorrow over the sin in our lives? Are we willing to repent concerning the sins of those that came before us in the generational curse? Are we not sorrowful over the spiritual pain and anguish that we have caused the next generation over the sins that we have allowed to pass through our lives without even yielding for a minute? We must not only recognize the curses in our lives, but repent from the generational curse in a generational way, fully appreciating the power of the forgiveness and regeneration of God. If we fail to do the first two steps, the curses will continue to hurt the very ones that we hold dearest in our lives.

### Closing Story

Sonya was an uneducated, young lady from inner city Detroit that had gotten off to a terrible start in life. She was a single mother of two young boys as the result of their father abandoning them shortly after giving to birth. The two boys were named Curtis and Ben, the oldest and the youngest respectively. Ben was constantly called "the dummy" by all in his class because he was a bit slow. By the time he was eleven, he considered himself "the stupidest kid in the fifth grade" which in turn led him to many fights on the playground. As a teenager, he tried to stab a fellow student who refused to turn down the radio.

That is when his mother stepped in to change his life. Though she was a single mother who worked long hours as a maid—often working three jobs a day to make ends meet, she was also a religious woman and saw to it that her sons would have the education to break this pattern. She insisted that Ben and older brother Curtis read two books every week and write reports about them. Years later, Carson would learn that his mother, who only had a third-grade education, had been unable to read the reports. The kid who hated school grew to love books and became known as the smartest kid in class.

Ben won a scholarship to Yale. After graduating from University of Michigan Medical School, he went to work as a neurosurgery resident at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. In 1984, when he was only 33 years old, he became head of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins. Not long afterward, he made history as the first surgeon to successfully separate twins conjoined at the back of the head.

With all his achievements, Carson has never forgotten his most valuable lesson. He speaks frequently to groups all over the country, spreading the message that education leads to liberation and that children should be encouraged to strive for excellence. Dr. Carson has written more than 90 medical articles and three best-selling books. So it's hard to imagine that Ben Carson's grade-school nickname back in Detroit was "Dummy," and that Ben himself believed that he was "the stupidest kid in the fifth grade."

He wasn't the only member of his family who's excelled. His brother Curtis is an engineer. And mom Sonya taught herself to read, went back to school, and earned both her GED and a college degree.

### 3. Rebuke

After recognizing and repenting of the generational curse, there is the need to rebuke the curse and all that is pro-curse. What is meant by rebuking in the Biblical sense? The Greek term is *epitimao* (ep-ee-tee-mah'-o) and means to *tax upon, i.e. censure or admonish; by implication, forbid*. Contextually it means to verbally make war against the forces of this world that seek to control the lives of the Christians. Follow the pattern.

- Mark 1:25 And Jesus rebuked (**verbally warred with**) him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"
- Matt 8:26 ...Then He arose, and rebuked (**verbally warred with**) the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm.
- Luke 4:39 And standing over her, He rebuked (**verbally warred with**) the fever, and it left her; and she immediately arose and waited on them.

We are in a war with the world concerning the things that are unseen, "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*" (KJV Eph 6:12). The weapons that we use are not that of a worldly strategy, but that which assaults the spiritual world, "*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.*" (2 Cor 10:3-4)

We can try to assault the spiritual world in a physical way, but that will not result in victory. Besides prayer, one of our greatest weapons we have against the darkness of the world is through our continual rebuking of that which is evil. We must curse the curse publicly and privately, before our friends and our families. The curse must not stand unopposed in relation to our lives and the lives of our children. We must be in "rebuking mode" concerning the breaking of the generational curses. No rebuking, no breaking, no blessing.

Rebuking does three important things for three types of people. They are as follows.

### **It holds the Christians accountable.**

Rebuking cursed behavior among the believers communicates a powerful message...**STAY AWAY FROM EVIL!!!** One of the reasons that Christians are afraid to rebuke that which needs it is because it communicates commitment to action. When a Christian faces a path before him or her that leads to or furthers a generational curse, there must be a stand taken. If they rebuke a behavior, then they are committed to getting rid of that behavior, lest the name HYPOCRITE applies. The last thing a believer wants is to be accurately accused of wavering in their faith. This is the same reason that the leaders of the people of God are held to a higher standard whether they want to or not. *1 Tim 5:20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful {of sinning.}* Rebuking of evil among the people of God holds the people accountable. This is what the Israelites were doing in the following text.

Deut 27:15-26 'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image... And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'

16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

17 'Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

18 'Cursed is he who misleads a blind {person} on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

20 'Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

21 'Cursed is he who lies with any animal.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

22 'Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

23 'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

24 'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

26 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'



God called certain behavior cursed and all the people said “AMEN”, that is they agreed wholeheartedly. By agreeing to the cursing of God on those lifestyles, they were holding themselves accountable to each other to keep it in the cursed category. Without a doubt, the people saying “AMEN” were strong in their stance concerning the evil of those practices and the natural consequences that would follow for the violators.

### **It holds aggressors accountable.**

What happens when those who are participating in the generational curses are not rebuked for that behavior? What if we know something is absolutely wrong and keep silent? According to the Bible, we have the obligation to speak up when we see destruction coming, issuing a warning for these souls.

Ez 33:2-6 "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people and say to them, 'If I bring a sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows on the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then he who hears the sound of the trumpet and does not take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. 5' He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood will be on himself. But had he taken warning, he would have delivered his life. 6 'But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.'

When we openly rebuke (war with words) behavior and policies which lead to generational curses, then our hands are washed clean of the curse and there is accountability to the cursed behavior. How many people would have changed their mind if only there was someone to stand up to the curse among those who have embraced it? How many times has Jesus desired us to be more like Him and say something before it was too late? When we do, we are leaving accountability in the hands of the propagator of the curse.

### **It holds the undecided accountable**

What else happens when the forces of generational curses are allowed to promote their agenda freely without opposition? What is the result when our friends, acquaintances and children are subjected to constant bombardment from the forces of evil without a single word of rebuke? The result is the generational curse becoming a recruiting effort for rebellion against God.

Every time the forces of evil launch an attack on the church, the Bible and the values found therein, there are evaluations made in the minds of all that are exposed. If a situation is not handled correctly, then the odds of the curse going on to the next generation rises. If the poor behavior is rebuked, then the curse's contagious qualities are limited and the people are forced to make a decision based on the truth rather than the lies. This is because the largest group of individuals in the fold is usually the undecided. They generally make up their minds based on what they hear, usually going along with the “perceived” majority. If they only hear one side of the issue, the odds of drawing a

conclusion concerning the “perceived” majority is quick and weakly reasoned. When we are rebuking the forced of the generational curses in our society, the undecided will make better decisions. “*You are the light of the world...*”, therefore shine into theirs minds and help stop the undecided to make a reasoned decision.

\*\*\*SPECIAL NOTE\*\*\*Rebuke with reason

It is not enough to rebuke with simple words, but to rebuke with reason. We can sternly speak against everything in this world that the Bible calls unholy, but if it comes across as our opinion rather than reason, then we will come across as narrow-minded and bigoted. We must have sound reason, not emotion, as the driving force behind the rebuke of the generational curses in our lives. When we are doing this, then the people will be forced to deal with the issue at hand and react in such a way that will stop curses in many lives.

The following is an example of how to properly rebuke a “Generational Curse” friendly behavior.

Example for January 2003

The breast exposing, crotch grabbing, vulgar verbal spewing Super Bowl halftime show is a good example of a curse-nurturing behavior. Millions of souls were watching the television only to be treated to a double portion of this slime. There were three reactions from individuals concerning this stunt and they are the following.

1. The Pro-curse:
  - They were the ones who tried to defend the path of the curse.
  - Perhaps they used the excuse of artistry and freedom of expression.
  - Some of people in this group may have tried to justify it by comparing it to other examples of moral decadence.
  - Still others may have tried to defend it by calling it an accident, yet their apologies did not include an admission of repentance. “I am sorry if I offended someone” is different than “Please forgive me, I did something very offensive”.
  - They are very vocal about the situation while trying to justify it with twisted logic.
2. The Neutral:
  - They were the ones that have yet to make up their minds concerning the curse.
  - They generally follow the perceived majority.
  - They are willing to listen to both sides of the opinion and follow the path that makes the most sense to them.
  - They usually do not want to be the one to go out on the limb in the beginning.
3. The Anti-curse:
  - They were the vocal and active souls concerning the path of the wickedness of the generational curse.
  - They called the televisions and radio stations, the congress and other elected leaders, their friends and relatives, cursing the plague that was displayed.

- Christian parents should have and did rebuke this as unacceptable behavior because it promotes sexual impurity and defilement.

Why are we not rebuking the lewd acts that occur around us? What thoughts go through our children's minds when we logically rebuke that which is evil? What is a dad were to not only rebuke the behavior demonstrated on the television, but gave the reasons for the rebuke.

“Children, what you saw on the television the other night was evil and curse behavior that must not be accepted in any form or fashion. It is bad because God does not want our minds dwelling in the sewer, but on heavenly things. He does not want our minds to be filled with trashy thoughts, but with joy, peace and patience. God does not want us focusing on the creation, but the Creator of the creation. He wants us to treat each other with love and care, not selfishness and lust. He tells us these things because there are built in natural consequences to moral filth that will lead us down the path of destruction. We are to be leading the lost to Christ, not leading ourselves away from Him. I tell you these things because I want you to have an abundant life not filled curse, but blessing.”

When we respond in this way, the result is the building of a moral inventory that will give the next generation strength to deal with like issues in the future. We may not have control of a bird flying over our heads, but we can stop it from building a nest in our head. Step one in dealing with the generational curse: Recognize it. Step two: Repent from it. Step three: Rebuke it.

Edward Gibbon, author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, has attributed the fall of the Empire to:

1. The rapid increase of divorce; the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
2. Higher and higher taxes and the spending of public monies for free bread and circuses for the populace.
3. The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming every year more exciting and more brutal.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within, the decadence of the people.
5. The decay of religion -- faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to warn and guide the people.

(Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.)

Are you willing to take the third step to stop the generational curses? Are you willing to make this investment in the next generation? The price is great, but the reward is greater. Take the step of rebuking.

#### 4. Replace

It is not enough to recognize a generational curse; it is not enough to repent from it; it is not even enough to rebuke it; we must be willing to replace the generational curse with something of the opposite nature. We cannot successfully drive the curse away if we are

not willing to replace it, for there is a spiritual vacuum that must be filled. If we do not seek to replace it with something spiritually good, then we will end up in a state that is "*worse than the first.*" (Matt 12:45) We must seek to replace the generational curse with the generational blessing.

Paul enlightens us to this concept in the laws of the reaper from Galatians chapter six. The laws of the reaper are easy to follow: 1) You reap what you sow 2) you reap more than you sow and 3) you reap after you sow.

Gal 6:7-10 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

By studying each principle of the law of the reaper, we can better assess the damages of a generational curse that is being waged on our family and the importance of the replacement stage for damage control.

### We reap what we sow.

When a farmer wants to grow soybeans, he will plant soybeans. When he wants to grow corn, the logical choice would be to plant corn. If the farmer plants wheat seed expecting to grow apples, will he not be disappointed with the outcome during the harvest? This is not only the rule in the physical world, but also in the spiritual realm. Principle number one concerning the law of the reaper is **you will reap what you sow.** *Job 4:8 "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it."*

The remaining question concerning the first principle of the law of the reaper is: *What is the choice of seed in the spiritual realm?*

The choice of the seed that is sown in the spiritual realm basically boils down to two kinds, bad seed and good seed. Whichever seeds we choose will be the crop we harvest in the future. How are the bad seed and the good seed defined according to the text? Paul identifies both and they are on the exact opposite sides of the spectrum.

#### Bad Seed

Gal 5:19-21 "...immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these..."

#### Good Seed

Gal 5:22-23 love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

If we are planting the seeds of sin, then we must understand that it will be a sinful crop to be harvested in the future. If we are planting seeds that demonstrate godly principles and standards, the result will be a righteous crop.

The greatest struggle for a parent with an apostate child or children is the regret over possible errors and bad decisions in the past that may have assisted in the present state. To this I have good news and bad news. First is the bad news: **You cannot go back and “unplant” that which has been planted.** There is no way of going back in time and undoing what you have done, for it is done. No matter how many tears Essau poured out, it did not undo what he did concerning his birthright. The good news: **We can begin to plant the good crop today.** If the sowing of bad seed produces generational curses, then the sowing of good seed will produce the generational blessings. Today we can begin planting seeds which will lead to a harvest of blessings for our generations to come. We may have blown a few things in the past, but the Lord must bless those who plant the good crop, **for we do reap what we sow.**

The planting of good seeds can bless many generations to come if only we will do what the will of the Lord is today. *II Ki 10:30 And the LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in executing what is right in My eyes, {and} have done to the house of Ahab according to all that {was} in My heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."* **We reap what we sow**, so choose today which seed will be sown. *Deut 30:19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,*

### We reap more than we sow.

Not only do we reap what we sow, but we reap more than we sow. One of the concepts in farming that makes it all worth it is in this concept of reaping more than we sow. A farmer may harvest one hundred bushels an acre, but only actually planted a couple of bushels of seed. *Matt 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.* Seed is always used for the purpose of multiplication.

The same principle applies in the spiritual world concerning the sowing of the seed. Not only will we reap what we sow, but **we will reap more than we sow.** Many of the curses that started out in the lives of the parents began with seemingly “little” offenses to God, but when harvest season arrives, there is a bumper crop to be faced, for if we *sow the wind*, we will *reap the whirlwind* (Hosea 8:7).

- It may have been the selection of the “R” rated movie with sexual references and violence through the eyes of our children, but by harvest it can bring in the crop of pornography and wife-beating.
- It may have been a “little” offense to drink the beer in front of the kiddies after a hard days work, but when reaping time arrives, the crop may be alcoholism and broken families.

- It may have been a “little” decision to plant “Sunday Morning Sleep In” seeds by purposely avoiding the expected gathering of the saints on the first day of the week, but when the crop was harvested down the road, it yielded “Missing In Action” status for the little genetically related spectators for years to come.
- It may have been a couple of nasty remarks in front of the children concerning an elder or eldership, but when the sheaves are brought in it yielded disrespect for the Chief Shepherd and Guardian of our souls.
- It may be a portion of “Roast Preacher” served up to hungry little ears in the car on the way home from worship, but there will be a bumper crop of rejections for hundreds and even thousands of lessons of the word of God, resulting in a generational curse of irreverence for the Bible.
- It may be the “little” decision to plant “Non Biblically-based, feelings-first” seeds in the minds of our children, but the result will be a bumper crop of non-reasoned thinkers being tossed to and fro in the waves of emotion.

Little seeds that we plant will yield bumper crops in the future, for that is the law of the reaper. This is another reason that we must be willing to plant a new crop of good seed, for it will lead to abundant blessing.

The same thing works in the positive way as well. If we plant the good seeds today, then the Lord will allow a bumper crop to be harvested down the road. If we will make decisions today that are right in the eyes of the Lord, then He will cause abundant blessings to overflow in our lives. If we make God the center of our universe, Jesus the center of our life, the Holy Spirit the center of our heart, the church family the center of our time and the Bible the center of our mind, then the Lord will cause a bumper crop of His first fruits to come into our lives. He longs to pour out on us the blessings of this life and the life to come, but we must be willing to plant a little good seed.

### We reap after we sow

Have you noticed the pattern in farming of planting in the spring and harvesting in the fall? Imagine a farmer riding around in the field with a combine during the springtime and no crops in the field? Farmers harvest the crops in the fall that they have planted in the spring. Where there is no planting, there is no harvesting, for we always reap after the sowing. *James 5:7 “...Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.”* That is the third law of the reaper, **we reap after we sow.**

Why is it important to keep this in mind concerning the generational curse? Knowing the reaping follows the sowing is significant because we often fail to separate present struggles and blessings from current actions, ignoring the correlation from choices of the past. Simply put, we are presently reaping fruits, whether good or bad, from that which has already been planted. The natural blessings in our lives are a result of the seeds of blessing being sowed in the past by that individual or someone prior. The natural struggles in our lives are also the result prior sowing of cursed seed. God does not prepay natural curses and blessings like phone cards, but always after the planting of the like

seed. Whatever was planted will be coming in the future in one form or another, a built in “up comings”.

This is why we must start the replacing process through the replanting of good seed, for the generations to come will thank you. We have the greatest effect on the lives of our loved ones, for we **reap after we sow**.

Summary of dealing with the generational curse:

There are many curses that we are up against in this nation, but the ones that we are most able to deal with are the ones that are influencing us and the people we love. **The crop is going to come, but will we be ready and willing for the harvest?** In order to do that, the following must be carried out.

- 1) Recognize the curse
- 2) Repent from the curse
- 3) Rebuke the curse
- 4) Replace the curse

If we will allow these actions to be carried out in these areas of our lives, then the Lord will cause the blessings to be poured out upon richly. If we fail to deal with the generational curses that are trying to take our descendents hostage, then that goal will be met. It is our choice and that choice is today.

Plato said centuries ago in the laws *"So long as the young generation is, and continues to be, well brought up, our ship of state will have a fair voyage; otherwise the consequences are better left unspoken."* He was only repeating what God was saying since the dawn of time, for the leadership goes in the present generation, so goes the future of that people. Can the leadership of one person make a difference? Look at some of the data and decide for yourself.

- “Adults who attended church regularly as a child are nearly three times as likely to be attending a church today as are their peers who avoided the church during childhood.” (61% to 22% respectively) -Barna Report 2001
- “Adults who attended church as a child are nearly 50% more likely to pray to God during a typical week than are those who did not attend church as children.” - Barna 2001
- “Reaching people when they are young.” –Barna 2003  
Moral foundations are generally in place by the age of nine.  
A person’s response to Jesus is usually determined before one reaches eighteen.  
Most peoples’ spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed when they are pre-teens.  
“In essence, what you believe by the time you are thirteen is what you will die believing.”  
Barna concludes, “Children are the single most important population group for the church to focus upon. Such a shift in priorities could well bring about the spiritual renaissance that many church leaders have long been praying for.”

*Make the choice today to end the generational curse!*

Josh 24:14-18 "Now, therefore, fear the LORD and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. 15 "And if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." 16 And the people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17 for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. 18 "And the LORD drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God."