

Attention: Many start on the wrong track in life because of a dysfunctional family. People become used to mistreatment during their cycle of trauma; they accept toxic as normal, a bad attitude is keeping it real, and true love seems like a trap, therefore certain believers aren't changed from the inside out. Devout believers break cycles and become change agents.

In a dysfunctional family, there is a system where conflict, misbehavior, and neglect are regular, driven by poor communication, emotional absence, or addiction. To survive the instability, members unconsciously adopt rigid, specialized survival roles and unspoken operational rules.

- **Don't talk:** Secrets are kept, and painful truths or abuse are never openly discussed.
- **Don't trust:** Reliability is absent, so members learn to expect betrayal or letdowns.
- **Don't feel:** Vulnerability and emotional expressions are punished or discouraged.

Need: Faith in Jesus Christ breaks old patterns of sin, fear, and generational dysfunction by transforming the mind and providing divine power to live differently. Believers step out of destructive cycles through active trust, repentance, and spiritual renewal.

Historical Background: The city was known for its pagan worship of the idol goddess Diana, which was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Ephesus prided itself in the idol-making industry (Acts 19:23-27). At the time of Paul's appearance to Ephesus, the estimated population of the city was approximately 300,000 people. As the capital city of the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey), it was filled with wealth and sophistication. At the time, Paul was imprisoned in Rome in A.D. 67 during the reign of the cruel Nero, one who greatly despised Christians. Paul would die while in prison in A.D. 68. While Paul was at Ephesus, unusual miracles occurred (19:11-12), sorcerers were converted (19:13-20), and the city revolted over the loss of business because many pagans turned to Christ at the preaching of Paul. He wrote this letter to the Ephesians to warn them against evil teachers that would come in teaching perverse things that would not spare the church and would draw away believers; some from within the church would distort the truth in order to create a following (Acts 20:29-30).

Paul wrote this letter to tear down division and to build unity within the Kingdom of God. He shared God's eternal plan in removing the barrier of enmity within the church of racism and prejudice of Jews and Gentiles, creating one family of believers. Paul proclaimed this to be true through the blood of Jesus Christ and the finished work of the cross. Sinners that were once dead are made alive by God's grace through faith. The blood of Christ has canceled out circumcision, which is of the flesh, and His blood through redemption has been applied to the heart of the believer. His blood has abolished outsiders and insiders and separate people, but all have been brought near to God. This nearness has made everyone capable of coming to God.

In this passage, the apostle Paul is reminding the Ephesian believers that they were at one time dead to Christ because of sin and disobedience. They once lived in the world, controlled by its influential patterns and Satan himself. His evil spirit is working in all of those who live in disobedience. They craved the lusts of their hearts and fulfilled the nature of the flesh. God, who was rich in mercy, came and offered them grace and gave them the faith to be saved. Now, we are no longer controlled by the patterns of sin that we were used to. You are governed by faith.

1. Relapsing to Your Old Life (v. 1-2).

- a. As soon as Israel left Egypt, they practiced their old ways.
 - i. They were used to the patterns of pagans.
- b. New ways feel unsafe and old ways are normal—stress reverts us back to old ways.
 - i. *“Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, ‘Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.’”* (Exodus 13:17, NKJV).
- c. Many people along with churches are practicing worldly patterns.
 - i. People are repeating norms that are harmful to their sanity and growth.
 - 1. Families are failing because of no accountability.
 - ii. *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13, NKJV).
 - iii. Churches have become dead zones because they see Christ.
 - 1. Many prefer motivational speakers instead of preachers; psychics over prophets; ChatGPT for praying; psychiatrists instead of deliverance.
 - 2. *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”* (Romans 12:2, NKJV).

2. Defeating Generational Consequences (v. 3-4).

- a. People tend to mimic their abusers.
 - i. *“You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”* (Ex. 20:5–6).
- b. People tend to repeat what has been demonstrated to them.
- c. Consequences can be interrupted by surrendering to God.
 - i. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* (Galatians 2:20, NKJV).

3. Live Empowered By the Spirit (v. 5-6).

- a. Anointed people have power over the enemy.
 - i. *“It shall come to pass in that day That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder, And his yoke from your neck, And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.”* (Isaiah 10:27, NKJV).
- b. Like a lamb, a viper’s blood is ineffective because of the blood of the lamb.
- c. The holy Spirit’s anointing is the yoke breaker for spiritual and generational cycles.
 - i. *“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.”* (Isaiah 54:17, NKJV).