

Generational Curses

READING
Exodus 20
Ephesians
Galatians
Acts 15

When you become a Christian you are born again. But not into the same family as before. You are now Yahweh's child. Yeshua's sibling. Your genealogy has been changed.

The idea of a generational curse, a curse which is on you because of something one of your ancestors did or said, comes mainly from this passage in the “Ten Commandments”.

“You shall not make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

The context here is very clear. This is the giving of the Ten Commandments. Yahweh is giving Moshe some explicit rules for his people to live by. He is explaining his standard for expected behaviour for the recently liberated Hebrew people.

In particular the context of this sentence is idolatry. If you make idols I'll be very jealous and I'll punish you, your children, your children's children, and even your great grandchildren.

But if you don't. If you love me. I'll show love and kindness to a thousand generations of your descendants.

So this isn't a general claim that Yahweh will curse your children if you sin. And it isn't a general claim that your children will be disposed to the same sins you are. Other sins have nothing to do with God's jealousy. This is particularly about idolatry.

There is another really important thing about the context here. This is the very central chapter of the giving of the Old Testament, (the old covenant), The Law. It is for Jews. ONLY. Period.

See this article [No Rules](#) for a more detailed explanation if you need it. But the Bible is **very** clear. Christians are not under the Law. Yeshua fulfilled the Law and nailed it up with himself when he was executed.

This often misunderstood fact is the focus of much of the New Testament, (the new covenant). Read Ephesians, Galatians, or many others. Acts 15 is the historical account of how the early apostles had to confront that realisation and how they stopped insisting that new Christians keep the old Jewish Law.

So if we're not accountable to the Law, then we're not accountable for the consequences of breaking it. That's done. That's paid for.

There is no penalty for us, let alone for our children or their children.

So where does that leave generational curses?

Pretty much a non event for Christians.

I also hear those who push this idea quoting things like, Abraham lied, Isaac lied, and Jacob was a deceiver. Those things are true. But perhaps they just picked up those things by living with their parents. There is no proof that they behaved that way because their parents did something, or that it was because of some curse from God on their family. And, not sure if you're aware, but everyone lies. So no surprise that you can find a parent and a child who both lied. There is nothing in the Bible that implies that Abraham was a liar. Or that Isaac was a regular liar either. But only that they both told a particular lie to protect themselves. Honestly, that means nothing to me. And to build a theology of generational curses based on that is just absurd.

Citing case studies where one client has a particular behavioural issue, like addiction or crime, or a similar sin, and then blaming a generational curse because their parent has the same issue is not even logical, let alone Biblical.

Years ago I worked in a small church school. About 25 students. And I knew all their parents pretty well. One day I was watching one girl, and was wondering about her behaviour. I realised her mother was the same. So then I started watching all the kids and then comparing what I knew about their parents. Pretty much all their behaviour, I could see in their parents. I learned a lot about my friends from their kids.

Children copy parents.

Nothing to do with curses.

There are some curses on children in the Bible.

But they are there because they were spoken by the parents.

Noah cursed his grandson Canaan.

Israel (Jacob) cursed two of his sons on his deathbed.

But they were very clear and explicit. The parent knew they were cursing the child, and the child, (an adult), knew that their parent was cursing them.

And finally, let me add this about “genealogies”.

When you become a Christian you are born again. But not into the same family as before. You are now Yahweh's child. Yeshua's sibling. Your genealogy has been changed.

Dramatically.

You are now in the genealogy of Yahweh. No curses in that family.

You have nothing to worry about.