

Reverse the Curse
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Are there areas of your life that you just don't understand?
 Are their hang-ups or sins or tendencies you can't seem to overcome?
 Does it seem like some invisible force is holding you back?
 If so, you could be dealing with what the Bible calls generational curses.

My last two sermons were on Jacob, Rachel and Leah. This week I was praying about what to preach and God brought to my mind the generational curse that affected this family.

So, today I'm preaching on Reverse the Curse. I want to begin by defining some terms for you. Generational curses are sins of the fathers passed down to their children.

I know some of you may have a problem with the word "curse" – you may even have a doctrinal issue with it. I think it will help you when I give you my definition of curse. A curse is the opposite of blessing. God wants to bless us and Satan wants to steal our blessing. To me – a curse is the absence of God's blessing. Proverbs 26:2 says:

Like the sparrow in her wandering, like the swallow in her flying, so the causeless curse does not alight.

We do not need to fear curses, but we do need to know how to deal with them. We need to know how to recognize curses, how to revoke curses, and how to reverse curses.

1- You Recognize a Curse by its Effects

But if you see the effects of a generational curse, you need to know the cause and then deal with it.

There is a reason people grow up to be alcoholics or addicts.

There is a reason people spend a lifetime in prison.

There is a reason people go through divorce after divorce.

When we see those things happening we tend to see the same sins over and over in the same families.

Here's how it happens: a person practices a sin over and over until it becomes a stronghold in their lives. They develop a weakness toward a certain sinful behavior. That is iniquity and that is what is passed down.

I want to be clear that everyone is accountable for their own sins. You are not responsible for the sins of your parents and they are not responsible for yours.

But Lamentations 5:7 says:

Our fathers sinned and are no more, but we bear their iniquities.

That doesn't make sense unless you understand the difference between sin and iniquity. Biblical definitions for sin include things like: missing the mark, falling short of God's glory, going astray, trespassing. Sins are things we do or don't do that are outside the will of God. But iniquity is different. The Hebrew word for iniquity means "to bend or deviate from the way." While sins are the outward action, iniquity is the inner motivation that drives people to sin. And iniquity can be passed down through generations.

If you have a hard time with that - think about this - Adam's iniquity has been passed down to every single person who ever lived. Romans 5:12 says:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

The curse of sin entered the world through one man - Adam. Because of that, we all sin. But we all deal with different sins. We all have a different bent or twist to our sins. The age-old question is: are these tendencies the result of nature of nurture? Is it the result of genetics or upbringing? I believe it is both of those things - plus the element of iniquity.

In addition to nature and nurture, there are generational curses - sins of the fathers - that are passed down from generation to generation. If you find yourself saying, "Well - that just runs in my family" - that may be an indication of a generational curse.

In the story of Jacob - we can see how the sin of deception is passed down from generation to generation. It all started with Abraham. The Bible tells of a time that Abraham lied to save his life by saying his wife was his sister. His son Isaac told the very same lie to save his life. So the curse was passed down - and it only got worse.

Isaac had two sons - Jacob and Esau. Jacob's name means supplanter, or deceiver. He actually deceived his own father to steal his brother's birthright. So, the curse was passed down - and it only got worse.

Jacob had 12 sons - one named Joseph. The other brothers hated Joseph, so they sold him into slavery. Genesis 37:31-34 says the brothers took the coat of many colors that Jacob gave to Joseph, dipped it in blood and took it to their father saying:

*"We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"
And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." Then Jacob... mourned for his son many days.*

For years, Jacob believed his own sons' lies that Joseph was dead. Left to itself, a generational curse only gets worse!

But, praise God – it works both ways! You can reverse the curse and change the destiny of generations by passing down blessings! It didn't start with you, but it can end with you!

And in Jacob's family – it ended with Joseph. His brothers sold him into slavery, but through God's miraculous intervention, Joseph became the second-highest official in Egypt. God used Joseph to prepare the nation for a famine and he saved many lives – including his own brothers. But when he first came face-to-face with his brothers, he did not reveal who he was to them. He recognized them, but they did not recognize him.

And for a little while, Joseph followed the family sin by deceiving them about who he was. But he could not do that for long. Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and they were very afraid because of what they had done to Joseph.

But Joseph reversed the curse in his family. How did he do that?

By acting in the opposite spirit.

He had an opportunity to get back at them – but he refused.

He had a reason to be angry and bitter – but he refused.

He had the opportunity to continue deceiving them, but he told the truth.

He chose to forgive his betrayers and trust God with the outcome. And if you're going to reverse the curse in life – you must do the same – forgive your betrayers and trust God with the outcome.

When Joseph did that – God took what his brothers intended for his harm – and turned it into good. Genesis 50:20 says:

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

That's how good our God is. He can take bad things that others do and turn them for good! That's how great God is – He can redeem the bad and turn it for good! That's how awesome our God is – He can even take what the enemy means for harm and bring good out of it!

And just as Joseph reversed the curse in his family - you can reverse the curse in your family. First you must recognize it. There are physical indicators of generational curse:

- 1- Chronic sicknesses that seem to be hereditary
- 2- Mental health issues and depression
- 3- Breakdown of family; multiple divorces
- 4- Poverty; chronic financial problems

- 5- Being “accident-prone”
- 6- A history of suicides or untimely deaths

Also, when there is a generational curse – frustration is the theme of your life. It seems like there is some invisible force at work against you. Something’s holding you back and you can’t seem to get ahead.

If you feel that way – I encourage you to study your family history. When you go to a doctor for the first time, one of the things they always do is ask you about your family history. Is there a history of cancer or heart problems or high blood pressure? Why do they do that? Because they know if there’s a history of a disease in your family, there’s a greater likelihood that you will have it.

Likewise, knowing your family’s spiritual history can really help you overcome generational sin. And that is what we are focusing on today.

Growing up, I didn’t know anything about anyone’s sins in my family’s history. I thought everyone was righteous. Then, on one of my trips to preach at my parent’s church, they drove me around the countryside showing me all the places different family members had lived. And they said things like, that uncle was a drunk, this uncle abused his children, this uncle killed himself in this house.

Hearing all the sins of my forefathers was kind of overwhelming. But it helped me understand why certain things happened in our family. You might discover that in your family there is a history of alcoholism or divorce or sexual abuse or depression or suicide. Knowing that will help you overcome it.

The sins of the fathers just keep getting passed down. Unless we do something about it!

2- You Reverse A Curse By the Blood of Jesus Christ

We saw earlier that the curse of sin came to earth through one man. The good news is that the curse of sin was defeated by one man – Jesus Christ. Romans 5:19 says:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one Man the many will be made righteous.

The cross deals with the sin issue. The blood of Christ deals also deals with iniquity. That’s why Isaiah 53:5-6 says

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus was wounded and bled outwardly for our outward transgressions. But He was bruised and bled inwardly for our iniquities – our inward tendencies – our generational curses.

You don't have to know how these curses got into your family, but you do need to know the way out! The cross is the way out. I see that in my family. In some families, the sin of racism is passed down. I spent some of my growing up years in Mississippi in the 60's. This was a time where there was total racial segregation. I had friends who hated black people.

Where did this hateful, racist attitude come from? No African American had ever harmed any of them. Most of them had never even talked to a black person in their lives. This hatred came from their parents. And their hatred came from their parents. No one is born racist! Little children play together regardless of color. Hatred and racism are passed down from generation to generation.

When people grow up in an environment of hatred, that's what they live. My family has deep southern roots and racism went on for generations until something happened to reverse it. What happened? My grandfather got radically saved! The sins of the fathers concerning racial injustice were broken there and my parents raised us to love everyone without prejudice. The cross broke the power of iniquity in our lives. The blood redeemed us from the generational curse of racism.

If you don't reverse the curse, it does not stop on its own. In fact, it only gets worse. The good news I bring is that you get to make a choice today. Deuteronomy 30:19 says:

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

You have a choice today: to pass on curses or blessings. If you want to pass on blessings, you must recognize generational curses and choose to reverse the curse.

3- You Revoke the Curse With the Word of God

To revoke means to take back. We do that through repenting of our sins and the sins of our fathers. Revelation 12:11 shows us three things required to overcome:

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

1) The blood of Jesus forgives our sins and redeems us from the curse

We must repent and confess our sins and the sins of our fathers.

NO – you are not guilty of their sins, but their iniquity is passed down. You will find people confessing the sins of their fathers over and over in the Bible – including Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and Jeremiah. Jeremiah 14:20 says:

We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You.

We must plead the blood of Jesus over our sins and our father's.

- 2) We must speak the word – verbally break the curse in Jesus' name.**
- 3) We must die to self**

We die to those sinful tendencies by acting in the opposite spirit. We find this principle in Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If you were raised with anger in your household, sow the seeds of peace.
 If you had divorce in your family, sow the seeds of commitment.
 If you were raised with cursing in your household, sow blessing.
 1 Peter 3:9 says:

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

This is not natural! It's natural to respond in the flesh selfishly. But if we want to reverse the curse and inherit a blessing – we must die to ourselves and act in the opposite spirit instead of in the flesh.

There are some families who have been devastated for generations. The sins of the fathers have wounded generation after generation. But one person in Christ can reverse a curse on an entire family! Jesus wants to bring restoration to the devastation and give a new destination to future generations!

We experience the curse of sin because we are born in Adam – in his fallen, sinful condition. That's why we need to be born again and placed in Christ.
 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 says:

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second Man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the Man from heaven.

When we are born – we are born in Adam and so we live like Adam.
 When we are born again – we are born in Christ, so we live like Christ.

I want you to notice that Jesus is called the last Adam and the second man. Some people call Jesus the second Adam, but the Bible never calls Him that – He's the last Adam. That's because when we are saved – Jesus is the end of Adam for us and the Father of a new royal family.

Look at this - when the children of Israel entered the Promised Land – they had to cross the Jordan River. Joshua 3:15-16 says:

As soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam.

I believe there is spiritual significance to this. To enter into the Promised Land – God had to miraculously roll the water back. And He didn't roll it back a little way – He rolled it all the way back to Adam – about 20 miles away! He's saying something here.

Crossing the Jordan River is symbolic of coming out of bondage into freedom. Out of sin into righteousness. Out of darkness into light. Out of Adam and into Christ! And when we are born again, God rolls away everything back – not just a little way, but all the way back to Adam – God cuts off that old source and gives us a new one! God cuts off everything that flowed from that old source: all the sin, all the lies, all the guilt, all the shame, all the generational curses. We are taken out of Adam and placed into Christ and now everything flows from His source!

We are not now who we once were. That was then; this is now!
 We used to be in Adam, but we are now in Christ.
 We used to be guilty, but we are now forgiven.
 We used to be sinful, but we are now righteous.
 We used to be destined for wrath, but now we are destined for heaven.
 And the power of generational curses have been broken!

You might have grown up poor – but now all your needs are met in Christ.
 You might have grown up fatherless – but now you have a Heavenly Father.
 You might have been rejected and discriminated against – but how you are accepted in the beloved!

Regardless of your past, Satan cannot dictate your future!
 Regardless of where you came from, Satan cannot control where you are going!
 Regardless of what you've been through, Satan cannot hold you back.
 Regardless of your origination, Satan cannot dictate your destination.

You can break the power of generational curses in your life!

Jesus died to save you from your sin and to destroy the works of the devil in your life. Today, you can reverse the curse on you and future generations!