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THE BIBLE VIEW

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Affecting Future Generations

Bill Brinkworth

We seldom think of the future consequences of our sin. Too often we do what gratifies us for the moment, and do not consider what our iniquities will cost us in the future. However, there is usually "fruit" from our sin, and quite often it is "rotten".

Most of the time we reap sin's havoc after it was sown. Sometimes the crop will be reaped during our lifetime. Sometimes it sprouts in generations down the road. The after-effects of our sin often affect future generations. There will always be a payday someday for our transgressions, and it may be our future offspring who will pay the price for our disobedience to God's commandments.

Here is some of what the Bible teaches about the inevitable, future wages of our sin:

Sin can affect family members.

“Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech [Molech was a false “god”], from among their people. Lev. 20:5

“But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.” Num. 14:32-33

Because of idolatry, God’s hand did not help or guide a sinner’s family. For that reason, many wandered aimlessly through the desert for 40 years, when the trip to the Promised Land could have been done in weeks.

“How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger. ... 19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. 20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.” Job 21:17-20 Also: Jos. 7:24-25.

Sin can be learned from parents, and thus be seen as “accepted” by their children, and then practiced by the off-spring. That is why one of the primary responsibilities of a parent is to be a godly example to their children.

“And he [King Jeroboam] walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.” I Kings 15:3 A parental, bad example often points offspring in the wrong direction.

“And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the

*way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:”
I King 22:52 Also: I Kings 15:26.*

At times, the consequences of a parent’s sins will be expressed to even their fourth generation. Sin can be shared to future generations by learning and accepting it as “normal” from their parent’s actions. Sometimes God allows future, undisciplined generations to reap the consequence of their own actions without His merciful interventions.

“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.” Ex. 34:7 Also: Ex. 20:5, Num. 14:18, Num. 14:32, I Kings 21:29, Isa. 65:6.

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, 10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.” Deu. 5:9-10 Notice that part of the reason God’s mercy will not deter a sinner’s future continuance in sin is that the original sinner hated God. He pushed God out of his life; so God will stay out of future generations, unless they personally call on Him.

Family and future generations can reap some consequences of the sinner’s actions unless God intervenes. The Old Testament Law did not require the death of a sinner’s immediate family. A child can be spared

the consequences of their family's sin and even their own, if they do right and obey God!

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Deut. 24:16

"As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. 19 Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. 20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Eze. 18:18-20 Just because the parent(s) did evil in God's eyes, does not mean that the children must also suffer the consequences of what the parents did. They can alter God's wrath by living right and obeying God! Also: Lev. 26:39-42, Jer. 32:18.

No one has to sin because of some "magic" pull on their life. They are not destined to be a thief like daddy, a liar like mommy, a drunkard like Uncle Albert, an idol worshipper like family members, or a homosexual like Aunt Sally. Since we are all born sinners, it does not take much training to get us to go in the sinful way of our parents.

Sin is always a personal decision. No one is forced to sin. One can always say "no" to iniquity's involvement. We all

have the opportunity to spurn sin and adhere to righteous living!

One can see from the many biblical examples that there is an awesome responsibility on the shoulders of a parent. That obligation is to be good, biblical example to young observing eyes. Disobeying God's commandments can affect others around you and future generations. However, obeying God and being a good, righteous example can also affect others, present and future, for the good. What kind of example are you?

"And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." II Kings 22:2

"And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the LORD." II Chron. 20:32

"Are you sowing today that which you will regret tomorrow?"

Why the "Sheep" Are Important

Gospel Herald

*T'was a sheep not a lamb, that went astray
In the parable (Mat. 18:12-14) Jesus told.
'Twas a grown-up sheep that wandered away
From the ninety and nine in the fold.
And out on the hilltops and out in the cold.
'Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd sought.
And back to the flock, and back to the fold,*

'Twas a sheep that the Good Shepherd brought!

*Now, why should the sheep be so carefully fed
And cared for still today?*

*Because there is danger if they go wrong
They will lead the lambs astray,
For the lambs will follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever they wander, wherever they go!*

*If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
'Till the lambs are as wrong as they;
So, still with the sheep we must earnestly plead,
For the sake of the lambs today.
If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost
Some sheep will have to pay!*

***“We sow a thought and reap an act;
We sow an act and reap a habit;
We sow a habit and reap a character;
We sow a character and reap a destiny.”***

— Author Unknown

Is Strictness the Problem?

John Hall, D. D. (Edited)

A good deal of nonsense is being palmed off today concerning the reaction of a child from over-strictness in parental training.

I sometimes hear, "My parents brought me up so rigidly that a reaction took place in my mind, and I have turned away from religion."

I then ask, “Did they teach you to be honest?”

“Yes.”

“Were they strict about that?”

“Yes.”

“Did they teach you to tell the truth?”

“Yes!”

“Were they strict about that.”

“Absolutely!”

“Have you suffered mental damage because of those two instances? Were those two things wrong to insist on?” At that point they usually just quietly shake their head “no”. Lessons taught by parental training are often hard, but there can be no compromise in teaching many of the lessons a parent must teach.

No person learns the multiplication table from sheer love of it. It is always tenuous in learning it. However, I know of no person that has suffered mental damage from learning it. Many of life’s lessons are also hard to master. A strict and unwavering hand often is needed for many to learn life’s lessons.

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” *Proverb 22:6*