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Invisible Barriers 3

Family Baggage

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Dealing with Past Family Baggage

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All of us have grown up in some sort of family setting. Some great. Some bad. Some terrible.

Dealing with Past Family Baggage



There are those who grew up with a mom and dad who were loving and supportive. They were there and helped them through life's difficulties. There were feelings of love, appreciation, and support.

Other grew up with a mom and dad who were caught up in drugs or alcohol. Anger, screaming, violence, and neglect were experienced on a regular basis. There were feelings of fear, insecurity, and abandonment.

There are so many types of families. There are unwed mothers, couples living together with kids, mixed families with children from a variety of moms and dads, grandparents raising kids, foster families, adoptive families, same-sex families to mention a few.

Traits that Run in the Family

One thing holds true for each of the families mentioned above. Each one has an unseen, invisible atmosphere at work. Even in the best of families there is an invisible force at work to influence it toward evil.

I am sure that you have seen it in other families. There are traits that you can see handed down from generation after generation. Maybe you know a family whose main characteristic is fear. It can be traced from the child, to the mother, to the grandmother, and who knows how many generations in the past.

The characteristics that we are concerned with in this resource are those characteristics that negatively impact family life. They are so much a part of the family that they are considered to be normal. They are so familiar that they are second nature to you. They are a part of how you see yourself, so much so in some cases that you may feel like you are giving up a part of your personality if you were to get rid of them.

A good example of this is a couple of families from my hometown, Austin, MN. I am not going to mention any names, but there were two families that had a reputation for being fighters. All of the guys of the family were fighters. If anyone messed with one of the brothers, you had to face them all.

Or take Bill (not his real name) who grew up in a home filled with sarcasm. Every remark was a smart-aleck response. There was a constant retelling of

stories and making fun of one another. Being the youngest boy he would continually be harangued by his older brothers.

They always laughed when they said the things they did, so did Bill. He did not want them to know how deep the words cut into his heart. So he just went along with the flow. That's just the way his family is.

Bill's heart was deeply wounded. He carried anger, resentment, and bitterness toward his brothers. It is ironic that even though Bill knows how much pain sarcastic words can cause, he did not realize how deep sarcasm ran in his own life.

Understanding Iniquity

The Bible calls this invisible influence **iniquity**. The idea behind this word is "to bend", "to twist", or "to deviate from a path." It is a perversion of what God's desires and calls us to be. It is crooked behavior that violates God's commands.

There is a threefold aspect of this word. It carries the idea of:

1. the actual sin or wrong behavior;
2. the guilt of sin;
3. the penalty of that sin.

All three of these aspects are present in this term and we must look at the context to see what aspect is being highlighted.

One of the passages in the Bible that shows how iniquity impacts multiple generations is Exodus 34:6-7.

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, **visiting the iniquity of fathers**

on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” (emphasis mine)

As we see iniquity goes on for three or four generations. It continues to be passed on until something breaks the power of this unseen force. Some people describe the influences of iniquity upon us as generational sins.

One thing needs to be made clear at this point. Because a person lives in this atmosphere does not mean that they are destined to sin in the same way. Sin is always based on a choice we make. No one can make us sin. We do it of our own free will.

What iniquity does is predisposes us toward the sin. It gives us more of an inclination or tendency to respond in the same way as we were raised. More than one author has described it as a pressure that is upon us to sin like our forefathers.

Another thing needs clarification. We are never held responsible before God for the sins of our parents or grandparents. We feel the impact and the influence of their sin on our lives, but God doesn't hold us accountable for what they have done. God will hold them responsible for the choices they made.

We also cannot blame our parents for our sins. We make our own choice to sin and will be held responsible before God for the choices we make.

Who's Responsible for Your Sin?



My father was an angry man. I grew up in a house filled with anger and yelling. Growing up I had an explosive temper. I would blow up in an instant. Every time I blew up and felt bad about it, I would blame my dad. I took great joy at declaring if it weren't for him I wouldn't be the way I was.

Once I came to know the Lord my anger did not just fall away. I was still angry and combative. I was complaining and blaming my dad for my anger after another explosive blowup. I heard the Lord say to my spirit, "You chose to emulate your dad."

I was stunned. It was like a whole new way of thinking entered my mind. I was guilty for being an angry person. I was sinning in my anger. It wasn't my dad's fault. I chose to be like him. I was raised in anger and I chose to continue in anger.

That was the beginning of a change in my life. It took place when God showed me the invisible lie I was believing thinking that the way I grew up was the reason I acted the way that I did.

Yes, I was raised in an atmosphere of anger and violence, but I can never use that as an excuse for what I did. I acknowledged the sin of anger in my generational lines. I repented of my own anger, taking full responsibility. I rejected the lie that it was my dad's fault that I was the way I was. I renounced anger and cast out the spirit of anger from my life.

That is when my life began to change. I was no longer controlled by anger. The rage that used to rise up in my chest was gone. Sure I still get angry from time to time, but there is no more invisible force at work in my life because my sin and the sin of my past generations.

What Baggage Are You Carrying Around?



What family baggage are you carrying around? What specific generational curses are affecting you?

Maybe you're like I was, blaming someone for the way you are. You were raised in a negative setting. You act in ways that you know are wrong, but you point your finger and blame someone else for what you are doing.

Maybe it's time to shine God's spotlight on that invisible area and break its influence in your life. At the end of this series I will give you some guidelines on how you can deal with this area and the other invisible barriers that follow.