

**A FAMILY OF FAMILIES
PASS IT ON...
GENESIS 26**

A SCARY TRUTH:

Sin and faith have _____ consequences.

GENERATIONAL MIGRATIONS:

1) We all inherit _____ from our parents.

(And pass it on to our children.)

2) We also inherit _____ from our parents.

(And pass them on to our children.)

3) And finally, we inherit _____ from our parents.

(And can increasingly pass them on to the next generation.)

How God Visits The Sins of Parents On Their Children and Grandchildren (Adapted For Today's Sermon From A Short Article By John Piper)

Does God punish children for their parents' sin out to the third and fourth generation? Some texts seem to say He does and others seem to say He doesn't. So how do we reconcile this?

On the one hand it seems as if God does punish children directly for their parents' sin:

The Lord...visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:6-7 and Deuteronomy 5:8-10)

"Because of their iniquity, and also because of the iniquities of their fathers they shall rot away like them." (Leviticus 26:39)

On the other hand it seems as if we are only responsible for our own sin:

Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers." (Deuteronomy 24:16)

The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. (Ezekiel 18:20, cf. Jeremiah 31:30)

How do these passages fit together? This matters for the sake of God's character, and the Bible's coherence, and how we counsel those whose parents were extremely wicked and who wonder if they are under judgment not for anything they have done, but instead for the sin of their parents. Here are is my conclusion:

The sins of the fathers are punished in the children through the sins of the father becoming the sins of the children.

ADDENDUM - What does this mean for us?

These verses – and others like them - teach that there is a generational migration of sinful patterns from one generation to the next, where the children are predisposed to commit the same sins as their parents. And just like the sin of deceit that grew as it passed from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob, these sinful patterns can extend for generations and become engrained within families.

The Bible does not teach that children come under judgment solely for their parents' sin. Instead, Scripture consistently teaches that we are individually responsible for our own sinful actions. Scripture also teaches us that, through Christ, it is possible to break the generational migration of specific sins.