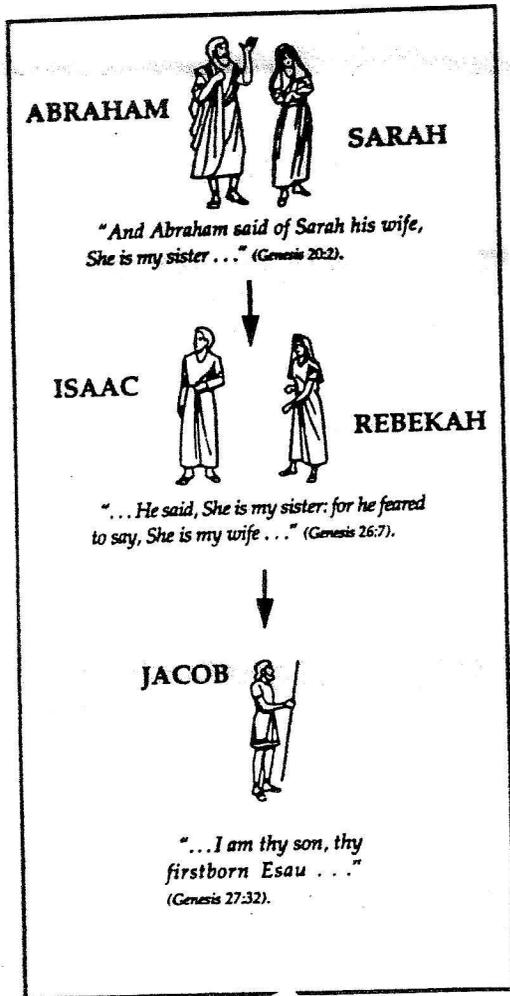


# How children are affected by . . . THE INIQUITIES OF THE FATHERS



The iniquity of deception that Abraham practiced was passed on to his son and grandson. With each generation, the deception increased.

By understanding how iniquities are passed from parents to children "to the third and fourth generation" and dealing with these iniquities in a Scriptural manner, a growing number of Christians are finally discovering freedom over long-standing conflicts and habits.

It is important to make a distinction between the iniquities of the forefathers and the sins of the forefathers.

The sins of the forefathers are not passed on to the children, but the iniquities are, as well as consequences of the sins of the fathers.

Sin is passed on but iniquities are not. As a consequence of sin.

## INIQUITIES OF FOREFATHERS

• "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5).

• "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. \* Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6-7).

again  
• "The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (Numbers 14:18).

again  
• "Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Deuteronomy 5:9).

## THE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE INIQUITIES OF THE FOREFATHERS

Even though sons and daughters are not responsible for or guilty of the iniquities of their fathers, they are affected by them. There is clear testimony in Scripture of the importance of \*acknowledging the iniquities of the forefathers.

Ezra is one example: "And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers" (Nehemiah 9:2).

By acknowledging the iniquities of forefathers, sons and daughters agree with God that they are wrong and are able to deal with them in a Scriptural manner, especially by building personal disciplines to avoid repeating them.

\* Avoid repeating them.

Daniel gives a further illustration of identifying the willful tendencies of his forefathers. Notice how he confesses his own sins first and does not blame his forefathers for the choices he and his people have made for their own transgressions.

*\* Daniel*  
"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us"  
(Daniel 9:16).

### How to deal with the iniquities of the forefathers

There are four steps of action that Christians should take in order to deal with the iniquities of the forefathers.

#### 1 Identify the precise iniquity that has been passed on.



Indulging physical appetites does not satisfy them, nor is there any limit to physical appetites. Therefore, they must be brought under constant control. In the area of eating, there is no limit to the amount of weight that a person can put on. One man now weighs over 1200 pounds.

A fifteen-year-old boy had a serious problem of overeating. His parents were very disciplined about what they ate and were alarmed with the excess weight which their son was putting on.

*\** Because the parents had not had a problem with overeating, it would at first seem that they had not contributed to their son's problem.

*\** However, what they had never told their son was that when they were teenagers, they had not exercised self-control in the area of physical drives. The result was moral impurity.

*\** Their iniquity of sensual gratification had been passed on to their son in the area of eating pleasure.

The lack of self-control was, therefore, the precise iniquity to be acknowledged by the parents and the son.

In another case, a teenage girl reacted against her parents on several matters. The parents explained to their daughter that for three generations, her forefathers had run off and gotten married as teenagers. In each case, the iniquity was a strong, independent spirit.

The girl had not recognized that this iniquity had been passed on to her. Therefore, to her it was a blind spot, but it was very obvious to her parents, who had lived with the same attitude and had experienced the consequences of it.

#### 2 Acknowledge your sin and your forefathers' iniquities.

The need to acknowledge the iniquities of the forefathers is emphasized in Leviticus 26:40-42. This passage also describes the full scope of confession that is required for freedom.

*"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;*

*"And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant. . . ."*

Jeremiah also demonstrates the practice of acknowledging his own wickedness and the iniquities of his fathers. *"We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee"* (Jeremiah 14:20).

According to the principle of heredity described in Hebrews 7:9-10, we are more deeply involved in what our forefathers did than we may realize. In this passage, God credits Levi with the good work of paying tithes to Melchisedec, even though Levi was not yet born.

God explains that his forefather Abraham paid the tithes when Levi was in Abraham's loins; therefore, Levi was a part of the action and received credit for what his forefather Abraham had done.

*" . . . Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him."*

Because we are a physical part of the good deeds which our parents have carried out, we are also a part of their iniquities and therefore have the obligation to acknowledge them.

If we lack wisdom in knowing what the particular iniquities are that are affecting our lives or the lives of our children, we can ask God for wisdom on this matter, and He will give it to us, according to James 1:5.

### Distinguish guilt from weakness.

When confessing the iniquities of our forefathers, it is important to distinguish between their guilt for their own iniquities and sins and the weaknesses that they passed on to us through their iniquities.

We are not guilty for the sins or the iniquities of our forefathers. Nor are we punished for what they have done. We are punished only for our own sins and iniquities.



The Law was given to reveal our guilt and, as a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ.

In the days of Ezekiel, the people tried to blame their sins on the iniquities of their forefathers. They misunderstood the concept of how the iniquities are visited on the children. They would excuse their sin by saying: "... Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father?..." (Ezekiel 18:19).

God responded by explaining: "When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:19-20).

In regard to personal guilt, therefore, "... The son shall not bear [carry the guilt for] the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear [carry the guilt for] the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Romans 5:20 gives a further reason why we cannot blame our parents for our sins. When we inherited weaknesses from the iniquities and sins of our forefathers, God also gave us more desire and power to overcome them (grace). "... But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).

Jeremiah makes the same distinction between personal guilt and the influence of the fathers' iniquity: "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity..." (Jeremiah 31:29-30).

### Confess sins and then iniquities.

The Scriptural sequence for acknowledging the iniquities of our forefathers is first to confess our sins. This sequence is illustrated in Nehemiah 9:2.

*"And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers."*

When we confess our sins first, we assume proper responsibility for them and for the fact that we failed to appropriate the grace of God, which was sufficient to overcome the weaknesses that were passed on to us by our forefathers.

The need to confess our own sins first is also emphasized in I John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Notice that we are not simply to confess that we are sinners in a general way, but that we are to identify specific sins and claim the blood of Christ as full payment for them.

*"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19).*

## 3 Reclaim "ground" and yield yourself to God.

*"... For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Romans 6:19).*

Whenever we yield to the weaknesses that are in our lives, we commit sin, and when we commit sin, we give "ground" to Satan.

The term "ground" is defined as "a sphere of jurisdiction in our lives that is voluntarily given

to Satan for his control." The concept of giving up "ground" is clearly stated in Ephesians 4:27: "Neither give place to the devil."

The Greek word for "place" defines a specific space or territory. As such, it provides a legal basis for Satan to be in that area of a Christian's life. If we or our forefathers have given "ground" to Satan, we can ask God to reclaim that "ground" by the authority of the blood of Christ.

Having regained the "ground," it is essential for us to rededicate that "ground" to God by yielding the members of our bodies as weapons of righteousness for Him.

#### 4 Cast down the strongholds of Satan in your mind.



Erving Galanter

A stronghold is anything that we accept as impossible that God says is possible.

From the strongholds in our minds, Satan tempts us and defeats us.

The Christian is in continual warfare with Satan. The battlefield between God and Satan is the mind, will, and emotions (soul). *HEART*

We can battle Satan continuously, but we will gain no victory until we regain the "ground" that was given to him and tear down the strongholds that he has built on that "ground."

In II Corinthians 10:4-5, God instructs every Christian to carry out this type of warfare.

*"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds:) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*

Satan is a defeated foe—he was conquered by Christ at Calvary. Through the empty tomb, Christ made a public spectacle of Satan in the same way that a triumphant general would parade his captives through his home city. "... Having

spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15).

Because Satan has no authority over us, he must be voluntarily given that authority. Satan will accomplish this goal by bringing to our minds false ideas and concepts.

As we accept these ideas, we help him build the strongholds that will keep us captive. As we test each thought and reject those that are not based on Scripture and God's will, however, we tear down his strongholds by bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ.



Crusaders during the reign of King Louis IX were captured and paraded through Jerusalem by victorious Muslims. The Crusaders lost the battle because they tried to accomplish the task without the support of their authorities.

When we surrender "ground" to Satan in our thoughts, he leads us captive, making an open mockery of the victory that Christ won for us on the cross.

#### A suggested prayer to acknowledge the iniquities of the forefathers

"Heavenly Father, I confess my sin of workaholicism and acknowledge the iniquities of my forefathers also in SELF-SUFFICIENCY, SELF-WILL, SELF-FULLNESS. *LACK OF INTIMACY*

"I do claim the blood of Christ as full payment for my sin and ask you to regain the "ground" given over to Satan in this area.

"I now purpose to cast down his strongholds by evaluating every thought in this area according to the truth of Your Word."

## How two generations were freed when a daughter acknowledged the iniquities of the forefathers



A few months before Annie was born, her mother attempted suicide by jumping off a bridge.

Shortly after Annie's birth, her mother and her father were both committed to mental hospitals.

Annie is now twenty years old, and her parents are still in mental hospitals. She was brought up by her aunt and uncle.

When she was asked if she felt that any of the iniquities of her forefathers had been passed on to her, she thought for a moment and then replied, "I don't know of any."

Then she was asked, "What do you suppose is your father's greatest weakness?"

She answered, "I think his major problem has been laziness."

When she was questioned further, "Do you think it is laziness, or an inability to make decisions?" she immediately said, "That's the problem! He has never been able to make a decision. He is always wondering what he wants to do."

Annie was then asked, "Do you have a problem making decisions?"

"Oh yes!" she exclaimed. "That's my biggest problem. I can never decide what I want to do. Even with small decisions, I'll ask as many people as I can what they think I should do, and even then I'm never sure I did the right thing."

When Annie identified the iniquity of her father as seeking his own will rather than the will of the Lord, she acknowledged her sin in this area, and also her father's iniquity.

She then asked God to reclaim any "ground" that she and her family had given to Satan in this area, and she purposed to cast down every stronghold in the area of decision-making by bringing every thought into the captivity of Christ.

The following testimony is a report from Annie of what happened next.

"After confessing my sin of seeking my own will and acknowledging the iniquity of my father in the same area, I experienced a new freedom that I had not known before.

"My prayer life suddenly took on new meaning and importance, and I felt a confidence that God could reveal his will to me so I could make the right decision. My first big test came the following Saturday, when I had to choose between participation in two major events.

"My spiritual authorities saw value in each event and did not have any counsel to give me, so I asked God what His will was in the matter.

"He gave me a peace about choosing one of the events and throughout the day confirmed that decision by allowing me to have significant witnessing opportunities to about eight people.

"The following week I received a phone call from my father. I was surprised to hear from him, especially at the office.

"He began to tell me how a bus had picked him up from the mental hospital and taken him to church the previous Sunday.

"I asked him what the message was about. He said, 'It was about decision-making.'

"Then he said in a warm, loving voice, 'Annie, you need to make a decision before you make a decision. Your first decision is that you're going to do God's will, then you're ready for the second decision about what His will is.'

"I was overwhelmed with joy. This was the first Biblical counsel I had ever received from my father. It confirmed that God heard my prayer regarding the iniquities of the forefathers and was beginning to free our family from them by His mighty power.

"Then my father began to tell me about his problem of drinking. I realized that this problem was partially due to the iniquities of his forefathers.

"It was then that I explained to him about the iniquities of the forefathers and the steps that I had taken in prayer.

"He wanted to take the same steps, so we prayed over the phone. He confessed his own sin of self-indulgence and acknowledged the iniquities of his forefathers in the same area.

"Then he asked God to regain the 'ground' that had been given to Satan in this area and to tear down the strongholds that Satan had built.

"Since that prayer, my father has been free from his previous addiction to alcohol."

## How the secret thoughts of a son became material Satan used to build strongholds on high places



The term "high places" is used in Scripture to identify altars that were constructed for worship and were used interchangeably for the True God and for false gods.

Revival in the nation of Israel and victory over their enemies was short-lived whenever the high places were not removed.

Jeff began experiencing personal depression. At first he tried to hide it from those around him, but soon it began to interfere with his daily responsibilities. Here is his testimony of what happened.

"It was a miserable Sunday morning as I awoke to the same unusual discouragement I had been experiencing for several weeks.

"Not only was I emotionally and spiritually discouraged, but I was physically exhausted. For days I had been frustrated as I tried unsuccessfully to trace this shrouded burden to its source.

"As I was preparing for the day, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart in a very clear voice. He said, 'Jeff, the source of this discouragement is a high place you have built in your life.'

"Immediately, I began to search the Scriptures and was taken aback in amazement as the Holy Spirit began to give powerful insights into what high places were and how to cast them down.

"In the Hebrew language, 'high place' means 'lofty or elevated place.' It is synonymous with pride. God says that He will not share His glory with another.

"It has been my desire to hold nothing back from God. This desire requires total surrender of all 'ground' in every area of my life to the authority of Jesus Christ. (See Romans 12:1-2.)

"'Ground' surrendered to Christ enables me to walk in joyful obedience.

"In contrast, 'ground' that has been willfully withheld from Christ will be taken over by Satan,

who in turn is given freedom to build strongholds which are designed to destroy me. It is upon this 'ground' that I stumble in sin. (See Romans 6:16.)

"In between these two extremes there was another 'ground' upon which my high place was built. This was the 'ground' which I held for myself—reserving the right to do my own will and resulting in iniquity.

"Suddenly, the Lord convicted me that the high place in my life was an area in my thoughts which I had lifted above the Lordship of Christ.

"II Corinthians 10:5 made it very clear to me that I had not been '... casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.'

"In reserving the right to hold 'ground' for myself, I was exalting the authority of my thoughts above the authority of Christ.

"Herein lies the root of pride. Any thought that I do not immediately bring into submission to Christ's authority becomes the fuel that feeds the fire of my pride.

"Little did I know the detrimental effect these secret thoughts would have in my life. It was then that the Lord revealed to me how the discouragement I was having could be traced back to the thoughts which I had kept for myself.

"As I yielded this 'ground' to the Lord and purposed to bring every thought captive in obedience to Christ through accountability, more diligent meditation upon God's truth, and prayer targets, the burdensome discouragement was replaced with a tremendous freedom and joy from the Lord!"



### Check for high places in your mind.

During your private times throughout the day or night, do you entertain thoughts that you know are not pleasing to the Lord?

*"High places are areas in our minds which we have not given to the Lord and not given to Satan, but have reserved for ourselves and upon which we commit iniquity."*