

## OVERCOMING THE SINFUL PATTERNS OF UNFAITHFUL FATHERS

**Psalm 78:1-11**—“Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; *incline your ears to the words of my mouth!* I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, **but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.** He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which **he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.** The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, **turned back on the day of battle. They did not keep God’s covenant, but refused to walk according to his law. They forgot his works and the wonders that he had shown them.**”

This Psalm highlights three points of Israel’s history from Egypt to King David:

- The repeated disobedience and ingratitude of unfaithful fathers.
- The recurring and unfailing mercy of God to the disobedient nation.
- A vision for the future generations.

The study of history is not just the relating of facts. History can teach us lessons that need to be learned so that we do not fall into the same sins of those who have gone before us.

Zechariah 1:4-6 “**Do not be like your fathers**, to whom the former prophets cried out, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.' But they did not hear or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? So they repented and said, As the LORD of hosts purposed to deal with us for our ways and deeds, so has he dealt with us.”

### **Do the iniquities and sins of fathers/parents impact their children?**

- “You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me” (Exodus 20:5). *Also see Exodus 34:7; Deuteronomy 5:9-10; Numbers 14:17-21.*
- “We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you” (Jeremiah 14:20).
- “O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us” (Daniel 9:16).
- The Hebrew word for “visiting” is *pawkad*. It means “to superintend, to watch over, to oversee.” Visiting does not mean that it is a final penalty or a permanent state. The

oversight relates directly to the responses of the sons and daughters to the iniquities of their fathers. If they continue in them they will be judged, if they acknowledge them and turn from them they will live.

- The Greek word for iniquity is *anomeeah*. It means not being subject to God's Law. Another way to put it—doing our own will (Matthew 7:21-23; Isaiah 53:6).
- A son cannot blame his father for his sin. God will deal with each one according to his own actions.
  - Jeremiah 32:18-19—“You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts, great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds.”

*“You are not guilty for the sin of your ancestors, but because of their sin, you may be predisposed to certain strengths and weaknesses. You can be influenced by the physical and spiritual atmosphere in which you were raised. These conditions can contribute to causing someone to struggle with a particular sin.”*

—*Steps to Freedom in Christ*, p.19, by Dr. Neil Anderson

#### **Satan's Goal:**

- To get you to believe it does not really matter, or it does not affect me.

There are no perfect fathers. There are some things from our father's lives that do not need to be repeated.

#### **Our Heavenly Father will be a father to us.**

- Psalm 2:7—“I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:18—“and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

#### **God is able and wants to mentor each man.**

- Galatians 4:4-7—“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”
- Hebrews 12:5-8—“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

## **I. THE IMPACT OF UNFAITHFUL FATHERS ON OUR LIVES**

- We have had fathers that have made an impact on us.

- For those of us that did have fathers, that has impacted our lives.
- Whether or not we want to admit it, our father's unfaithfulness does matter.
- We are not victims of our father's unfaithfulness.
- Many people have built their lives on the lies of their fathers (Amos 2:4b).
- We experience rejection when we did not have the *beloved son* experience.
- We react out of the wound of rejection in insecurity, anger, performance, and pride.
- Some feel disconnected from the Heavenly Father's love.
- We struggle in the same areas and have some of the sinful patterns our fathers have.
- Making new patterns in our lives is painful, slow, and frustrating at times.
- Some of the patterns of our fathers may never be broken.
- God is calling us to go forward in overcoming the impact of unfaithful fathers.

## II. INSIGHTS FROM ASAPH IN OVERCOMING THE SINFUL PATTERNS

(PSALM 78:1-8A)

Asaph gives fathers direction to communicate to their children, to address the hopelessness of the situation. Many fathers lack training and lack role models.

- He is tuned into hearing from God. His ears need to be inclined to the right source. (In God's Word on a regular basis.)
- He is a man with a message, he communicates to his family, and what fathers say matters.
- He has a generational perspective. Generational thinking generates right thinking and setting of priorities.
- He is a man who praises God and finds his strength in God.
- He teaches his children to put their hope in God, to not forget what God has done, to keep God's commands, and to break the ungodly sin patterns.

## III. SINFUL PATTERNS TO OVERCOME IN OUR LIVES (PSALM 78:8-11)

"Fathers stubborn in their own way, and rebellious against God's way, are sorry examples for their children; and it is earnestly desired that better instruction may bring forth a better race. It is common in some regions for men to count their family custom as the very best rule; but disobedience is not to be excused because it is hereditary."

—*Treasury of David*, Psalm 78, by Charles Spurgeon

**1. Stubborn**—"Unreasonably obstinate; inflexibly fixed in opinion; not to be moved or persuaded by reasons; inflexible; as a stubborn son; a stubborn mind or soul" (Webster 1828 Dictionary).

- Stubbornness is a manifestation of pride in our lives; pride is an improper focus on self.
- 1 Samuel 15:23a—"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (KJV)
- Manifestations of Stubbornness
  - Discontent and ungratefulness—I have a hard time accepting my suffering.
  - Unforgiving and bitterness—I cannot release my offenders to God.

- ❑ Self-willed, rather than seeking the will of God.
  - ❑ Leaning on their own understanding rather than seeking God's guidance.
  - ❑ Reliance on their own strength and abilities rather than depending on the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - ❑ Blaming vs. recognizing and admitting when they are wrong
- 2. Rebellious**—As the sin of witchcraft, coming under the influence of Satan; having an independent spirit that is motivated by pride in our lives.
- Aspects of Rebellion
    - ❑ Rebellion causes people to resent and reject correction.
    - ❑ In the same way that a person gives ground to the enemy through participating in witchcraft or occult activities (I Samuel 15:23), ground is given to the enemy through rebellion.
    - ❑ In Psalm 68:6, David describes the rebellious as living in a dry land. Those with rebellious hearts will always have unmet needs.
    - ❑ When a rebellious couple marries, the rebellion is turned toward each other and each partner reacts to the control of the other.
    - ❑ I Samuel 12:15 states, “If you rebel against the Lord...then the hand of the Lord will be against you.” Because God cannot use someone who exhibits a rebellious spirit, He seeks to uproot them and will often use calamity (Proverbs 1:24-25) to bring that person to a place of usefulness to Himself.
- 3. Their heart was not steadfast**—they set their heart on wrong things
- 4. Unfaithful spirit toward God**—they served false gods
- 5. Cowardly**—they did not fight for righteousness
- God is calling men out of their passivity all throughout scripture.
  - Proverbs 24:24, 25—“He who says to the wicked, ‘You *are* righteous,’ him the people will curse; Nations will abhor him. But those who rebuke *the wicked* will have delight, And a good blessing will come upon them.” (NKJV)
- 6. Did not keep God's covenant**—they were not doers of the Word
- 7. Forgetful of the works of God**

## PERSONAL EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Are you actively breaking the sin patterns of your unfaithful fathers?
2. Do you find it difficult to acknowledge the past issues that may impact your life?
3. Why is it important to be an independent thinker and not to have an independent spirit?
4. Have you found the process of change in your life difficult? Are you struggling with discouragement? Are you tempted to give up?
5. What kind of impact can Godly grandparents make on their grandchildren?