

Introduction

I was never really crazy about kids. I was the youngest child in my family, and never spent much time around younger children. I did some babysitting in my teen years, but that was only to earn spending money, not because of the pleasure I received from the job. Babies always seemed so fragile. And between the dribble and the diapers, they were messy and icky. Toddlers were just miniature noise machines with only one setting - loud and fast. And they knew only two words: “NO!” and “MINE!”

I majored in elementary education in college. I did my student teaching in first and third grades, and frankly, I wasn't very good at it. I was terribly self-conscious and nervous around the children. And teenagers simply terrified me. From what I observed, they were nothing but a bad attitude wrapped in weird clothes.

Then, two days before my twenty-fifth birthday, our daughter Charity was born. You have never seen such a beautiful little girl! Wavy brown hair, huge brown eyes, deep dimples, and a smile that would melt your heart. Two years later, she was joined by her brother Joshua, the most beautiful little boy ever born. Curly blond hair, huge blue eyes, and the sweetest disposition you can imagine. These babies were bright and healthy and happy and a constant joy to my heart. And, did I mention how beautiful they were? Every minute with them was pure pleasure. Caring for their needs was an absolute delight. I found that even the dribbles and diapers were just opportunities to coax a precious giggle out of their loving little hearts.

All my life I have heard about the “terrible twos and threes.” Well, somehow we missed those years. We had the terrific twos and tremendous threes! Toddlers are so much fun! Everything is new and exciting and interesting. Mom and Dad are brilliant fountains of all wisdom and knowledge, strong towers of refuge who can do no wrong. Oh, I absolutely loved those years!

The Lord called us to teach our children at home when Charity was just three years old. At that time, homeschooling was basically unknown. It was not unusual for Social Services to remove your children from your home for truancy and arrest you for child neglect if you were homeschooling. But God put it in our hearts that this was His will and purpose for us, and I am so glad He did. Homeschooling our two children has been the single most satisfying thing I have ever done.

Those elementary years were so fulfilling. Children are created to learn, and they absolutely love to do so, if we don't crush that desire through competition, insensitivity, or boredom. Besides the "book learning," every Wednesday was family day. We went to parks, museums, Niagara Falls, Chuck E. Cheese, libraries and amusement parks. We explored the creek, the woods, the beach, and our own backyard. We toured power plants, factories, bakeries, and waste treatment facilities. We went roller-skating, bowling, sledding, bike riding, ice-skating, and hiking. And then we did it all again!

Gradually time passed and we approached the dreaded teen years. I had been taught that rebellion was a natural part of growing up, and that repudiating your parents and their values was a normal, expected, and even necessary part of the maturing process. I personally rejected those beliefs as lies from the pit soon after my children were born. To imagine that my precious children would one day turn against me, to believe that I had to *expect* that, was totally unacceptable to me. Proverbs 10:22 (KJV) declares, "*The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.*" I claimed that promise for my life. I knew that my children were a blessing from the Lord that had greatly enriched me, and I believed that they would add no sorrow to my life, but only joy. Praise God, He has been faithful to that promise!

As our children grew and matured, we continued to spend lots of time together. I taught them at home all the way through high school. (They never attended traditional school.) We ate our meals together, played together, worked together, and vacationed

together. They became our best friends. There has been no hint of rebellion or “normal” teen attitude in their relationship with us. Not that they haven’t questioned and explored and examined our beliefs and standards. They have, and they still are. But it has been with respect and honor, not rebellion or disrespect.

Now they are young adults. Charity traveled to eighteen countries before her eighteenth birthday, sometimes with us and often with various mission endeavors. She spent a year in Tulsa in the Teen Mania Ministries internship program, and now she is back home, completing her post-graduate studies before God leads her into the next exciting adventure He has planned for her. She loves to meditate on the Scriptures and claims the Holy Spirit as her closest friend. She knows she will one day influence the world, and is preparing for the day when the Lord calls her to step forward into her destiny.

Joshua is our resident computer expert and government watchdog/activist. He also lives at home, pursuing external degree studies in those two main areas of his interest. He is our diplomat, quietly listening and observing, hearing all points of view, drawing others into more clearly communicating their ideas, then laying out the overall picture that ties it all together. Sometimes I look at these two young adults and am moved to tears at the goodness and grace of God, that He has allowed me the privilege of knowing and loving such special people.

For the last few years, Mark has been urging me to write a book about raising children. Seeing the different philosophies and methods other parents use, Chari and Josh have added their support to Mark’s encouragement. I have resisted for two major reasons.

First, my training is not in the area of family therapy, child development or psychology. Isn’t it presumptuous for me to think I have anything to contribute to these disciplines when there are so many more learned individuals writing and teaching on these subjects? My second reason for hesitating to write this book was my conviction that it is largely by the grace of God that Charity

and Joshua are who they are today. I have seen too many godly families suffer the pain of wayward children to believe that somehow we did anything to “deserve” to be spared that tragedy.

But lately the Lord has been showing me that, just as we can put up blockages that prevent the grace of God from flowing in our lives, there are also things we can do to clear the way for His grace. And that is an area in which I have been trained. Mark and I have devoted our lives to learning how to increase the flow of God’s grace in the lives of believers and developing training materials to pass that knowledge on to others.

Let me clarify what I mean when I talk about the grace of God. The basic meaning of the Hebrew word for grace is “favor,” while the New Testament Greek word connotes that it is a divine gratuity (perk, “freebie,” bonus, benefit, extra). It is a free gift. It is forgiveness and deliverance. It is the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life. (Biblesoft’s New Exhaustive Strong’s Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright ©1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

To me, grace is the essence of God’s relationship with me. It is unmerited favor – God’s goodwill toward me even though I don’t deserve it. It is the mercy of God on sinful man. It is the power of God freely used for the benefit of frail mortals. It is God calling me to Himself before I even knew Him, and God calling me to holiness now that I am His child. It is God at work in me, giving me the desire and the ability to please Him. It is He Who began a good work in me, and He Who completes that work in me.

“’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.” It was God’s grace that showed me I needed salvation, and it was God’s grace that provided me with salvation. It is grace that reveals dark areas that remain in my heart, and grace that drives the darkness out with the light of His presence. It is grace that gives me the desire and the strength to cling to the grace that

gives me power over the enemy! It is all by grace, and it is amazing.

God has a vast reservoir of grace that He wants to pour into your life, your home, and your family. And He has provided lots of ways by which that grace can be channeled into your world. Unfortunately, these rivers of grace can become littered with the debris of our own sinful thoughts and actions, as well as the ungodly actions of our ancestors, creating dams that prevent His grace from flowing the way He desires.

My goal for this book is to help you clear away any obstructions that are preventing the grace of God from flowing freely in your family life, and help you establish great open channels by which His grace and mercy can pour in. That is my prayer for you. You may discover that what I have to say is very basic, and I would have to agree with you. Essentially, the concepts of this book could be reduced to the simple imperative, “Apply your Christianity to your family life!” I do hope, however, that what I have to say will spur you to new understandings and new ways of doing so.

During my years as a parent, I have read many, many books on raising children. I have especially been encouraged and instructed by the teachings of Kevin Leman, Gary Smalley, and James Dobson. These men have offered their years of education and experience to help young parents through the often confusing and always challenging process of raising godly children. After reading this book, you will still want to turn to them for advice on practical day-to-day matters of training and discipline. I would not presume to suggest that what I have to say in any way replaces or contradicts their wisdom.

What I want to offer are some spiritual principles that have not often been applied to family life. I hope I am able to stimulate you to new ways of looking at the dynamics of a family that lives in and reflects God’s love every moment of every day. Of course, these principles will be most effective if you begin practicing them even before your children are born. But no matter how old your

children are, and no matter what your relationship is with them today, if you will draw on the grace of God to change *you*, breaking down the barriers that have prevented His grace from flowing freely through you into your family, the river of the Spirit will sweep through your home bringing the righteousness, peace and joy of the kingdom of God into your world.

I am indebted to the teaching of many other leaders in the body of Christ for much of what I have to say in this book. Rather than try to reiterate all that has been said by others on each principle, I recommend to you the books listed in the Bibliography. They will provide you with the detailed Scriptural support and theological foundations you may need to move more confidently into any new areas.

Most of us grow and change most quickly and completely in the context of a group that shares the same goals. The accountability, support, and encouragement of fellow travelers on the way make the path easier and lots more fun. That is why I want to strongly encourage you to use this book with one or more friends.

Most of the rivers of grace we will talk about will require you to change your own behavior and develop new habits. This isn't easy, especially if you try to do it alone. Your first and greatest Helper, of course, is the Holy Spirit, Who wants to and is well able to make you into a pure channel through whom the grace of God flows in its fullness. But God has also placed His children in a body and made us part of a family. He wants us to be instruments of grace to one another as well, helping each other draw upon all the power of God that dwells within us. Appendix D offers ideas and suggestions for your group gatherings.

Chapter One - Start with a Clean Slate

Although Abraham eventually became known as “the Father of Faith,” he had to grow in faith, just like we do. Twice when he

entered new kingdoms while he was traveling to the Promised Land, he feared for his life. His wife Sarah was so gorgeous that every man that saw her wanted her for himself. Abraham was afraid that he would be attacked and killed by a foreign king wanting to add Sarah to his harem. So Abraham made a plan.

Both Sarah and Abraham had Terah as their father, although they each had a different mother. Therefore they were half-brother and sister before they were husband and wife. Abraham decided to take advantage of this technicality of their relationship to carry out a “minor” deception on the Pharaoh of Egypt and King Abimelech. He would tell them the truth about their relationship, but only part of the truth. “She is my sister,” he said, and allowed her to be taken from him to become the wife of other men. So began the seed of deception that plagued Abraham’s family for generations.

Abraham’s son Isaac wasn’t very creative in his deception. His wife Rebekah was also very, very beautiful, and he also feared for his life by those who would want her for themselves. So, since Abraham’s little deception had worked so well (!), Isaac tried it for himself. “She is my sister,” he told the Philistines, though she was actually only his second cousin. And the deception grew as the sin was passed to another generation.

Isaac grew old, as men tend to do, and was nearing death. He had two sons, twins, but not identical. Esau was the elder and thus had the birthright to the greater blessing. Jacob was the younger, and wanted the greater blessing. So he followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, and used deception to get his way. Dressing in his brother’s best clothes and using the skin of a goat, he pretended to be Esau and thus received the blessing of the firstborn. And the sin was found in another generation.

Jacob went on to have twelve sons of his own, but he loved Joseph the best. His other sons were jealous of his love for their little brother and, when the opportunity presented itself, they got him out of their way. Using his best clothes and the blood of a goat, they deceived their father into believing that a wild animal had

killed him. It was Jacob's son Judah who actually had the idea to sell Joseph as a slave and only pretend that he was dead. And the sin made its way through another generation.

Judah went on to marry and have three sons of his own. When the first was old enough, he married a woman named Tamar. But Judah's son was wicked, and God killed him before he could have any children. According to the custom of the time, Judah's second son was required to marry his brother's widow and give his firstborn son as his brother's heir. But this second son was also wicked and refused to give Tamar a child. So the Lord killed him, too.

Judah's third son was quite a bit younger than his brothers, so even though he would eventually be expected to marry Tamar and provide heirs for both of the deceased men, Tamar was sent home to wait until he grew up. Time passed, and the youngest boy matured. But after losing two of his sons who were married to Tamar, Judah was afraid that the third son would meet the same fate, so he didn't call Tamar back to marry him. Eventually, Tamar became aware of Judah's treachery and came up with a plan of her own. Changing her clothes to disguise herself as a prostitute, she deceived Judah about her identity and seduced him to sleep with her in exchange for a promised goat, and she became pregnant.

When Judah learned that she was pregnant by a man that was not his son, he was furious and demanded her death. At the last moment, she revealed the truth of her deception, and Judah accepted the consequences of his behavior. And the sin of deception played a major role in the lives of another generation.

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“Like father, like son.”

“The acorn doesn't fall far from the tree.”

“He sure has his father’s temper!”

“What a gossip – just like her mother!”

When you look in the mirror, are you beginning to see your parents? Do you find yourself struggling with the same weaknesses and frustrations that plagued their lives?

Does a tendency toward addiction “run in your family”? Is there a hereditary illness that torments you and your relatives?

Is there a certain besetting sin that hounds members of your family across generational lines, no matter how committed to the Lord the individual? Is there a “character flaw” that keeps showing its ugly face?

Do you think it is cute when your three-year-old sticks out his chin, looking just like his grandpa, his eyes cold with anger when things don’t go his way?

Does it make you uneasy to see your seven-year-old’s face falling into the same sullen lines of discontent that characterize your mother?

Have your brothers and sisters borne sons and daughters but not enjoyed them, because they were taken captive by ungodly music, peer pressure, alcohol, *Dungeons and Dragons*, drugs, violent video games, illicit sex, petty crime? Do you fear the day when your children are tempted by these enemies – fear it so much that you have bound your children in rules and laws and regulations that attempt to control not only their actions, but their minds and hearts as well?

Does your child suffer from unexplained pains and illnesses – fevers, rashes, tumors, sores that won’t heal or keep recurring? Is she “accident-prone”?

Does success seem right within your grasp, only to slip away time and again?

Is there a cloud of darkness that follows you wherever you go, paralyzing you into confusion, depression or indecision?

At work, do others constantly get the credit, bonuses and promotions that you deserve for your ideas and innovations, while you remain stuck in your dead-end position?

Perhaps there is something other than mere bad luck at work in your life and family. Perhaps you are dealing with more than environmental influences and learned behaviors. Perhaps you are battling something deeper than genetics, and stronger than habits.

*“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....” (Exodus 20:5)*

*“No one born of a forbidden marriage (or ‘a bastard’ – KJV) nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, **even down to the tenth generation.**” (Deuteronomy 23:2)*

*“If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...**the fruit of your womb will be cursed....**” (Deuteronomy 28:15,18)*

“The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind.” (Deuteronomy 28:27,28)

“You will be unsuccessful in everything you do.” (Deuteronomy 28:29)

“You will plant a vineyard, but you will not even begin to enjoy its fruits.” (Deuteronomy 28:30)

“You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep (or enjoy) them, because they will go into captivity.” (Deuteronomy 28:41)

*“The Lord will send fearful plagues on you **and your descendants**, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses...The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law until you are destroyed.” (Deuteronomy 28:59,61)*

While society calls you a victim and the Church calls you carnal, while Freud blames your sex drive and anthropologists blame the culture, while psychologists argue about the relative influence of environment and heredity, the Bible talks about generational sins and curses. According to the Word of God, the circumstances that affect your life are directly influenced in the spirit realm by the lifestyle of your parents and ancestors.

Al Sanders, in his book ***Crisis in Morality***, compares the descendants of two men who lived in the United States about 150 years ago. Max Jukes was an atheist. He did not believe in Christ or in Christian training. He married an ungodly girl and refused to take his children to church, even when they asked to go. At the time of this research, there were approximately 1200 descendants from this union. Of these, 310 died as paupers, at least 150 were criminals, 7 were murderers, 100 were drunkards, and more than half of the women were prostitutes.

Jonathan Edwards lived at the same time as Max Jukes, but he married a godly woman. He loved the Lord and saw that his children were in church every Sunday as he served the Lord to the best of his ability. An investigation was made of 1,394 of his known descendants. Thirteen of his offspring became college presidents, 65 became college professors, 100 lawyers, 30 judges, 60 physicians, 76 army and navy officers, 100 preachers and missionaries, 60 authors of prominence, 3 United States Senators,

one Vice President of the United States, 80 public officials in other capacities, and 295 college graduates, among whom were governors of states and ministers to foreign countries. (Resources at www.yorkcitychurch.org.uk.)

According to some studies, as many as 92% of the people in American prisons today were victims or witnesses of childhood abuse. Yes, heredity has played a part in their problems. Yes, their horrendous environment influenced them toward the path they have chosen. But, according to the Word of God, there is another influence that no amount of human punishment or rehabilitation can overcome: the sins of their fathers and the resulting curses that have come upon them, which can only be broken by the cross of Jesus Christ.

Have you ever considered the validity of these Old Testament warnings in your own life? Do you have an immediate inner reaction against such a concept? Set your objections to the idea aside for just a few moments, and stay with me while we explore this together. Don't reject the possibility of generational sins and curses affecting you and your children without at least hearing everything I have to say. We will address your objections and reservations in a minute.

For now, let your imagination take you to the world in which your ancestors lived five hundred years ago. Draw out of your memory everything you know about the lifestyle of that time – the homes, the clothing, the food, the occupations, the government, the religion. Take a few minutes to immerse yourself in that era and that place. Can you see it?

Five hundred years is at least twenty generations, so it is likely that more than a million of your great-great-great-(+15 more “greats”!)-grandparents were walking around in that world you are imagining. (You have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, thirty-two great-great-great-grandparents, and so on.) Let's focus in on their spiritual lives. Were your ancestors from Europe? What do you

think are the chances that at least one of those 1,048,576 individuals was not a worshipper of the one true God but dabbled in witchcraft or black magic? Did your family come from Africa? Do you suppose at least one of your great-grandparents may have practiced ancestor or idol worship? Are you of Asian descent? Is it possible that at least one of your forefathers was a Buddhist or Muslim? Are you Native American? Could one of your forebears have believed in pantheism or animism?

A better question might be, is it possible that any one of us has a perfect family tree in which there has never been a single person who has not served the one true God all the days of his life? I think it is highly unlikely. Yet the Lord has declared, “*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol... 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...*” (Ex. 20:3-5). “*If you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you... **you will worship other gods** – gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known” (Deut. 28:15,64).*

So, five hundred years or twenty generations ago, you had an ancestor who practiced idolatry. God decreed that the punishment and the curse for that sin would last for three or four generations, and that *one of the consequences would be that the idolater’s descendants would worship idols!* So generations nineteen, eighteen, seventeen and sixteen probably had at least one idol-worshipper. But great-grandma number sixteen’s idolatry extended the curse down four more generations, creating idol-worshippers in generations fifteen, fourteen, thirteen and twelve, whose sin sent the curse down four more generations... And so the cycle has continued down to you and your generation, *unless the curse has been broken!*

Sexual sins carry a similar curse, but the promise is that the consequences will influence up to the next *ten* generations! Are

you sure that nowhere in your millions of ancestors there has never been any sexual immorality?

And we have only been talking about the results of the sin of one person, twenty generations ago. Multiply that exponentially by the reality of the sinful human nature that makes up your family tree, and you will see a maelstrom of generational sins and curses swirling down upon the unsuspecting and innocent heads of your children. Now double that negative sin energy, because your spouse's family tree is as diseased as yours! No wonder life is hard! No wonder there are days when we feel like we are trying to run uphill through quicksand just to stay even! No wonder we struggle so to appropriate the grace of God to overcome our sins! The channels of His grace have been dammed up by the curses of our ancestors.

I can hear you objecting: "But Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us! Don't you know Galatians 3:13?"

Well, yes and no. Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty and broke the power of sin for every member of the human race from Adam to the last man standing at the end of the age. Every single person *was saved* by Jesus' death. Yet that salvation, that forgiveness of sin and deliverance from its power, was not effective in our lives, was not applied to us, was not accounted to our behalf, until we personally accepted it by faith and appropriated it in our own lives. We must individually receive the benefits of the cross for them to be effectual for us. And *only the benefits that we personally receive by faith are effectual for us.*

Growth in the Christian life is often simply the increased revelation of what the cross of Jesus has accomplished, and the application of that revelation to our own lives. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was available to us from the moment of our salvation, but few of us received it then. The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus was in effect as soon as He became our Lord and Savior, but few of us walked in it immediately. By His stripes we were healed, yet many

of us walked in sickness even after receiving His salvation. All that is necessary for life and godliness was in the cross, yet it is not manifest in our lives until we personally receive it by faith.

The same is true of the curse of the law: Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. Absolutely. Positively. However, until we personally appropriate that redemption in our own lives, the curse still operates. When we personally take the cross of Jesus Christ and place it by faith between us and our ancestors, immediately all those generational sins and curses that have been pouring down upon us and our children come to an abrupt and absolute end. They are absorbed into the cross, for Jesus has already paid the price and suffered the penalty. Their power over us is broken because of our faith in the work of Jesus on the cross.

You can be released from the negative sin energies of your ancestors. You can live a life of freedom from the power of generational curses. You can draw freely from the wells of salvation, for the channels of God's grace can be cleared of every obstruction. Your children can start life with a clean slate, unburdened by the consequences of any sin but their own. All you must do is receive it by faith. At the end of this chapter there is a sample prayer and meditation, which I strongly encourage you to appropriate into your own life by faith. It is especially important to appropriate God's grace in this way if you have an adopted child. By the very nature of the issues that result in adoption, there is cleansing and breaking of curses that must be done.

By the grace of God, Mark and I learned about the power of generational sins and curses early in our marriage, before we had children. By faith we saw the cross of Christ standing between us and our ancestors. The sins and curses that had been bearing down upon us were absorbed into the cross. We were freed from their power! And as we stood on this side of the cross, every promise of blessing that God ever made began pouring down upon us and all future generations. When the debris of the past was cleared out, the dams blocking the channels of grace and blessing were swept

away, and the flood of mercy, grace, blessing and peace that God longs for all of His children to experience began flowing freely.

The Other Side of the Cross

The negative power of sins and curses is only one aspect of the heritage that we receive from our ancestors. God's promise in Exodus 20:5,6 continues, "*I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God...**showing love to a thousand generations** of those who love me and keep my commandments.*"

*"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his **covenant of love to a thousand generations** of those who love him and keep his commands."* (Deuteronomy 7:9)

*"If you fully obey the voice of the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you and accompany you if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God. You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. **The fruit of your womb will be blessed....**"* (Deuteronomy 28:1-4)

The grace and mercy of God that flow into my life and family never cease to amaze me. To the unspiritual eye, our lives appear "charmed." To the spiritual, it is clear that we are greatly blessed. Our marriage is strong. Our children are following the Lord and have never indulged in rebellious attitudes or behavior. We have a lovely home, plenty of food, more clothes than we need, and very comfortable vehicles. We have never been involved in an accident that resulted in personal injury or suffered any serious illness or disease. Mark, Charity and Joshua have all been involved in situations that could have resulted in severe injury or even death, and all have walked through without any harm coming to them. We have had the opportunity to travel all over the world, blessing and receiving blessing from our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Often I used to look at our wonderful life and compare it to that of other sincere Christians who seemed to stagger from crisis to catastrophe. While the flu swept through their families, our family walked on in perfect health. When their new appliances broke down with distressing regularity, our old ones kept on plugging along. While they labored daily in unfulfilling dead-end jobs, we made a comfortable living doing the things we enjoyed and following a very flexible schedule. Yet their faith was as strong as ours, their devotion to the Lord as sincere as ours, their sanctification at least as great as ours. There was nothing in our lives that made us more deserving of God's blessing than they.

Finally we realized that Mark and I are walking in the blessing of a strong spiritual heritage. Both of us were raised in godly homes by truly Christian parents who lived their faith in their families as well as in public. Three of our four parents also had parents who were committed Christians. Our blessed lives today are the direct result of the godliness of our ancestors.

We have noticed a pattern among our friends who have not embraced the truth about generational sins and curses, and therefore are walking in the mixed blessings and curses into which they were born. Those of our believing friends from Christian families who married believers who also had a Christian heritage have enjoyed good lives. There have been some difficulties, but for the most part they are limited to one area of their lives at a time – either financial or physical or relational or emotional. Those who married first-generation believers, no matter how devoted and sincere, have struggled with all manner of physical, financial, emotional, church, business and family difficulties. Every step forward has been with blood, sweat and tears. Nothing has ever come to them easily.

The good news is that *no matter what heritage you received, you can pass on a godly heritage to your children and your children's children!* You can be the one who applies faith in the cross of Jesus to bring an end to the sins and curses that have plagued your family. Beginning with you, a new family tree can be planted that

is strong and healthy and whose fruit is life and joy and peace to all who follow after. Your children do not have to suffer for the sins of their fathers, and neither do you! You have been redeemed from the curse of the law, and if you will diligently listen to and obey the voice of the Lord your God, blessings will run after you and chase you down in every area of your life.

“You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out...The Lord will send a blessing on...everything you put your hand to...The Lord will establish you as his holy people...All the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you. The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity – in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground...The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty...to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.” (II Corinthians 1:20)

This is the heritage you can establish today for your children! You can wipe the slate clean, freeing them from the punishment of generations past. They can enter into covenant with God without any baggage weighing them down. They can be free to make their own choices and decisions without fighting the negative sin energies of their ancestors. What great freedom you can offer your children, and with it, what great responsibility! They will never be able to use the excuse of a family weakness to justify their sin, and neither will you. You will all be able to draw on God’s grace as freely and avidly as you desire. Your success and your failures will be your own.

Application and Prayer

Beginning today, you can be a better person, a better Christian, a better spouse, a better parent. Beginning at this very moment, you can be freed from the power of generational sins and curses that have influenced and harassed you all your life. The words below alone will not bring you freedom. You must speak them from your heart with faith. Read the prayer over carefully first, being sure that you understand and can wholeheartedly affirm every word. Then read it aloud prayerfully, from your heart, using the eyes of your heart to see the spiritual realities of which you speak.

“Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God and the only way to God; and that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead.

“I give up all my rebellion and all my sin, and I submit myself to You as my Lord.

“I confess all my sins before You and ask for Your forgiveness – especially any sins that exposed me to a curse. [As the Holy Spirit brings specific sins you have committed to your mind, draw upon His grace to truly repent and turn away from them.] Release me also from the consequences of my ancestors’ sins.

“By a decision of my will, I forgive all who have harmed me or wronged me – just as I want God to forgive me. In particular, I forgive... [As the Holy Spirit brings the names or faces of people to your mind, draw upon His grace to make a decision to forgive them now.]

“I renounce all contact with anything occult or satanic – if I have any `contact objects,’ I commit myself to destroy them. I cancel all Satan’s claims against me.

*“Lord Jesus, I believe that on the cross You took on Yourself every curse that could ever come upon me. So I ask You now to release me from every curse over my life – in Your name, Lord Jesus Christ!” (**Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose** by Derek Prince. Chosen Books, ©1990. p.196)*

“I place the cross of Jesus Christ between my ancestors and myself as a baby in my mother’s womb. I command the sins and all accompanying curses from my ancestors to be halted at the cross of Jesus Christ, and for freedom and release to flow down from the cross to that baby in the womb.” (It is most powerful to apply the grace of God at the point of need. You received the curses in your mother’s womb, so that is when they should be broken. God lives in timelessness, so this is not a problem for Him. The eyes of your heart are to be used to increase your faith, so see this spiritual reality happening as you pray.) (***Prayers That Heal the Heart*** by Mark Virkler. Bridge-Logos Publishers, ©2000. p.54)

“By faith I now receive my release and I thank You for it.

“Lord, I now open myself to receive Your blessing in every way You want to impart it to me.” (Prince, p.197)

Praise the Lord! He has redeemed you from the curse of the law!

Now, what about your children? If you are released, does that mean they are automatically released, also? As far as I know, there are no Scriptures that specifically answer that question, so I will tell you what I believe to be true. You must have the confirmation of the Spirit in your own heart of what you believe.

John and Paula Sandford, who teach extensively on generational sins, testify that the effects of this prayer will be manifest in all of the family members currently living and yet to be born. They believe that this is what is meant in Acts 16:31, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* The breaking of the curse by one believer can and does set free all of their family.

I concede their greater experience and wisdom. However, to be absolutely certain that the personal sins of my children have not left any legal ground for any effects of any curses to remain, I prefer to pray with my children as well. Any children who have not

yet been conceived when you receive your redemption from the curses are automatically included in your redemption, for they are still “in you” biblically speaking. However, as soon as they are conceived, the power of the curse begins working within them, and they are under its shadow. Therefore, they must be redeemed as well.

Infants and toddlers who are too young to understand anything spiritual can be redeemed by the faith of their parents. Simply pray the above prayers in faith for their release. Once a child is old enough to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior, his level of spiritual understanding is adequate to participate with you in the prayers for his redemption. For a young child, perhaps drawing a picture of what is happening in the spiritual realm would be helpful. Older children should understand the spiritual principles, and voluntarily and wholeheartedly participate in the prayers on their behalf, personally repenting as necessary.

This general prayer of release will make a great difference in your life and the life of your family. As you continue to grow, the Holy Spirit may bring to your attention specific areas of sin in your life that have kept the door open for a curse to continue to flow to you. If that happens, simply apply the prayer once again to that specific sin and curse, and walk out in the blessings of your loving Father.

Chapter Two - What Is Your Goal?

Have you ever built a new house? Do you remember all the excitement of planning it to be just right?

Probably you spent many hours imagining what your dream house would look like. You looked at magazines, examined builders' literature, and toured model homes. You decided what you liked and didn't like, what you could live with and what you absolutely had to have. You thought about your lifestyle and your family and