

What is a generational curse?

Q. - Here's my question...what is a generational curse and where can I find more info regarding this? I believe I've seen it in the OT books but, am not so clear on it.

A. – One of the main passages that you are referring to is, Exodus 20:5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

• Other passages that speak to this are: • Numbers 14:18 - 18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.'

• Numbers 14:33 - 33'Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness.

• Deuteronomy 5:9 - 9'You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

• Deuteronomy 5:10 - 10but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

• 1 Kings 21:29 - 29"Do you see how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but I will bring the evil upon his house in his son's days."

• Jeremiah 32:18 - 18who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God The LORD of hosts is His name;I don't think that it is a mystery that trouble & un-due suffering comes to generations ahead of us, because of us.

If I sin against the Lord by not lovingly teaching my children the word of God and placing before them an example of righteousness and faithfulness as a father, then I should 'naturally' expect my children to struggle and suffer with life & relationships in regard to their behavior and character. If I said that it is actually a 'curse', I am not sure if I can support that biblically.

But I will say that it is a 'natural' process that occurs when preceding generations do not faithfully depend upon and follow the ways & will of God simply because God has 'decreed' this condition upon our (man's) sins. Such is what we see in these passages which represent the true nature of God and men who move away from that nature to idolatry. All men who are being unfaithful to God are being faithful to something or someone else which becomes idolatry. God specifically judges idolatry because it defames & profanes His Holy Name.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul reiterates the point by expressing the principle more clearly in Galatians 6:7 "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

What is 'not' stated here is exactly 'when', 'where' or specifically 'how' you reap. But...you will reap. The blessedness about the grace we have been shown in Christ Jesus is that there is mercy with God that the unbeliever does not know about, which can keep us from receiving the full blow of these sins. All the more the reason why we need to learn to call upon the name of God to receive "...mercy & grace to help in the time of need" (Hebrews 4:16)!

It does make one wonder if the Lord indeed actually does 'curse' a family line (such as the Kennedy family, or like Bruce Lee and his son), but outside of these particular passages, I really don't know that I can accurately use the term 'curse' in any present day application.

Several passages do speak of a curse (The Hebrew word = q@lalah {kel-aw-law} which means 'curse', 'vilification', 'execration'), big words that speak of a curse. A curse was certainly in the mind of the Jews for different reasons. When you get a chance, go to www.blueletterbible.org and type in the word 'curse' and then view the passages that come up. There are too many to pull them up here. Notice the different & specific reasons for a curse.