

WWF: WRESTLING WITH THE FATHER

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Baggage Series

Sermon Notes



QOD: What features did you have growing up that you wished were different?

I suspect most of the features you've just shared you were born with! One of the things you always hear when people visit new mom's in the maternity ward... He looks just like his father! Or she looks just like her mom! It is obvious from observation that many different characteristics are passed on from parents to their children. These include looks, behavior, and personality. What is the cause of these inherited traits or behaviors? Sociologists differentiate between **nature** and **nurture**. Nature has to do with genetically inherited traits. Physical features like height or size of nose are usually a result of nature. Propensity to some illnesses can also come about because of inherited genes. Nurture refers to learned behavior. Kids will always emulate their parents... this is how they learn! If you laugh a lot in your home, chances are that your kids will laugh a lot. If you're very intense and structured on the other hand, chances are their own homes will be the same. Right from an early age, we learn by imitating.

But not all things we inherit have to do with nature or nurture. Not all that we inherit from our parents can simply be attributed to nature or nurture. Some of it seems go a little beyond that, into what we want to refer to today as generational curses. **What are generational curses and spiritual bondages?** They are negative consequences that are passed on to individuals because of the words or sinful actions of the people in authority over them. Some of you come from families where none of the men ever make it through school or find useful work and most become alcoholics. Or have you seen families where all the girls get children before marriage? It is a known and expected fact. Have you ever met a guy who has a problem with uncontrollable rage, and then realized later that the dad also seems to have the same problem as did his grandfather? For some, it's persistent irrational fears, divorce and separation, addictions and for others, it's miscarriages, mental problems or depression, or unexplained chronic illnesses running in every generation. For others, it's suicides or untimely deaths: there's a spirit of death among members of that family, and they don't expect to live very long. I have a friend that has always been plagued with poverty regardless of bettering himself in school, computer training, and hard work ethics. He has done everything within his own strength, fasting, tithing, devotion to God, faithfulness you name it. He has never prospered though he had the most giving heart of many I have met. I believe it is a curse of poverty which has been passed down and is now resisting, restricting & choking out the blessing that should be in his life.

Having grown up in homes where their fathers physically abused their mothers, why do some men repeat the same pattern in their marriages? Having been victims of abuse in their childhood, why do some women choose to marry men who continue the abuse? Having seen the effects of alcohol on a parent why do some become addicted to it themselves? Why do some of us remain chained to inherited ways of thinking and acting that we know are destructive but that we seem unable to change? After an episode of pain caused by our acting out in the same old broken way why do we say, "I'll never do that again" and yet turn around and do it again over and over and over?

It is the result of being chained to a generational curse. The baton of self-destructive behavior is passed down to each succeeding generation in an unbroken line. The abused becomes the abuser. The victim becomes the victimizer. Warped ways of thinking and self-destructive ways of acting literally become family heirlooms that are diligently preserved and religiously bequeathed to each successive branch of the family. Thus the brokenness and pain of the family continues to flow like a river of acid down through each generation.

Please understand me here. I'm not talking about breaking a pattern of bad table manners. If your Daddy loudly slurped his soup you can decide not to do so simply by exercising your free will. What I'm speaking of

are deep, inherent patterns of sin that are so ingrained in families they are accepted as truth without question.

Why are bondages and curses effective?

1. **Bondages:** Sinful actions performed by an ancestor may open a door that gives the enemy the right to frustrate future generations e.g. many politicians engage in witchcraft in an attempt to find protection from their enemies and to stay in power. And many of their children have memories of being involved in rituals that were meant to protect them. The bible lists at least 5 sins that attract curses from God. **Occultism** e.g. witchcraft, divination, New Age practices etc (Deut.18:10-13), **sexual perversion** (Lev.23), **idolatry** (Ex.20:1-5), **oppression of the poor and helpless** (Ex.22:25, 23:6-9) and **shedding of innocent blood** (Gen.4)
2. **Curses:** God has given power to the spoken word. James3:9 says *'with the tongue we praise the Lord and Father and with it we curse men, who have been made in his image'*. Prov.18:21 says *'Death and life are in the power of the tongue'*. God has given a huge responsibility to people in spiritual authority which they are meant to use for good. But they can also use it for evil or death. Prov.26:2 limits this authority however, because it says a curse without a cause is ineffective.

Can bondages and curses affect Christians? Yes! They will not have eternal effect on us but they can greatly frustrate us and reduce our quality of life, just like in most families. There are many righteous kings in the bible who followed God and had great success but then because they didn't deal with their family and national issues, their sons were wicked and brought great problems to the nation. You can belong to God and be assured of your eternal salvation, and yet still experience frustration and difficulty if you don't close this door. God has given us victory through the cross but we still need to apply that victory into our realities.

How can we overcome generational curses? One family that was chosen and blessed by God and yet experienced the frustration of generational bondages was Jacob's. Turn with me to **Genesis 32:22-30**.

Jacob's family had issues; strife, favoritism, jealousy and fear. But I believe their root sin was deceit. Jacob means 'he grasps the heel' or 'he deceives'. We first notice the pattern first with his grandpa Abraham, who had a very beautiful wife. In **Gen.12:10**, he lied to the king of Egypt that his beautiful wife was his sister so that people wouldn't kill him for her. What a betrayal! But if you flip over to Gen.26, after Abraham himself had died, you see a strange thing. His son Isaac lied to another king that his beautiful wife was his sister... like father, like son!

So that's dad's side. Now mom's side was even worse. Rebekah came from a family of expert deceivers. She loved her younger son Jacob because he stayed indoors and loved to cook, unlike his older brother Esau. So she conspired with Jacob to con her own husband into leaving the inheritance to him! It worked but it resulted in great strife between the brothers. When their mom heard Esau was plotting to kill his younger brother, she manipulated her husband to send Jacob off to her relatives, on the pretext that he needed to find a wife.

That's how he fled from the chaos caused by his deceit and went to live with his mother's family. But he found her brother, uncle Laban, to be an even greater deceiver than Rebekah! Jacob worked for him 7 years to marry beautiful Rachel, only for his uncle to con him at the last minute and give him the rather plain older sister, Leah. He was forced to work yet another 7 years to finally get the girl of his dreams. The next 6 years after that were a battle of wits between Jacob and his uncle. Uncle Laban was the boss from hell, changing his contract and cutting his fees 10 different times!

Meanwhile, the strife had spilt over into his own family. His two wives, who were sisters, were competing in having babies to win his affection. They did everything, including bringing their maids for him to have children with and on one occasion, Leah even had to bribe her younger sister so she could sleep with her husband! What a messed up competition! The negative effects of the sin of deceit were being passed on as bondage to the next generation.

In the midst of all this, his financial success caused his cousins to despise him and give him dangerous looks. So after 20 years of exile away from his family, Jacob had to flee with his two wives and risk meeting his brother.

We catch up with the story when everything seems it was finally crashing down on Jacob. He had missed his father's funeral, he had not seen his mom for 20 years. His wives were constantly fighting and his uncle thought he was a crook. His own brother had put out a 'wanted dead or alive' sign for him and yet he had nowhere else to run to. Talk about frustration! And that's where our reading catches up with him.

READ GEN.32:22-30

"He saw God face to face." It seems at some point during the wrestling match, he realized his opponent was God Himself. The interesting thing we learn is that the mystery wrestler could have disabled Jacob at any time, yet he allowed him to wrestle until he was exhausted.

If the man could win whenever he so desired, why didn't he? I would suggest that it was because the struggle was necessary for Jacob's growth. Through it, he came to the place where he realized his strength could not save him. His smooth tongue could not bail him out. Once he was there, the angel asked him to let him go. Jacob refused and asked for a blessing. Now reading this story doesn't quite give us the full picture of how the fight happened. Hosea 12:3-4 says *'in the womb he grasped his brothers heel, as a man, he struggled with God. He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor'*. Again, the angel, the same one who could dislocate a hip with his finger, agreed. And then he asked Jacob for his name.

Do you find this question at all odd? I do. If this was God or an angel, he should have known who he was wrestling with! God asked Jacob his name not because He didn't know it . . . He wanted to know if Jacob knew it. He wanted to know if Jacob was ready to come to grips with who he really was. By answering 'Jacob', Jacob was doing an uncomfortable thing. He was admitting the truth about himself. It's me Jacob, the schemer, the manipulator, the deceiver. It was only after he confessed this that God now blessed him. V.28 says *'your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and men and have overcome'*. Jacob means 'deceiver'. Israel means 'he struggles with God'. He would no longer be one who deceived men, but one who prevailed with God.

No longer would he be the deceiver, but the overcomer. Even the nation that had been promised to his grandfather Abraham would bear his name. God can turn our bondage into blessing. He can turn our curses into resources and make you a blessing for the next generation!

My own parents were the first in their own families to come to Christ. My parents came from an extremely poor family, where the men never amount to much. And yet as they dealt with some of the issues, those issues have not passed on to her own children, although there are some which they never dealt with and they have affected us. My siblings have purposed to deal with this issues for the sake of our children. We have no expectation of failure, but we fully expect to succeed. Because of my parents, we have not had to deal with most of the issues that they did in their generation. Most of us are believers. This is what happens when spiritual bondages and generational curses are broken. **There is freedom in the next generation.**

How do we break bondages and curses?

1. We Confess Ancestral Sin – twice in the book of Neh (1&9), we see Nehemiah making a prayer of confession for the sin of the forefathers that brought about their exile. Some of you are first generation believers. You are the first ones in your family line to come to Christ. God wants you to deal with the curses and bondages so that they stop with you and you leave a godly heritage with the next generation. Some are second generation believers like me. Someone else dealt with most of the issues and you are enjoying the blessing. It's still important that you keep praying about any trends you notice – you must maintain the freedom! Sometimes it takes more than one generation to deal with the multiple issues in our families. For example, we noticed that my dad and his siblings have had a strained relationship for many years, and so is my family. When I notice our kids beginning to have some intense sibling rivalry. I decided to deal with it in

prayer but also to prioritize teaching them love, so that this stops in their generation. **There is Freedom in the next generation**

2. **We Wrestle With The Father For Our Relatives** – Jacob wept with tears and clung to God until God changed his destiny. We must pray that God will open the eyes of our other family members so that they too will break the power of the curse over themselves and their own progeny. We pray for our family members because we realize that their own sin affects us. It's a big job to close the doors that have plagued our families. Some of you like Jacob are the lastborns and nobody thinks much of you. But as you deal with your own issues, God is saying He is willing to bless your family because of you. I can tell you from experience that a huge change comes to your family when every member knows Christ! Is it possible... absolutely yes! (recommend Gideon's Action – 10,000) **There is Freedom in the next generation.**
3. **By Walking in Obedience.** In order to break free from the curses and walk in freedom, you must learn to walk in obedience to God's ways. We don't have to be perfect or without mistakes, but our hearts need to be surrendered and pliable toward God. We need to be moving forward in the things of God every day of our lives. Today's decisions determine our tomorrows. There is a miracle on the other side of your obedience. Do Mizizi, sign up for Simama and Ndoa (go to the info desk) **There is Freedom in the next generation.**

As I conclude, I must say that I love the fact that as we break the power of the curse, we can learn to do the opposite, which is to bless ourselves and our children. In fact we can learn to bless all the areas where God has given you spiritual authority over. I bless my wife and my kids often, and I also bless my staff team. I also bless you as a congregation often. Why? Because I believe God honors the authority He has given me to bless you. And because I want to model to you blessing for your own families!

Think about it - can you see issues in your family that could be as a result of spiritual bondages and curses? Imagine family members – everyone succeeding – loving God and one another, no one needy but together serving and blessing others. Imagine what impact that could have on our city. Imagine what impact that could have on our nation!

Let me invite us to pray.

1. Salvation

2. Altars

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You as Your child, purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that has been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ that is in or around me to flee my presence and never to return. In the name of Jesus, and by the power of His blood, I now renounce, break and sever all curses that have been handed down to me from my ancestors. In the name of Jesus, I now loose myself and my future generations from any bondages passed down to me from my ancestors! I now ask You, heavenly Father, to fill me with Your Holy Spirit. I submit my body as an instrument of righteousness, a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. All this I do in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.