

**A Different Perspective
Building a Godly Family (1)
09-26-4
Breaking with the Past**

One of the things that brings so much dysfunction into families is, well, things from the past. Things that have been handed down genetically, emotionally and spiritually. It seems such an incredible paradox to me, that the people who are most likely to sexually abuse a child are those who were themselves, abused when they were young. Doesn't that seem totally against the way it should be? Wouldn't you think that someone who was abused as a child, well the last thing they'd want to do would be inflict that on their own children?

And yet, what happens is this powerful kind of template or imprinting. Our parents hand so many things down to us. Their genes. Their strengths. Their weaknesses. People say that I look like my Dad. I even walk like him. But it wasn't until I saw myself on a TV interview, I was shocked to realise that even my mannerisms were so much like my father's. Pretty scary.

And so alcohol addictions, bad tempers, a tendency to whinge and complain. All sorts of things end up being handed down from generation to generation. Dysfunctional families are much more likely to produce children that grow up to have their own dysfunctional families.

Where does it end? Well, I have a simple answer for that. It ends today. Here and now. This very minute. That's when it ends. Let me explain.

See it's so easy to blame our parents for things. For the bad things happening. If abuse happened when you were a child. You had a father with a bad temper or your parents smoked, whatever. And then they handed those things down to you.

I don't know about your parents but mine, I had good parents. Neither of them would ever have claimed to have been perfect. I mean, who is? But they worked hard to provide for myself and my sister. I'm sure they'd look back on their lives and see the mistakes and their weaknesses. But I think we need to get this all into perspective.

It's so easy to blame the past. To blame our upbringing. To blame our parents. Things get handed down from generation to generation. Some of them are good. Others aren't.

When you go see your Doctor, one of the very first things he tends to ask you is about your family history. Do you have a family history of high blood pressure or diabetes or heart disease or mental health issues or breast cancer?

Family history has a lot to do with our physical well being. My father had type 2 diabetes. It took his life in the end. My mother has high blood pressure. And so I can just sit here and not exercise and eat whatever I want and then complain about the fact that they gave me diabetes or high blood pressure. Or, or I can do something about it. I can get off my backside and go and exercise and eat properly.

There are clear alternatives. I mean most sicknesses - diabetes, cancer, there are things we can do in our lifestyle to mitigate them happening in our lives. And it's the same with emotional and spiritual things that get handed down to us.

Maybe, I don't know, maybe you had parents who were into the occult. Maybe you had parents who fought like cat and dog. Maybe you had parents who got divorced. Maybe you had parents who knew about God but simply never honoured God with their lives. And some of that stuff gets dumped down into who you are.

Well, we have 2 choices. We can sit here and complain about it. Or we can go and do something about it. Have a listen to what happens when we put other things before God. When we accept that as the way of living that's been handed down from our parents and from their parents. Deuteronomy chapter 5, verse 8.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol. (That's something that you worship other than God) Whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that's on the earth beneath or that's in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of their parents to the third and fourth generation of those who reject Me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments."

That's pretty straight forward. When parents turn away from God and chase after other things and put those things first, it's going to have an impact. To the third and the fourth generation. That's obvious, we've seen it. A child brought up by an alcoholic father is going to suffer from the consequences of that, in all likelihood, into

their adulthood. And there's every chance that the impact will be passed down to their children as well.

Not rocket science. We've seen that but look at the alternative that God talks about. He talks about *"Showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments."*

Now, what's a thousand generations? Well, a new generation roughly every 25 years. That's 25 thousand years. I mean only a fraction of that has passed away since this passage in Deuteronomy is written a few thousand years before Christ.

Do you get it? God's blessing to us and our families when we honour Him is massive. The flow on affect in our families is massive. And I've seen that in so many Godly families. This dynasty of blessing that flows down from generation to generation.

Maybe, maybe there are things in your past. Emotional. Spiritual. Behavioural. That are still impacting your life. Today is the day that we can choose to break the chain. Today is the day that we can choose to break free from the power of the past.

The prophet Nehemiah saw God's people suffering. Listen to the prayer he prayed.

"O Lord God of heaven. The great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. Confessing the sins of the people of Israel which we have sinned against you. Both I and my family have sinned. We have offended you deeply failing to keep the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances that you commanded your servant Moses.

Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses? "If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples but if you return to me and you keep my commandments and do them, though you are outcast or under the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them back to a place in which I have chosen to establish my name." (Nehemiah chapter 1, verses 5 to 9).

It is such a simple prayer. It's a prayer saying, 'God, I have sinned. My family has sinned. We've sinned down through the generations.

Right now, here and now, we take a stand and we turn away from that. Because we know that you are a God who forgives. We've all sinned but you will forgive and you will bring back'. And he says, 'this is what breaks the power of the past.'

Gods people, at this point, were living out in exile because of their sin and Nehemiah prays a prayer that gets forgiveness happening that brings Gods people back. The apostle Paul puts it this way, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17:

"If anyone is in Christ Jesus he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and behold, all things are new."

It may take you back to some of the things that maybe have been handed down to you. Addictions. Anger. Bad behaviour. Whatever it is. We can receive freedom from those things simply by praying and believing. God will work out His answer to our prayers, in our lives, in His good time.

Meanwhile, we can take stock of those things and decide to start doing something about them. Not in our own fancy strength but through a relationship with Jesus. The Christ. The Son of God. Who transforms us from the inside out. It is time, it is time to end the cycle of sin that's been handed down from generation to generation. The buck stops here with you and me. How about it?