

**Breaking Generational Curses**  
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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?  
 Does it seem like something is stealing your blessings from God?  
 If so, you could be dealing with what the Bible calls generational curses.

We are in a series called Transitions for Growth. Last week I preached on a biblical overview of curses which was introductory to today's message on Breaking Generational Curses. We looked at the original curse, the curse of the law and spoken curses.

I want to remind you that believers should not fear curses. In fact, fear is what give curses power. I remember back in the early days of our church when a Nigerian lady called me and told me someone in Nigeria put a curse on her. My response was, "So what? You have power over that in Jesus' name." But she said, "Pastor Joe, you don't understand. This person has power." But I said, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. We can take authority over it and revoke it in Jesus' name."

So I prayed and did spiritual warfare, but she seemed to put more faith in the spoken curse than the word of God. And as a result, a spirit of fear began to oppress her.

Hear me! Do not fear curses or you will empower them! We do not need to fear curses, but we do need to know how to deal with them. Remember - A curse is the opposite of blessing. In fact, it's the absence of God's blessing. God wants to bless us and Satan wants to steal our blessing. One of the ways he does that is through generational curses. Generational curses are sins of the fathers passed down through the family line from one generation to the next. In Exodus 20:5-6, God said:

*I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

I'll explain all this later, but I just want you to see that we receive a spiritual inheritance from our parents that can include both blessings and curses. This means that the sins and destructive behaviors that parents to not overcome will be sins and behaviors their children are more prone to commit.

But I'm here today to tell you that powerful things happen when generational curses are broken! When parents overcome the power of sin in their lives through love for God, they pass down blessings to their children.

As believers, we should not live under the power of a generational curse. In order to do this, we must know how to recognize curses, how to revoke curses, and how to reverse curses.

### **1- You Recognize a Curse by its Effects**

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 repeatedly practices a sin until it becomes a stronghold in their lives. They develop a weakness or a bent toward a certain sinful behavior. That is iniquity and that is what is passed down to future generations.

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 they died, 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. Sin is the outward fruit of an inner root of iniquity. And iniquity can be passed down through generations.

If you have a hard time with that – remember from last week - 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 or 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.

I also believe that there are demonic spirits that can attack families. The Bible calls them familiar spirits, because they are familiar with your family’s history and they know what temptation works in your family.

In the Bible – we can see how the sin of deception is passed down from generation to generation. For example – deception was an issue in Abraham’s family. 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 twelve sons – one named Joseph. The other brothers hated Joseph, so they sold him into slavery. Genesis 37:31-34 says they 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 Abraham’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 broke the generational 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 had a reason to hold a grudge, but he chose to forgive his betrayers and trust God with the outcome.

And if you're going to break generational curses – you must do the same – forgive your betrayers and trust God with the outcome. Forgiveness is a huge key to breaking generational curses. Getting God's forgiveness, forgiving those who wrong you, and asking for forgiveness from those you have wronged.

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- 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 Break Generational Curses By the Blood of Jesus Christ**

Since generational curses pass down through the bloodline – it takes blood to break their power! 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 – but it 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. 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 hatred 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. All families pass down either curses or blessings!

Yale University did a study done on 2 families who lived in the 1700’s. One family descended from an ungodly man named Max Jukes. The other family descended from a godly man named Jonathan Edwards.

Of the 1,200 Juke’s descendants, 310 of them died as paupers and 150 were criminals, including 7 murderers and 60 thieves. A large percentage of the women were prostitutes.

Of the 1,400 descendants of Jonathan Edwards - 13 became college presidents, 65 were college professors, 3 mayors, 3 governors, 3 United States senators, 30

judges, 100 lawyers, 60 physicians, 75 army and navy officers, 100 preachers and missionaries, and 1 Vice President of the U.S.

The study concluded: whatever the Jukes stand for, the Edwards family does not. Whatever weakness the Jukes represent finds its antidote in the Edwards family. I found what I believe to be the key buried in the report: The Jukes neglected all religious privileges, defied and antagonized the church and all that it stands for, while the Edwards family has more than a hundred clergymen, missionaries, and theological professors.

I believe what we see here is the difference between a family that passes down blessings and a family that passes down curses – a family that passes down iniquity and its effects vs. a family that passes down righteousness and its effects. In fact, listen to this New Testament verse - 1 Corinthians 16:22

*If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, a curse be on him.*

People who love God pass down blessings. People who don't love God pass down curses. 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 Generational Curses With the Word of God**

To revoke means to invalidate, to make null and void, to reverse. 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 14:20

*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.*

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. 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.

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.

In the Bible, Jesus is called the last Adam. 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 whole new family. 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!

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

Let's pray this prayer together:

Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross and becoming a curse, so that I could be redeemed from every curse and receive God's blessing. Because of Your finished work, I ask you to set me free from every curse that is over my life.

I declare that the blood of Jesus separates me from the sins of past generations. I forgive past generations for their sin and I ask for forgiveness for me and my family. I renounce these sins and break every generational curse that affects my life and my family.

I command any evil spirits that are attached to these curses to go in the name of Jesus. I release my family from every form of bondage in Jesus Christ name. And I declare that the blessings of Abraham will come upon me and my family in Jesus name! Amen