

# Are There Such Things As Generational Sins?

Written by Stephen George

Deuteronomy 5:9,10(NIV) – “...For 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.”

Very clearly stated in this text is the concept of a generational iniquity. For purposes of clarity let us define sin as “a failure to follow a moral, legal or spiritual law”. Let us define iniquity as “that state of being which arises when a specific sin is repeated until it becomes a sin pattern; a habitual tendency to sin.”

The process that turns a “sin” into an “iniquity is simply one of repetition until a “pattern of sin” is almost automatic, without thought. Once a “pattern” is established, the Enemy (Satan) enters and empowers the “pattern” until it becomes a part of a person’s spiritual life. The generational aspect of the “iniquity” or “pattern” is such that, once a part of a person’s life, it is transmitted much the same as genetic codes.

To illustrate this point, we will consider the “medical model” of how medical conditions are generationally transmitted.

Medical science has proven the existence of generational medical issues such as diabetes, sickle cell anemia and even drug/alcohol addiction. The body of evidence is so vast, that to question this generational concept is not intellectually wise.

However, let us take alcoholism for example. At some point in a person’s ancestry, one individual began abusing alcohol. Such abuse continued until it became a pattern. Such a pattern became

so ingrained that it began to result in health problems, relationship problems and employment problems. Alcoholics Anonymous has certainly documented the progression of alcohol related issues. There is no need to debate or prove this. At some point, the health of the alcoholic becomes such that the next generation becomes “prone” to alcohol problems. Medical science believes that they have proven a genetic generational link. Psychology has proven that family issues related with alcoholism are passed from generation to generation. Why then, is it such a stretch to believe that spiritual issues are passed the same way?

The overriding point in the previous paragraph is that alcohol abuse represents sin, and the sin of the father is easily proven to pass down to the son. Therefore, the proof text Deut 5: 9-10 is proven by actual life example.

We now move to a discussion of how Generational Sins apply to New Testament faith. Matthew 5:17(NIV) states, “Do not think that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

So the concept of Generation Sin is valid as a New Testament concern. When we accept Jesus into our lives as Lord and Savior, He forgives us of the sins we have committed. However, He does not, without further work, deal with the consequences of sin.

However, Philippians 2:12 (NIV) states, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;” The work we do toward our salvation *after* we accept Christ is called “sanctification”. The work of sanctification is the second part of salvation that takes us from the moment we are saved all the way to eternity.

So sanctification is the part of the salvation process that covers those sin patterns (or iniquities) that were bequeathed to us from former generations. We are not always aware of these sin patterns, but they affect our lives in significant ways. Why, for instance, do we sin in certain ways when we specifically try not to? Could it be that there is some “pattern” we inherited in accordance with Deut. 5:9,10?

The concept of generational sins and curses is scriptural. That those curses have an effect generationally can be clearly seen in studying the life of Aaron and his lineage compared with the life of Eli and his lineage. The sins of David were repeated in the lives of both Absalom and Solomon.

Just as medical doctors trace physical ailments through our ancestors, so do prayer ministers trace generational issues in much the same way. Careful examination of our ancestral lines can show us much correlation with the sin patterns we currently have in our own lives.

The power of the Elijah House teaching is that there is a “method” of searching and praying that can be taught to identify and break the sin patterns and stop the consequences of sins & curses. This pattern revolves around the Blood of Jesus and the Cross of Christ, two concepts no one can deny that are integral to the Bible.