

## **The Fallacy of What Many Call “Generational Curses”**

As Christians, we have observed the damage caused by sin in our lives, the lives of our children and the lives of our ancestors. Naturally, as Christians, we desire ongoing victory over sins and the damage they cause in our lives and the lives of our children. The Bible provides much instruction on what Christians can and should do in our battle against sin.

Unfortunately, many Christians have been told that by following a series of cleverly designed steps, instant and complete victory can be achieved almost magically. They claim that because of the sins of past generations, demonic curses are in effect in our lives (and the lives of our children) that will continue to cause destruction unless we cancel these curses. They also claim that the only way to cancel these curses is to follow their multiple-step system. If you don’t follow their system, you should not expect this instant deliverance.

Those promoting this approach combine some biblical principles along with concepts not taught by the Bible. Though the multistep program is not taught in the Bible, it has become so popular that many Christians simply assume it is rock-solid Bible teaching that every Christian can and should accept. Because so many Christians have such little Bible knowledge, they don’t even question the validity of the idea.

Like other approaches or systems that people construct, this one is founded mainly on a passage that has nothing whatsoever to do with what the promoters suggest. They sight the following passage as foundational to the notion that there are such things as “generational curses.”

*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).*

Nowhere in this passage is the word “curse” mentioned. This passage tells how God made some of His glory known to Moses. As He passed by Moses who was hidden in a cleft of the rock, He proclaimed His Name and included some specific information about Himself. First, He declared that He is “*merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*” Then He added more information about Himself. He “*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.*” Promoters of this multistep system claim that the last part of the verse proves that there are such things as “generational curses.”

Again, the word “curse” is not mentioned in this verse. In spite of that glaring discrepancy, this portion of the verse is said to be the basis or foundation for the entire construct. In reality, all this verse provides is certain undeniable truth about God. Namely, though He is merciful, He simply cannot and will not excuse sin. Instead of teaching a concept of “generational curses,” God provides truth that is foundational to the cross of Jesus Christ. Though God is merciful, He simply cannot excuse any sin whatsoever. Every human is guilty of breaking God’s laws and God will by no means clear them (the guilty) without the sins being punished. Ultimately, God provided a righteous way for the sins of “the guilty” to be remitted by sending Jesus to die as a substitute sacrifice. But in the meantime, God would visit the lawlessness (iniquity) of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children. Though Christ would be the full satisfaction when He would later die, lawlessness would still have its consequences not only on the one who commits the iniquity, but also on his descendants. The One who claims responsibility for executing this punishment is God, not Satan or his demons. And those who receive the punishment/consequences fully deserve the punishment they receive in this life, and ultimately at the final judgment.

These are the essential truths relating to this passage. It is unfortunate that some have extracted one clause from this passage and claim that it teaches things that it does not teach. But it serves their purposes sufficiently

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to construct their multistep system that they teach as if it is God's authoritative multistep system. Since there is not demonstrable basis for their system using the Exodus 34:7 passage, Christians should look elsewhere in the Bible for more clear teaching about our battle against sin and its destructive effects in our lives and the lives of our children.

The Bible provides much clear teaching on this subject that if applied will enable Christians to overcome sin in their lives. God is and has been at work in us to accomplish victory from the moment we first believed. This process is called "sanctification." It is an ongoing work. We are being sanctified and we will continue to be sanctified until the day we die because God is conforming us to the image of His Son. If you are not familiar with this subject, perhaps it will help to read my article, [Are You Feeling the Breeze?](#)

The **generational curses hoax** holds out a false promise of instant and complete victory to any Christian who follows their multistep system. (I call it a hoax because it is based on a false premise.) Human beings like the idea of an instant fix, especially one that can be obtained mainly by mumbling certain phrases. Contrast that with God's sanctification process. His work utilizes trials and sufferings and is a life-long process. If presented with a choice between God's sanctification process and an instant fix that does not include trials and suffering, human beings happily opt for the quick fix approach. Unfortunately, many Christians are falling for the **generational curses hoax** because of its promise of a quick fix.

It might help at this point to present one man's version of this multistep system and provide a few observations about the steps:

The 6 Steps to Breaking a Generational Curse as published by Michael Bradley on December 27, 2018 on Bible-knowledge.com.

1. **The full surrender**
2. **Confess the sins of your sinning parent to God the Father**
3. **Be willing to fully forgive your sinning parent**
4. **Break any ungodly soul ties with the sinning parent**
5. **Break the curse line of the demons**
6. **Verbally command the demons to leave you in the name of Jesus Christ**

Though this entire system is based upon a false premise, perhaps it has benefitted some people simply because of step one- (**full surrender**). If a person attempts to apply this system and in that process, fully surrenders his life to Jesus (by faith), he will immediately begin to experience deliverance from the bondage of sin.

*"There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2).*

It is because of this reality that genuine Christians are no longer slaves to sin as they were at one time. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death. So, in spite of the fact that the "generational curses" system is based on a false premise, some people may have experienced some benefit simply because they fully surrendered their lives to Jesus. (Their new life in Christ has now begun.)

But just to clarify, any person who has not fully surrendered his life to Jesus is double-minded and should not expect any meaningful deliverance.

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*“Let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (James 1:6-8).*

If a person has never fully surrendered his life to Jesus as his Lord, he is simply not a Christian. Jesus is not our co-pilot, He is Lord. Anyone who thinks he is in a right relationship with Jesus while at the same time running his own life has deceived himself. (See James 1:22-24.) And in addition to this, it should be noted that the Bible speaks of this surrender as being something that Christians do repeatedly throughout their lives as they seek on-going victory. It is by no means a one-time act.

In step 2, Christians are instructed to **Confess the sins of your sinning parent to God the Father**. He bases this step on the following passage:

*“But if they confess their iniquity and THE INIQUITY OF THEIR FATHERS, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me ... then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember ...” (Leviticus 26:40, 42)*

Michael Bradley does not seem to be fully convinced why Christians should do this. Rather, he provides his guess as to why this should be done.

*I believe the main reason could be that God may want you to know exactly why these demons are coming after you in the first place – and that reason is because of the severe sins your sinning parent has committed against the Lord. God wants you to have full knowledge as to what is going on behind the scenes in the spiritual realm, and by confessing out what sins you know your sinning parent has committed against the Lord – you are showing Him that you have the knowledge and the understanding that these original sins is what has caused all of these events to occur as they have done in your own personal life.*

I suggest that if God wants a person to know what demons are doing behind the scenes and why, He would communicate that in a way that is not so ambiguous. Bradley’s supposition causes me to wonder if he understands what it means to confess sins. The Bible provides an example of a person confessing in a way that fulfills the Leviticus 26 passage above. Perhaps Mr. Bradley would benefit from reading Daniel 9:4-19. There we see Daniel confessing his iniquity along with the iniquity of his people who lived before him. There is no mention of demons. Rather, we observe the brokenhearted Daniel lumping himself fully in with all his people rather than seeing himself as a victim of his predecessor’s sins. We observe the truly humble heart of Daniel taking responsibility for his sin along with the sins of his people.

We don’t need a six-step system to prompt us to confess sins. If we are brokenhearted over them, we will be confessing sins like Daniel confessed. Like Daniel, we will not blame our ancestors or fellow countrymen. We will take responsibility for them. Like Daniel, we can confess our sins as lumped in with the sins of our ancestors and also those living in our country today. In summary, the main thrust of Daniel’s confessing was not to point out the sins of his ancestors as if they were to blame for his own propensity to sin.

Step three instructs Christians to **Be willing to fully forgive your sinning parent**. Again, we do not need a six-step system to tell us this. Jesus has already said that if we do not forgive others from the heart, neither will His Father forgive us. (See Matthew 6:15.) This is not something we are supposed to do on a one-time basis to get instant victory. It is something we are to be doing all the time. If Christians are reading their Bibles as they should, they already know this. They don’t need a six-step program to tell them to do it.

Step four instructs Christians to **Break any ungodly soul ties with the sinning parent**. Mr. Bradley seems to hold to the principle of “setting boundaries” that has been made popular in many “Christian” self-help books.

While abuse (sin) will always negatively affect any relationship, Michael Bradley teaches that in such situations, the remedy is for the abused party to break all ties with the one who has sinned against him, lest demons are allowed to wreak havoc.

*This sinning parent will always be your natural parent by blood, but that does not mean you have to stay spiritually attached to this evil, sinning, and dysfunctional parent. What happens in the spiritual realm is that when one person is being severely abused and dominated by the other, an ungodly and unhealthy soul tie can develop. And if that kind of unhealthy soul tie develops during the abusive relationship, then it has to be completely broken in order to be completely set free from both the abuser and any demons who may be attacking you as a result of the legal rights given by the abuser to the demons. Demons will move in to feed off any kind of unhealthy soul tie that could develop – so you have to make sure that any of these kinds of destructive soul ties get completely broken when you go into this kind of battle prayer.*

Many Christians have bought into this unbiblical concept. Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive those who sin against us. In His answer to Peter, Jesus essentially said that we should keep forgiving countless times. This fourth step seems to suggest that the better way to deal with someone who is always offending us is to break any ties with them. This advice circumvents Jesus' command to forgive and keep on forgiving. If we break ties, the offenses stop so that we no longer need to forgive and keep forgiving as Jesus commanded. I believe this notion of setting up boundaries is a clear case of the traditions of men making the commandment of God of no effect.<sup>1</sup>

The fifth step instructs **Christians to Break the curse line of the demons**. The entire premise of this step is false. Notice the term "curse line." Where is this term mentioned in the Bible? The premise assumes that it is the demons who are responsible for your propensity to sin, not you. Since the demons are to blame (along with your predecessors), all you have to do is mumble a few words and whallah, their influence goes away and your propensity to sin goes away too.

Now I do not deny that demons are seeking to influence us toward sinful behavior and attitudes. And I teach that certain behaviors and attitudes actually attract their attention. We see this principle in action in Peter's life. With a prideful heart, he insisted to Jesus that he would NEVER deny Him. In response, Jesus said, "*Satan has demanded to sift you as wheat.*" It was Peter's pride that gave Satan access to his life.

We cannot block satanic and demonic influence in our lives by mumbling a few words! We must humble ourselves. It is not the words we speak that make the difference, it is an obedient heart. We see this principle in action also in the life of Saul who did not fully obey God's command to completely destroy the Amalekites along with all their livestock. He kept some of the sheep alive. In response, Samuel said, "*Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*" (See I Samuel 15:23.) In summary, if you truly want deliverance, rather than mouthing a few words, humble yourself and repent of any known disobedient behavior or attitude<sup>2</sup>. If you are unaware of any, ask God

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<sup>1</sup> "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." <sup>3</sup> He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" <sup>4</sup> "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' <sup>5</sup> "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God' -- <sup>6</sup> 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. <sup>7</sup> "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: <sup>8</sup> 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. <sup>9</sup> And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' " (Matthew 15:2-9)

<sup>2</sup> A complaining heart is one example of an attitude that invites satanic influence. "nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer" (I Corinthians 10:10).

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to show you if there is any. Your life must be fully surrendered to Jesus and you must let go of all your bitter attitudes and disobedience.)

In the last step, Christians are instructed to ***Verbally command the demons to leave you in the name of Jesus Christ.*** Again, the key is not in the words we mouth. If there is any known disobedient attitudes or actions, no amount of words you speak will make any difference.

Hopefully, you now realize that there is no magic multistep system that if followed will provide instant and complete victory. Our battle against sin began the moment we first believed and it will continue until the day we die. Because of Jesus victory through His death and resurrection, we should engage in battle against sin with the expectation that the victory is indeed possible through Christ. We should take strong encouragement from the fact that it is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (See Philippians 2:12-13.<sup>3</sup>) To experience that victory, we must live in the reality of the gospel. As we do, we will experience the abundant life Jesus offers. (*If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh- Galatians 5:16.*)

For more specific instruction about what the Bible teaches on this subject, see my books, [The Christian and Habitual Sin, How to gain Deliverance by God's Grace](#) and [The Abundant Life, Serving in the Newness of the Holy Spirit and Overcoming the Powers of Darkness.](#)

### Addendum

There are some people teaching an extreme version of the generational curses hoax. In this version, generational curses are said to be the reason for virtually all sickness and disease that humans, including Christians, experience. For example, if you suddenly are diagnosed with cancer, it has nothing to do with God's purposes. It is because of sins committed by your parents or immediate ancestors (or maybe you). Because they sinned, ground was given to Satan and his demons and they now have free reign to inflict you with cancer. To get rid of the cancer (or other sicknesses), you need to follow the multistep system to cancel the generational curse.

Since the entire generational curses system is based upon a false premise, I am not motivated to address this extreme version of the generational curses hoax. But most of the points I made in the main body of the article still apply. I find it wearisome watching people use this hoax in an attempt to "help" Christians who are experiencing the trials relating to severe sickness in themselves or their children. It reminds me of the approach of Job's friends who assumed Job's trials were due to his sin. They did not consider the possibility that God had arranged all of innocent Job's sufferings through His agent Satan, all to accomplish His grand purposes in accordance with Romans 8:28. Instead Job's friends presumed things that they could never know for sure. Instead of helping Job with their counsel, they became tools of Satan to further afflict Job at his time of greatest need for compassion and comfort.

Thomas Bear, 12/3/2020

Οὐαὶ μοί ἐστιν ἂν μὴ εὐαγγελίζωμαι (Προς Κορινθίους Α 9:16)

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<sup>3</sup> "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; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).