

The Error of Generational Curses

Introduction

Some people are of the opinion that things like alcoholism, bad temper, sicknesses, depression and even financial setbacks, can be the result of curses that have been passed on from previous generations. To be freed these curses have to be identified and must then be broken.

Exodus 20:5-6

What is taught about generational curses is almost entirely based on **Exodus 20:5-6** where it is stated that the sins of the fathers will be punished to the third and fourth generations. To understand this piece of Scripture it is necessary to take the whole context into consideration:

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousands who love me...” (Ex. 20:4-6).

It should be noted that **it is God** who is warning Israel that He will punish them if they worship idols. No mention is made in these verses of Satan or demons placing curses on anybody! Secondly, it should be noted that the continuation of God’s punishment is only meant for those who hate Him! There is a difference in Scripture between God punishing sin and the result of the influence of Satan and demons in the lives of people. **Ex. 20:4-6** illustrates the danger that the example of sinful parents and grandparents can have on the generations that come after them. Children who continue to follow in the footsteps of sinful forefathers, will have to bear the consequences, they will also be judged by God. But even then there is hope; when repentance takes place, God forgives and restores His blessings:

“But if they will confess their sins... I will remember my covenant with Jacob...” (Lev. 26:39-42).

Ex. 20:5-6 cannot be used to justify the breaking of demonic curses in the lives of people, because in this section it is God who is referred to who will do the punishing and not Satan or demons.

Can a child be held accountable for the sins of his parents?

In her book *Break the Generation Curse* Marilyn Hickey says:

“You can come under a curse for which you are not responsible” (p.15).

Neil Anderson conveys the same idea when he writes:

“As a child of God, I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors...I cancel all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors...I command every familiar spirit that is around me to go to the pit and to remain there until the Day of Judgement,” Bondage Breaker.

Scripture though, does not agree with them. According to the Word each person will be held responsible for only his or her own transgressions:

“The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him” (Ezek. 18:20, my emphasis).

This spiritual fact that each one is responsible for his or her own sins and spiritual condition is repeated in the New Testament:

*“Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, **for each one should carry his own load**” (Gal. 6:4-5, my emphasis).*

The Greek word for “load” is **phortion**, explained by Zodhiates as **“the burden of one’s own responsibilities and failures”** – *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament.*

Satan cannot indiscriminately place curses on God’s people. In the case of Job, Satan first had to get permission from God in order to attack and cause harm to him. Unfortunately, some Christians are, usually through ignorance, involved in occult practices that can open them up to being oppressed by the devil (Note: there is a difference between being oppressed and being possessed). In such cases, to get free, all occult involvement must be confessed and renounced. After repentance spiritual growth must be pursued in order to grow in Godly knowledge and maturity. In this regard Peter encourages believers by writing to them:

“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith...”(1 Pet. 5:8-9).

James gives the same advice:

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded...Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:7-10).

Christians should put on the full armour of God for protection against any attack from evil powers (**Eph. 6:10-18**).

Take note, in the context of attacks by the devil, Paul, Peter and James make no mention of inherited curses that have to be broken.

If we are in Christ, people can curse us with their mouths, but they have no power to place curses on us:

"Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest" (Prov. 26:2).

In the Old Testament we read of the curse on the Moabites (Deut. 23:3), no Moabite could enter the assembly of the Lord. Ruth, a Moabite, when she accepted the God of Israel, she was not only accepted amongst God's people, but also became part of the genealogy of Jesus (Ruth. 1:16-17, Luk. 3:32).

Released from the curse of the Law

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us..." (Gal. 3:13).

The atoning work of Christ on the cross is so powerful that it even releases a believer from the curse of the breaking of Old Testament Law! The curse of the Law was instituted by God Himself. If Christ's atonement breaks such a curse, how much more will it free and protect the repentant sinner from any other bondage! No wonder that Paul who was guilty of persecuting and the killing of saints, when becoming a follower of Christ, could write:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Instead of scratching around in his past, searching for curses, he says:

"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find any teaching on how demonic curses must be broken in the lives of reborn Christian believers. We are though, instructed to confess our sins (1 Joh. 1:8-9) and to be changed by getting rid of wrong patterns of thought (Rom. 12:1-2):

"...we refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the true knowledge of God..." (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Sin and spiritual bondage cannot be passed on to others through the medium of blood. It is the result of wrong thinking which leads to wrong doing:

*"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, **by his own evil desire, he is dragged away** and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin...Don't be deceived, my dear brothers" (James 1:13-16, my emphasis).*

Physical genetic influence

Some people are more susceptible to certain types of physical ailments because of genetic weaknesses in the bloodline of the family. In these cases demons have nothing to do with what has been passed on genetically.

What about curses in the lives of unbelievers?

The Bible teaches that the whole of the unbelieving world is under the power (curse) of the evil one:

“We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

Unbelievers are not under the protection of the blood of Christ and therefore have no real protection against the demonic forces that control the world. In terms of curses in the occult world of witchcraft, unbelievers have to turn to other stronger satanic forces to counter the work of lesser demons. The bondage does not get broken, it just gets taken over by the conquering powers.

It is only through the blood of Christ that victory over these controlling spirits can be experienced:

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

“And when he had disarmed the rulers and the authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross (Col. 2:15) .

Conclusion

Ministries propagating bloodline curses usually lean heavily on testimonies given by people who claim that they were healed after being freed from curses. As such testimonies are subjective, before they can be accepted, it must first be seen whether they can stand the test of time. What the Bible calls the works of the flesh (**Gal. 5:16-25**) is often attributed to the work of demons. The danger of emphasising the work of demons is that, instead of learning to stand on what the Word declares about the freedom we have in Christ, people depend on subjective experiences. When some do get blessed by ministries “breaking curses”, it is not because of but in spite of – they have responded to some components in the message that are Biblical.

*“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because **the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world**” (1 John 4:4, my emphasis).*

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced ...neither angels **nor demons...** nor any powers...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:35-39, my emphasis).*

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