



## Dealing with Generational Sins: Family Affairs

Message Notes, March 5, 2017

Exodus 20:5-6, Galatians 3:13-14

We have examined our own sin, and the need to forgive the sins of others against us. Now we shift to “generational sins” – the brokenness in our family tree that produces patterns of dysfunction and unhealthy behavior such as addictions, abuse, anger and fighting, unforgiveness and bitterness, infidelity and divorce, legalism and control, deception and manipulation, and many more.

What does Exodus 20:5-6 reveal about the impact of family “sins?”

The Hebrew here for “punishing” the children is best translated “visiting.” The sins of the fathers (the family) will “visit” the succeeding generations. The brokenness and unhealthy patterns of those who have come before us will *visit* – knock at the door of our own lives. We are free to welcome these or reject them. We can, by the grace and power of God, break the cycle!

- We are not bound to such generational sins/patterns.
- Nor should we use the generational concept to simply embrace our brokenness and blame it on our family.
- How does Ezekiel 18:20 reinforce the truth that each of us is responsible for our own choices and sins?

Factors that contribute to the perpetuation of generational sins/patterns:

- Biology, genetics
- Environmental shaping (the relational/emotional atmosphere we grow up in)
- It is ultimately a *spiritual* issue. We need the presence and power of the Spirit to break the cycle(s).

A Biblical example of generational sin and family dysfunction: The legacy of deception and manipulation of Abraham’s lineage. Trace their family brokenness:

- Genesis 12:10-16 – Abraham lies to a pharaoh about his wife, Sarah, being his sister.
- Genesis 20:1-3 – And later (again) to Abimelech.
- Genesis 26:7-9 – Like father, like son – Isaac lies that his wife Rebekah is his sister.
- Genesis 27:6-13, 17-24 – Isaac’s son, Jacob, schemes to deceive him to win the birthright due Esau.
- Genesis 37:31-34 – Jacob’s sons lie about Joseph being killed by a beast.

### Battling Generational Sin

- Recognize the patterns and then ...
- Renounce these generational sins over you and your family.
- Repent of any unforgiveness or judgment you are harboring against others in your family. Forgive them.
- Ask God to break the power of these generational sins by the power of the Cross (Galatians 3:13). God has dealt with *all* sin once and for all.



### **Reflection Questions**

1. Anything here unclear or confusing?
2. Is there a truth or principle here that is especially meaningful to you?
3. Is there a pattern of sin/dysfunction in your family that God is bringing to the surface for you?  
How is He leading you to confront this?
4. Can you share testimony of breaking the cycle of generational sin from your family?