

**EVEN TO THE NEXT GENERATION**  
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In our pride, we like to claim we can take our lumps and pay for our own mistakes. Our choices, even the bad ones, are our problem and our prerogative. When I sin, my punishment is deserved. Too bad the consequences of my sin are not mine alone to bear. No man is an island; no parent suffers alone.

Scriptures including **Exodus 34:5-7** make it clear. Even our great-grandchildren will reap a harvest from our mistakes. The children of Israel wandered for forty years till they paid for rebellion with death. Their children wandered with them. In **Genesis 24-27**, when Noah woke and realized his son Ham has ridiculed him; he placed a curse, not on the evildoer, but upon Ham's son, Canaan. David repented of his sin with Bathsheba, but it was the baby who died. That is what makes the proclamation of the Jews at the trial of Jesus in **Matthew 27:25** so chilling. They cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children." As they asked, two generations, seventy years later, history tells us all the inhabitants of Jerusalem remaining alive after a siege, were crucified by Roman soldiers, just like Christ died.

How we live our lives before God will either bless or curse our descendants. In the case of Isaac in **Genesis 27: 11-12**, his children took their father's words seriously because his curse or blessing was real, deliberate, and effective. Though we no longer follow that custom, we bless or curse our offspring making personal choices they will inherit. In **Matthew 7:24-27**, Jesus likened our choices for our lives to building a house on a proper or poor foundation. What he left unsaid, but understood, was that houses we build are passed onto our children who remain after our deaths. But what foundation will we leave them to continue to build their lives upon? No matter our words, our offspring will determine what is really valuable by how we spent our time, what they were and where our treasures were stored, where we placed priorities, and in which world we chose to live. Joshua's decision to serve the Lord in **Joshua 24:15** was a decision both for himself and those in his house. The same holds true for our choices.

I have come to realize that, like it or not, my actions always affect the destiny of those who depend upon me. They will, of necessity, eat the crop I have sown and inherit the consequences of my deeds, decisions, and choice of storehouses for my treasures. Can the chain be broken? Only if children heed the call of God for repentance and a renewed relationship with Him. In biblical history, a few kings managed to break the pattern of their forefathers' evil by seeking knowledge and the approval of God. Is that likely to happen with our children if we raise them in an ungodly environment? Lot raised his children in Sodom, and lost his whole family, even those he tried to save. The two daughters the angels brought out of the city brought Sodom with them. It is not wise to immerse our children in sin, and then expect them to heed the call to righteousness when the time of judgment is at hand. Advocates of abortion claim a woman's right to her body, her right to engage in fornication without protection, takes precedence over her unborn child's right to live. As parents, some would say our right to pleasure takes precedence over the spiritual life of our children. Eternity is a much larger part of life than time spent breathing. When it is said and done, who does the greater harm to their children? Those who kill them unborn, or those who abandon their children's souls to hell for eternity?

Our weakness and our most immoral choices are the baseline from which our children will form their convictions. We tend to live at the lowest level allowed by the authority we recognize in place in our lives. That is because we are carnal by nature, born in sin, shaped in iniquity, and trapped in flesh. Gravity usually wins in an even up contest over levitation or elevation of ourselves to a higher standard of behavior. Therefore when setting standards for my life, if we err in the direction of righteousness, is it not better to err on the side of safety? Which will be safer for our children? We say we would die for our children, but will not sacrifice one iota of our pleasure, lifestyle, or traditions for their sake, even when we know what we do displeases God and will yield unpleasant consequences for our families.

Can blessings and promises transfer as well as curses? In **Acts:2:39**, the promises of God spanned generations. The descendants of Abraham inherited vast wealth in the Promised Land because of the righteousness of one man and God's subsequent promises. Can promises and blessings be lost? Millions of Israelites also died in the wilderness.

What are we commanded to do as parents? The command in **Deuteronomy 6: 6-9** is not ambiguous. “These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” In **Joshua 1:8**, that leader commanded continual meditation upon the books of the Law as a prerequisite for success. David hid God’s word in his heart as a preventive measure against temptation in **Psalms 119:11**. What would the wisest man who ever lived recommend in **Proverbs 22:6**? “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Like Noah in **Hebrews 11: 7**, if we are willing to work at it, setting our pleasure aside for as long as it takes, we can prepare an escape from judgment for our children.

Paul told us in **Corinthians 3:2** we are God’s living epistles, known and read of all men. Our children can read us like a book. We are the epistle that teaches them about God. From us, they will learn who He is and whether He is really worthy of worship. Ten seconds after their death, what relative significance can any gift have that we have given our children, except for an introduction to Jesus Christ? I feel Him coming and I am not alone in this. Time is drawing to a close. Is my house ready? Are my children safe?

When my children stand before God, will they bless or curse me for the crop I planted for their future?