



INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

A Seminary Program for Training Christian Leaders

USA Office: PO Box 934273 - Margate, Florida 33093-4273
International Office: PO Box 84, Yannawa, Bangkok 10120 Thailand
Email: Info@ilti.org • Website: www.ilti.org • Tel: 011-66-81-960-5350

Winter 2004 • Vol 34 • Issue 4

Generational Curses

Have you ever been at a prayer meeting in which someone asked for prayer and this happened? The group gathered around, laid hands on the individual and each prayed as the Spirit led. Then someone "felt led" that a generational curse needed to be broken. The group then began 'loosing' the person from curses and binding all demonic activity.

What is a Generational Curse?

"Generational Curse" is a term used to describe the cumulative effect on us today of things our ancestors did, believed or practiced in the past. It is the consequence of an ancestor's actions, beliefs and sins being passed down through each generation to the next. Many believe this principle also extends to demonic activity. For instance, if one of our ancestors practiced witchcraft or other occult practices, any spirit they talked to, used or dealt with, has the freedom to trouble us now. (Until we bind it.)

Some Christian counseling manuals now advocate determining if generational curses are causing a person's problems. Some of these manuals give specific problems which they feel are signs or indicators that a curse is at work in a person. The list includes but is not limited to mental and emotional breakdowns, breakdowns in marriage, recurring or serious illness, financial needs, lack of success in business, poverty, barrenness, oppression, depression, and rebellious children.

Finding and freeing people from generational curses is fast becoming a chief tool employed by many Christian counselors. When Christians feel depressed or suffer from any number of other problems they may seek help from a Christian counselor. After hearing the brother or sister's troubles, the counselor often suggests that the root cause of his (masc. used to simplify) suffering may be due to a generational curse. The counselor then explains what generational curses are, and the need to determine whether one is affecting him. Various techniques are employed to discover which type of generational curse the person might have, and who may have caused it.

The counselor interviews him about his heritage, to discover some obvious link. "Did any of your ancestors dabble in the

occult?" "Were any of them adulterous?" "Slave owners?" "Thieves?" The list goes on and on. The person is encouraged to look back, searching all he knows about his ancestors to determine which sin they committed that caused the curse being "handed down." If they cannot find any obvious link, the counselor asks whether he is "really sure" none of his ancestors were involved in any form of idolatry or occult practices. Because if they were, "then God's judgement still rests on you, and the devil has a right to afflict you!"

If the counselor finds nothing, he may try to receive a "Word of Knowledge" or "Discerning of Spirits" to determine what the curse is and how to break it. Once the counselor has identified the curse and its cause, they then take the person through a series of steps to break the curse, and get deliverance from the oppression. The counselor, and any others present, lay hands on him in prayer, denouncing the curse, binding any demons involved and proclaiming the brother or sister 'loosed' from the curse. As the prayer session ends, the curse broken, and devils bound, the person often experiences a tremendous emotional release, akin to euphoria. The counselor tells him that problems may still arise. If they do, he should return.

In a matter of days or weeks the emotional euphoria subsides and in a few months the person finds himself in the same condition as before (or worse.) When he goes back to the counselor, he is told additional curses may be afflicting him, or that the original curse was not totally broken and has returned. The counselor explains that sometimes it may take several times for a curse to be "completely broken" or that once it is gone, other curses may come to the surface and be exposed.

The same process is undergone again, with similar results. Each new problem is quickly and easily interpreted as being another curse. This may go on for years, as new curses are discovered and dealt with. They accept this is a normal process, believing that not all the curses are discovered at once. As each curse is broken, it may again be accompanied by a tremendous emotional release. This tends to authenticate the process and verify to the counseled that his experience is real. That he truly is being set free from bondage.

A True Story

A few years ago, one of my students told me she had attended a conference where she had been told she had generational curses affecting her. Through words of knowledge they determined what these curses were. Several people then stood around, laid hands on her and began binding the demons involved and 'loosing' her from her bondage to those curses. She came back from the conference excited and joyful. She testified to me and others that she had been transformed, and how she was now finally free from the depression that had been so heavy on her.

Since then the depression has returned (even deeper) and she has sought further deliverance from curses. Each time, people wait for a "word of discernment" about which curse needs to be broken or which demon needs to be bound. They sometimes determine it is an old curse that has not been completely broken or has returned, other times they decide it is a curse they had not detected before. After determining which curse is affecting her they again pray for her deliverance. Each time she receives temporary short-lived relief, but soon slides back into depression. Because of the tremendous emotions she experienced at a few of these sessions, she firmly believes in their authenticity and that it is only a matter of time before she will be finally rid of these curses.

All Doctrines Must Originate and Agree With the Bible

All Christian teaching must originate and be wholly supported by scripture. What is taught should not only agree with scripture, but be derived from it. Scripture alone must be our basis for accepting what is truth. We should examine the scriptures as a whole, and derive our doctrine based on what fits all it teaches on an issue.

As we learn truths from scripture, the Holy Spirit gives us a sense of peace deep in our heart, bearing witness to the truth in our spirit. This peace serves to cement and solidify the truth into the foundation of our faith. However our acceptance as to whether we believe something is true should never be based solely on emotional experiences.

Emotional experiences can be deceiving. We see this when a good person "falls in love" with someone bad or completely mis-suited for them. One person may be ready for marriage while the other is immature and selfish. Yet they do not wait, but marry right away, each "feeling" the other is "right" for them, believing that their love for each other is sufficient. They have lost the ability to determine what is good or bad. Their emotions have deceived them.

Similarly a person that "experiments" with drugs may have emotional highs accompanying their drug use. This does not

make the drug use wise or right. ***If we use our emotions as the basis to determine whether something is true or right we will be deceived.***

There are times we may read a passage of scripture and think we know what it means. We assume our understanding is correct, instead continuing to study all other related passages. This is an easy and common mistake. If we allow our assumptions or emotions to drive our belief in what is correct scripturally we will fall into error. The problem is that when we decide what we believe first, then look through scriptures trying to support it, we likely will find something that sounds similar to our belief, even if it is wrong.

YES, Curses Do Exist

What is a curse? In preparation for this article I reviewed and studied each time the Bible mentions curses. The word curse is used several ways in the scriptures. There are curses that are indicative of bad language. Examples are "*He who curses father or mother...*" or God telling Israel their name will be used as a "*curse among the nations.*" Another type of curse is synonymous with the word "oath." Such as "*they bound themselves with a curse.*"

However, the type of curse we are talking about here is the pronouncement of maledictions upon a person, place, or thing. ***The Bible has no incidences of anyone being able to place a real curse on anyone else, except when they were pronouncing a curse directly from God.*** Each curse was a result of God judging sin. All true curses and all true blessings come from God. Each time anyone pronounced a real curse they spoke on behalf of God and used His power.

The Bible mentions several sorcerers who used demonic powers, none of them were ever shown having power to curse believers. The closest example we see in scripture is Balak telling Balaam in Numbers 22:6, ". . . for! know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." When Balak commanded Balaam to curse Israel, he could not. He replied to Balak "*How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? And how shall I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?*" (Num 23:8) No one can curse anyone except God curses them. No one can bless anyone unless God blesses them. This is God's principle. He is sovereign.

Nowhere does the Bible mention curse in relationship to the devil. It never uses the expression, "curse of the devil". We do not see any example, mention of, or verse where Satan or demons have the ability to bring curses on people. Demons can do a lot of things, and cause many problems, especially for nonbelievers, but these are never viewed or referred to as a curse in the Bible.

Do Generational Curses Exist?

Although the term “generational curse” is not used in the Bible, it is very clear on the subject. The answer is YES! Generational curses do exist. God handing down judgement on one generation for the sins of the prior generation is a biblical principle. The things your ancestors did can affect you. That is obvious. Statistics show for instance that children of broken homes (parents divorced) are themselves much more likely to have their marriages end in divorce. Children who grow up physically abused are much more likely to abuse their children. Children can also be born with HIV if their mother was infected. Both disease and tendencies of behavior can be handed down from one generation to the next.

God says “. . . for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.” (Ex 20:5) Moses writes “. . . by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.” (Num 14:18)

God does punish sins from one generation to the next. This is part of the “Curse of the Law.” The penalty for sin is not only death, but also is the cause of sickness, and oppression on the earth. It is part of God’s curse on sin. (Read Lev 26:14-46 Deut Chapters 27-32)

All references to anything similar to generational curses are in the Old Testament. The New Testament has nothing even similar to generational curses. The New testament says we have been “redeemed” from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13).

“Does God punish descendants for the sins of their fathers?” YES! If that is the only question we ask ourselves, then that is the only answer we will find. There is much more. **If we stop there, we will be deceived.**

Generational Curses Have No Effect on Believer

The Old Testament applies the curse of the law only to those who have sinned and walked away from God. The curse continues onto the next generation only when a person continues in the same idolatry or rebellion his father did. In this way God places an ever increasing pressure on them to repent. *If the next generation believes and follows God the curse is removed.* In neither the Old, nor New Testament does the “curse” apply to believers.

A person is judged for his own sin, not the sin of his father. The 18th chapter of Ezekiel lays out this principle in great detail. *“If, however, he begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, And considers but does not do likewise... And walked in My statutes—He shall not die for the iniquity of his father; He*

shall surely live!” (Eze 18:14-17) *“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”* (Eze 18:20)

The visitation of the sins from fathers to their children is only for “those who hate” God. *“For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of **those who hate Me,**”* (Ex 20:5) The opposite is true for those that love Him, as is seen in the next verse, God blesses those that Love Him. *“. . . **showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**”* (Ex 20:6) God blesses believers who love Him. He does not curse them. *“Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;”* (Deut 7:9) Each generation has an opportunity to repent. When they do, He **immediately** removes the curse. God will only punish children for sins of their father when they have continued to walk away from Him and are equally as guilty.

The Power of the Cross

When God laid out the curses that would come upon those that rebelled and walked away from Him, “generational curses” (the penalty handed down from generation to generation) were part that curse. Christ has freed us from the curse of the law. (Gal 3:13; Rom 8:2) We have become righteous, (righteous = having no sin) and so have no curse of sin on us. (2 Cor 5:21) We are new creatures in Christ. As new creatures in Christ we have no spiritual connection with our ancestors. All the old things have passed away. Our past and all of its connections from the past have been done away with. (2 Cor 5:17) Nothing any demon or person can do will change that. Satan has no power over us. We are blessed and loved by God. (Rom 8:38,39; Eph 1:3; 1 John 5:18) His mercy extends to us from generation to generation. **Not His curses!** (Luke 1:50)

Jesus does not tell us if we want to live a victorious Christian life we need to examine ourselves to see if we have any curse hindering us. Paul did not tell the Ephesians after they accepted Jesus, and burned all their books on magic, to find which curses might have been left behind to plague them. If tracking down, discovering, and being released from curses is needed to be free, why didn’t God tell us about it? In fact nowhere in the New Testament do we find any example or instruction on how to deal with curses of any kind. If being freed from generational curses is important for leading a victorious, empowered Christian life, why is the New Testament totally silent on the subject? Why do Christians prioritize finding and ridding people from curses when the Bible does not.

Curses are Not the Problem

Nowhere in their writing, do the apostles suggest that any church problems are, or even might be, due to a curse! We are not “innocent victims” of our past or some other power. This idea has been borrowed from the world. Seeing the main problem as coming from outside ourselves whether from the devil, a curse, or “how my father treated me” is nonsense. These counselors who ignore God's Word, and choose to believe ideas not contained in scripture, striving hard to discern curses and spirits affecting our lives, become instead susceptible to deceiving spirits.

The trouble we have may be God's way of shaping our character. God uses trials to test and build our character. (Rom 5:3,4; James 1:2-4) As children growing up we need difficulties in our lives to help mold and shape us. Growing spiritually is no different. We need obstacles and trials. However, most problems we encounter stem from our own behavior. Our own lack of forgiving, lack of trust in God, unrepentance, selfish behavior, hardness of heart or unbelief are all sins which cause problems in our lives. **The answer is repentance toward God and faith in His word.**

WARNING!

Do Not Place Yourself Back Under the Curse!

You are free from the law. Do not place yourself back under the curse of the law. We have been set free from the law and its curse. It has already been dealt with. If we allow ourselves to be placed back under bondage to it we have denied the work of the cross and separated ourselves from it. *DO NOT accept being under the curse of the law!*

Paul wrote to the Galatians about coming back under the law and its curse. They had received Jesus and forgiveness of sins through Paul's ministry. But after he left, Jews came telling them they needed to become circumcised and follow the Old Testament law. Paul warns them that if they place themselves back under the law they are again subject to the curse of the law. (Gal 3:10)

Paul felt so strongly about these Jews placing the Galatians back under the law and its curse that he twice tells them that even if he, an angel, or anyone else preached any other gospel (God's good news of being set free) they should be accursed (separated out for destruction). (Gal 1:8,9) Paul said that the people who teach these things bring people into bondage again. If we teach that we are under a curse passed down from our ancestors, it also brings us back under bondage to the curse of the law. Paul calls people who teach such things “False

Brethren,” who come “by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.” (Gal 2:4) He goes on to say Christ has redeemed them (us) from the curse of the law. (Gal 3:13) Telling them to stand fast in the liberty by which Christ had made them free. Warning them to not be entangled (trapped) again in bondage. (Gal 5:1) And that by placing themselves again under the law (and its curse) they have become estranged (separated) from Christ, and fallen from grace. (Gal 5:3,4)

The only thing that brings God's curse (judgement) on us, is not the sin of our ancestors, but choosing once again to live under the Law and its penalties! Those who say they have a generational curse are not accepting God's grace and are placing themselves back under the penalty of the law. Those who live by faith in Christ are redeemed from the curse of the law. No curse of the law nor any ancestral sin can afflict them if they are in Christ!

Conclusion

At best the teaching about generational curses is just superstitious nonsense. The main problem arises when a person spends weeks, months, or even years looking to blame his problems on curses handed down from others instead of focusing on the real issues, dealing with them, and leading a victorious Christian life.

At worst by believing he is under a “curse” and not accepting his freedom acquired at the cross, a person may actually bring himself back under the curse of the law again. Instead of finding freedom they find bondage. Instead of victory they find defeat. Many Christians are caught up in the never-ending web of finding other things beside themselves to blame. They become weak and ineffective, unable to push on into the ministry God would have for them. It is sadly ironic that because they are so busy blaming devils and curses for their troubles, that the Devil has the victory in the end by making them useless.

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD. Isaiah 54:17

Doug