

Generational Curses

Scripture clearly communicates that consequences—not curses—are passed on through the generations. In this sense, the Bible says that children are punished for the sins of their fathers “to the third and fourth generation” (Exod. 20:5). The children of alcoholic fathers frequently suffer neglect and abuse as a direct consequence of their father’s sinful behavior. Moreover, the descendants of those who hate God are likely to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers.

Furthermore, Scripture explicitly tells us that “the son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son” (Ezek. 18:20). Indeed, when ancient Israel quoted the proverb, “The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge” (Ezek. 18:2), God responded in no uncertain terms: “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel....The soul who sins is the one who will die” (vv. 3–4). In other words, every person is individually responsible to God for his or her life alone.

Finally, while the notion of generational curses is foreign to Scripture, there is a sense in which the curse of sin has been passed on from generation to generation. Through the first Adam, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Through the second Adam—Jesus Christ—atonement is offered to all. Says Paul, “Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” (Rom. 5:18). Through no act of our own we are condemned; likewise, through no act of our own we are saved (Rom. 5:12–21).

In the Bible, blessings and curses are the respective results of obedience and disobedience to God's covenant. Those who obeyed the covenant were blessed, those who disobeyed were cursed (e.g. Lev. 26). Because God's covenant recognized strong solidarity within the covenant people and within

families, those who violated the covenant risked bringing a curse not only upon themselves, but also upon their families and even upon the entire covenant people (e.g. Josh. 7; 2 Sam. 12).

Believers, however, are in union with Christ, and thus share his status as perfect covenant keeper (Gal. 3:25-4:7). Because of this, no believer may ever fall under a covenant curse of any type, generational or otherwise. This does not mean that believers may not undergo discipline from God, or that this discipline may not outwardly resemble a curse. Nevertheless, God's discipline is always motivated by love (Heb. 12), and is not a curse.

This does not mean that we won't be affected by the consequences of the sins of our family members. When a divorce occurs, the children suffer. When a family member is an alcoholic, everyone is hurt. But these sins do not plague the children or other family members so as to bring God's disfavor, punishment or discipline upon them for the sins of someone else. As Deuteronomy 24:16 states, God's rule is that children aren't punished for the sins of the parents, and parents aren't punished for the sins of their children. When a man or woman therefore comes to Christ in salvation, He is instantly freed from the wrath of God and immediately reconciled to Him made subject to the grace and mercy of God. He is immediately set free from every curse and sin - individual or generational. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new and all things are of God..." Breaking generational curses comes through Christ and salvation at the Cross.

Romans 8:1 teaches "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." In Luke 4:18, applying Isaiah 61:1-3 to Himself, Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, *to preach deliverance to the captives*, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Christ broke every curse at the cross. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). Don't let the devil have you concentrate upon bondage, rather, concentrate upon the victory of Calvary.