

Repentance Leads To Christ-like Character

Do You Know There Are Severe Consequences To Disobeying God? (Part 1)

“Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon” (Isaiah 55:6,7)

“When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,” says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 7:13).

As the passages above and elsewhere in the Bible reveal, out of His longsuffering mercy our Father holds open a “window in time” for the repentant to forsake his evil actions and turn to Him with an obedient and trusting heart. He is ever ready to pardon the repentant sinner through Jesus out of His heart of mercy, yet a scriptural principle stands: **there are consequences to our sinful actions.**

By grace His Spirit holds open that window so that we might respond out of grateful love with heartfelt obedience to His will. But as God’s Word makes ever so clear, when individuals, families, faith communities and even nations disregard His ways and choose to pursue their own way, they’ll experience His painful chastisement for their disobedience—a chastisement He uses to draw people to a place of humility that they might repent and turn (or return) to Him.

The problem is that most self-identified Christians don’t believe that our heavenly Father would discipline them for their disobedience. They’ve been fed a man-conjured “gospel” in which God’s love is translated into Him blessing them

no matter how sinfully they live.

The wonderful truth of an authentic relationship with our Father in Christ is that when we do sin through our disobedience and when we repent, He restores the fellowship we severed (1John 1:9). And as His Word so gloriously encourages us, genuine repentance and contrition will always be accepted by Him:

“For this is what the high and lofty One says— He who lives forever, whose Name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isaiah 57:15).

Heartfelt repentance, whether individually or collectively, opens the way for our heavenly Father to forgive and even to *forget* our disobedience (Isaiah 43:25). But we need to also understand that our repentance, even with the deepest sorrow, may not forestall the *consequences* of our willful sins. For example, look at 2Samuel 12:1-23. While God forgave a repentant King David’s adultery with Bathsheba as well as the murder of her husband, He still *took the newborn’s life* despite the king pleading and fasting. God also told David that *“the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.”* David’s descendants would suffer the consequences of his sinful decisions.

“Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you” (Deuteronomy 8:5).

Beginning with this lesson and several to follow, we want to help you understand the consequences the Bible warns about if we choose to sin by disobeying

God's commands—His good and righteous ways to *outwork our love* for Him and for others. Even now you may be suffering the repercussions of your own disobedience, or facing certain trials as a result of the disobedience of your parents or grandparents. There is relational “collateral damage” to people who are connected to someone who willfully sins! As you go through each lesson, keep in mind this important point:

As followers of Jesus we are here on earth to bring glory to our heavenly Father as we live in a way that pleases Him (Romans 14:17,18). This purpose is not optional, nor does it allow room for living in disobedience. Our love for our Father and for His Son is expressed through making His commands our way of life through the Spirit at work in us. Like the most loving of fathers, He tells us in His Word what is expected of us (His righteous commands) and the consequences for disobedience (His discipline).

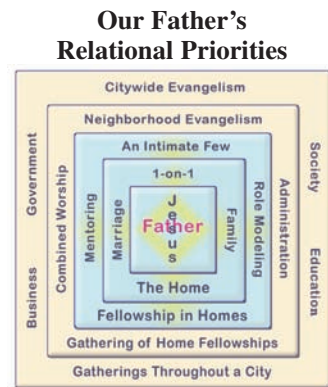
When we violate His commands, His Spirit within us warns us to repent so that we may return to the truth (John 16:8,13). And if others in our lives truly love us, the Spirit may also use them to warn us (Matthew 18:15-17). When we refuse the warnings, however, our Father will discipline us so that we might repent and change direction.

Our hearts are heavy as we write these lessons because preaching which focuses on obedience and/or repentance to restore followers of Jesus has for decades been absent from faith communities. Today's sermons offer **informational insight** into the Bible which is taught in an entertaining manner and stirs no one to see any need to change their lives. (See Teaching E-mail 37 to learn how church mortgages in particular have silenced any call to obedience and repentance.) Because *obedience, repentance* and the *consequences of sin*

have been so neglected, we're finding it difficult to help people in their time of need. Why is this?

Many who contact us are in the midst of a painful life circumstance such as impending divorce, relational tensions, isolation, financial pressure. They want from us some piece of in-formation that will cause their problem to go away. In essence, they want to know **WHAT** they can do to end the situation. We, however, try to focus them on **WHY** it's occurring. The first point we check is disruption in their relationship with our Father and Jesus (see the diagram below). If they've broken fellowship through their disobedience, nothing will help until they repent (1John 1:6).

Secondly, when we point out the possibility that they may be encountering severe consequences because they've willfully disobeyed God, they close their ears. And if we point them to a need to repent, that usually ends the communication. Since obedience and/or repentance isn't at the forefront of the teaching in their own faith community, our counsel seems totally foreign to them.



“I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me”
(Exodus 20:5).

“The LORD, the LORD God, is God, merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in grace and truth; showing grace to the thousandth generation, forgiving offenses, crimes and sins; yet not exonerating the guilty, but causing

the negative effects of the parents' offenses to be experienced by their children and grandchildren, and even by the third and fourth generations"
(Exodus 34:6,7,CJB).

Besides the painful consequences of our own disobedience, there are repercussions we inherit from the sins of past generations. The Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20 and similar themes elsewhere present this truth clearly. Think about this for a moment, since Jesus reinforced the connection between obedience and love (John 14:15). If our love for our Father is demonstrated in obeying His commands, then how do you think *hating* Him is expressed? Through disobedience! "***He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me***" (John 14:24).

How tragic that the disobedient in one generation fail to consider the negative consequences of their rebellion on their offspring.

We state clearly in *Demolishing Strongholds* that when one generation hates our Father through living in disobedience, He permits demonic strongholds in succeeding generations (like "spiritual DNA") to oppress and agitate people until they repent and seek Jesus. In His Name alone can they demolish their spiritual strongholds. Because our Father is so loving and compassionate, His discipline, *although painful*, has a redemptive goal. In one way or another His discipline leads us to Jesus!

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Timothy 3:16,17).

The Older Testament is essential to our lives in Christ because those writings were all that existed as God's Word when Paul penned the above. Whenever Newer Testament writers cite "*it is written*" or "*in the Scriptures*", they're referring to the *Hebrew text*. It's within those God-breathed pages that we get our first insight into God's holy and loving nature, His righteous commands, and His consequences when people disobey.

If we use the Book of Proverbs as a starting point we can glean a great deal about potential consequences that may be negatively affecting our own lives, especially consequences overflowing onto us by the disobedience of prior generations. First we need to recognize the interplay of our relationship with our Lord, the influence of our parents, and their diligence or negligence in instructing us in His ways:

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but FOOLS despise wisdom and discipline. Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching" (Proverbs 1:7,8; see also 9:10, 4:1). A "fool", or one who is called "simple" in the Hebrew Bible, is a person who lacks moral direction or is inclined to give way to their sin nature.

Contrary to erroneous teaching in much of westernized Christendom today, the *fear* of the Lord is a good thing. In fact a reverential awe that even includes *being afraid* of His sovereign power is absolutely necessary in our relationship with Him. Our Lord Jesus emphasized that point three times in a single verse: "***I will show you Whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him***" (Luke 12:5). And the collective called-out ones throughout the

Land multiplied as they were *“walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 9:31).

On the other hand, the apostle Paul warns that those who are inclined toward their sin nature have *no fear of God* (Romans 3:18). Therefore, their attitude, behavior and daily life decisions will ignore both His Person and His power.

The fear of our Lord reveals our grateful appreciation for *His might, His majesty* and our clear understanding that there is nothing in this world that lays outside of *His sovereignty*. Although we as humans are made in His image, He is not like us. And it’s vital that we don’t try to make Him into *our* image—a grandfatherly deity who dotes on us, ignores our sins, and fulfills our will. We today NEED that scriptural reminder of how different from us He really is:

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isaiah 55:8,9).

Perhaps you haven’t grasped the *awesomeness* of our God Who created the entire universe. Then you lack the *holy fear* that’s needed for acquiring and maturing in the wisdom, the knowledge and the understanding of Him through His Spirit and His Word: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding”* (Proverbs 9:10).

We’re told in Proverbs 1:8 to listen with the intent of following through regarding *“our father’s instruction and our mother’s teaching.”* God intends for *parents* to use time with their kids at home and away to instill in them the fear of God as well as His love in Christ. Through intentional role modeling and

instruction children can acquire wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, especially as they realize their own sinful bent and their need for a Savior and Lord to empower them to *want* to obey His ways (see Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Psalms 71:18; 78:4; Ephesians 6:4).

But to the regret of too many parents both church and not, they’ve *hated* God through their negligence and have given their children over to the consequences of their failure to love God and obey His commands. One of the most destructive ramifications of hating God through parental negligence is progeny inheriting generational strongholds and suffering the relationally painful symptoms.

Sadly, the responsibility which God has given to *parents and grandparents* to personally instruct and teach their children to fear Him and acquire His wisdom has been outsourced to the religious system. The consequences have been staggering. (See Deuteronomy 6:1-9. For more on the evil of spiritual outsourcing, see Lifebyte 71. *Scripturally Reliant Fathers and Grandfathers—Guiding the Destiny of Generations*).

Statistics reveal that 77% of children view their parents’ faith as irrelevant to themselves. It’s not as if young people are forsaking their father’s instruction or their mother’s teaching. Rather, they weren’t taught the ways of our Lord by them in the first place. And the entertainment format of most church youth groups bring no one to the point of hating their sin nature, turning away from it, and embracing Jesus as Lord of their life and His ways.

The rebellious disregard for others and the idolatrous self-centeredness in this nation is the fruit of *multi-generational disobedience* to our Father’s commands. In other words, we’re facing *multi-generational consequences*.

A traumatic consequence of this inter-

generational void is generations of Christians who lack the *wisdom* of applying God's commands to their lives. He gave the Israelites His righteous commands for a purpose beyond themselves:

“Observe [My commands] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’”
(Deuteronomy 4:6).

Wisdom is having God's perspective on a matter and obeying what He commands about it through His Spirit and His Word. The Book of Proverbs notes that wisdom and understanding should be the supreme quest of our lives (Proverbs 4:7), and as followers of Jesus we've been given the *mind of Christ* to discern and obey His ways (1Corinthians 2:16).

The pursuit of wisdom and its connection to the fear of God is wonderfully captured in Proverbs 2:1-6 as a father instructs his child:

*“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding,
and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding,
and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure,
then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.
For the LORD gives wisdom, and from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”*

Biblical Wisdom Is Seeing Everything From Our Lord's Vantage Point

Biblical wisdom flows from both *knowing* God's commands and having *applied* them to your life. In essence biblical wisdom *makes a difference* in how you live.

It's demonstrated in your Christ-like motives and in your desire to bring glory to your heavenly Father as you do His will out of love. The theme of Proverbs 2:1-6 is this: wisdom is an *intentional pursuit* of making His commands a way of life.

Love for God and *fear of Him* are a biblical combo that brings about the Spirit-empowered transformation seen in wisdom. Even if you're not always a willing participant in obtaining wisdom, the lessons our Father wants you to learn become that much more difficult if you resist. When God's trying to teach someone a lesson in choosing wisdom rather than foolishness, we tell them, **“You can learn it the easy way or the hard way. BUT you will learn it in the end.”**

The pursuit of biblical wisdom is much easier for any given generation if their parents, especially fathers, had pursued biblical wisdom themselves. Then they could have role modeled that wisdom as they taught their children. (Their actions could have backed up their words.) If you're a father, the lessons we'll be writing on the consequences of disobedience will be just mere academic topics if you're not honest with yourself and your family by realizing how YOU have failed God and them by your irresponsibility. YOU let the consequences get past your generation into the next!

These lessons will also be difficult for you to internalize if you weren't raised by a father who trained you to pursue biblical wisdom. If this describes you, just keep in mind, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...”* Ask our Lord for the holy fear you need to obtain His wisdom, and a heart that's willing to obey!

It's timely for us to repeat a point to help you better grasp our purpose in preparing these lessons on the consequences of sin:

The entire Older Testament ends with this passage: “*See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse*” (Malachi 4:5,6). When John the Baptizer came to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus, his father prophesied the above concerning the boy’s future mission, adding that John would also “turn the disobedient to the *wisdom of the just*” (Luke 1:17).

The need for fathers to turn their hearts to children, and vice versa, must be fulfilled in each generation. As an older man, Paul considered himself a spiritual *father* to the followers of Jesus in Corinth, and as such role modeled and instructed younger men in the wisdom of applying God’s commands (see 1 Corinthians 4:15, 16). The apostle John distinguished between the *spiritual* maturity of fathers, young men, and little children because each generation was intertwined with the other, with fathers especially important because they had known “*Him Who is from the beginning*” (see 1John 2:13,14).

Intergenerational connectedness in the Spirit parallels the connection God calls for among chronological generations. Yet because of the multi-generational void of Christian fathers imparting biblical wisdom, their children have grown up without any holy fear of our Lord or love for Him—as evidenced by their personal tolerance for sin, their disregard for other people, and their total biblical illiteracy.

Today a number of fathers with adult offspring are attempting to restore relationships with their children—the children they failed to instruct in the way of the Lord. But too many parents, especially fathers, don’t realize that the estrangement of one generation with the preceding one is a *curse on this land*

(Malachi 4:6). Until the older generation is willing to humble themselves and lead in pursuing a relationship with the heavenly Father through His Son Jesus, then they’ll be halfhearted at best in seeking God’s wisdom and ineffective in putting His commands into practice. Thus the estranged relationship with their children will remain “cursed” because only God can turn the hearts of both generations to one another. The fear of the Lord needs to begin with the older generation if they want relational restoration with succeeding generations.

We personally believe that in every generation an “Elijah spirit” comes upon certain people who help families understand the curse, and guide fathers and children in our Father’s way to undo the curse in their lives. In essence, they’re able to clarify the steps they need to take as followers of Jesus to replace the curse with our Father’s blessing. [We’ve been told by some that our ministry is being carried out in the spirit of Elijah. The Hebraic Foundations are not for just one generation to know, but for multi-generations to make a way of life in Christ. Think about this...](#)