

Living Word Fellowship Church
Center For Christian Living – March 17, 2026 (12 Noon)
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Overcoming Difficult Family Issues
Part One
(Our Struggle with Temptation and Sin)
Psalm 119:11

Temptation is a common challenge for Christians, appearing as desires, distractions, or pressure from others. The Bible warns about temptation but also provides ways to overcome it. Resisting temptation is not about willpower alone; it requires spiritual discipline. Scripture gives clear examples of people who stood firm. Their stories offer guidance for us today. This study will explore these examples and practical ways to resist temptation. By applying biblical principles, we can grow in faith and stand strong against sin. Overcoming temptation is possible with God's help.

Let us dive into what the Bible teaches about resisting temptation. Over the next two weeks we will study the following:

- generational curses and our struggle with sin,
- Biblical case studies: impact of sin on families,
- difference between testing and temptation,
- nature and origin of temptation,
- Biblical models of resisting temptation,
- ways Christians can resist temptation.

I. Generational Curses and Our Struggle with Sin

A term that is often heard in Christian circles is the term generational curse. I am not sure if people who are not Christians use that terminology. People may wonder what exactly a generational curse is, while others go a step further to ask, are there generational curses today? The answer to that question is yes, but maybe not in a way you may have thought.

A. The Idea of the Generational Curse

A "**Generational Curse**" is the understanding that the sins, failings, or judgments of one generation pass down to future generations in some kind of binding spiritual curse. This question often arises from specific passages in Scripture where God's judgment upon fathers' spills over to their offspring (**see below**). When approaching this topic, it is crucial to consider all related biblical passages together.

B. Old Testament Foundation

The generational curse of sin started with Adam in the garden, not with Moses. Because of Adam's sin we are all born under the curse of sin. This curse causes us all to be born with a sinful nature which is the true catalyst of any sinful behavior we exhibit. As David said, ***"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me"*** (Psa. 51:5). The idea of generational curses are also indirectly linked to several Old Testament passages such as **Exodus 20:5**, where it's mentioned that the iniquity of the fathers can affect subsequent generations: ***"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."***

Number 14:18, *"The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.**"*

Deut. 5:9, *"For I, the LORD your God, and a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of the **third and fourth generation.**" "Rebellious God-hating parents often produce children to the **third and fourth generation** who also hate God (Exod. 20:5; 34:6-7).¹*

Lam. 5:7, *"Our fathers sinned and are no more, **but we bear their iniquities.**"*

These passages indicate that the sins of one generation can have consequences for future ones. This is not to assume a deterministic fate but rather a societal structure where certain behaviors and their outcomes are continued unless addressed and transformed.

C. New Testament Insights

The New Testament shifts focus more on individual responsibility and redemption. Passages like **Matthew 23:36** and **Luke 21:32** emphasize the collective outcome of a generation's choices: ***I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation*** (Matt. 23:36); ***I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled*** (Luke 21:32).

These verses suggest that a generation's actions may result in shared consequences, implying spiritual devastation can be inherited.

¹ John Walvoord and Roy Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary – Old Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1985), 272.

D. Refining our Terminology

Let us refine the term because what people often describe as generational curses are generational consequences. What is passed down is not a “curse” in the sense that God is cursing the family line. What is passed down is the consequence of sinful actions and behavior. Thus, a generational consequence is really a function of sowing and reaping passed down from one generation to the next (Gal. 6:8, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows”).

A “generational consequence” is the passing down of sinful behavioral patterns that get replicated (*repeated or imitated*) in the next generations. A parent does not just pass down physical attributes but also spiritual and emotional attributes as well:

According to USA Statistics² “there exists a complex and often misunderstood reality where temporary aid, deep need, and multi-generational patterns of government dependency are intricately intertwined.” - **examples:** *children of alcoholic fathers frequently suffer neglect and abuse as a direct consequence of their father’s sinful behavior; children of sexually promiscuous mothers and fathers often follow in the footsteps of their parents; children from physical and sexually abusive backgrounds at times replicate that behavior toward others; “children who grow up with a father in jail or prison usually don’t expect much from their own lives, they don’t dream as big, or believe they’re as worthy as success as people raised in a household without the trauma of an incarcerated parent”³; parents with little or no educational foundation find their children’s literacy skills far below normal; and negative mental, financial, relational, and work ethic patterns can also be replicated.*

These are not curses from God that He put on people. They are a result of sin and sinful behavior. This is not about an unavoidable curse—it is about the natural consequences of humanity’s disobedience and turning away from God. (**Want to Dig Deeper**)⁴

E. Breaking the Horrible Cycle

The Bible offers hope that through Christ, individuals can break free from the cycles of generational sin and establish a new path for themselves and their families. The New Testament offers hope and a pathway to breaking generational cycles through Jesus Christ. In **2 Corinthians 5:17**, Paul writes, “**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed**

² Info@globalcommercemedia.com.

³ Duke University, *The Generational Curse Holding Black Children with Incarcerated Fathers*. October 20, 2023 - today.duke.edu.

⁴ For a more thorough discussion on this subject see: Clarence L. Haynes Jr’s article entitled, “*What Are Generational Curses and Are They Real Today?*” Please visit clarencehaynes.com; Voddie Baucham’s YouTube message, “*No Such Thing as Generational Curses*,” and “*Generational Curses*,” Got Questions Ministries @ GotQuestions.org.

away; behold, the new has come!" This transformation is central to overcoming inherited patterns of sin and behavior.

Galatians 3:13 further explains that "**Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.**" Through His sacrifice, believers are set free from the curses of the law, which can include generational curses. This redemption is not just spiritual but can manifest in practical changes in behavior and family dynamics (see section VI. How Christians Can Resist Temptation and Sin).

II. Biblical Case Studies: Sin's Impact on the Family

If we lived isolated on an island in the middle of the sea, then perhaps our private sins would not affect anyone but ourselves. However, since the adage is "*no man is an island*," there is a good chance that we have family, friends, and acquaintances that we encounter on a continual basis. All of them will be affected in some way by sin because sin has consequences (**Romans 6:23**). That is a principle that follows the pattern laid down at the creation. Everything created has a seed from which it propagates itself after its "*kind*" (**Genesis 1:11, 21, 25**). In other words, we do not plant corn and expect to harvest beets. We cannot "plant" sin—even in private—and not expect to reap a harvest of consequences. And consequences have a way of spilling out over everyone and anyone that encounters us because of another principle called "**association**." This means that those around us can be blessed or hurt by association with us and the choices and actions we make, both privately and publicly. The following examples prove our main thesis:

- ❏ **Adam's Sin (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-19; Romans 5:12-21)**: Adam's disobedience led to spiritual death, severing the relationship between humanity and God. This spiritual separation is considered the root of sin entering the world, **affecting all of Adam's descendants (Romans 5:12-17)**.
- ❏ **Achan's Sin (Joshua 7)**: Achan's transgression serves as a tragic example of how sin can affect an entire household. After Israel's defeat at Ai, God revealed that someone had taken forbidden items from Jericho. Achan confessed, saying, "***It is true, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel***" (**Joshua 7:20**). As a result, Achan, along with his sons, daughters, and possessions, were destroyed, illustrating the **severe repercussions of his sin on his family**.
- ❏ **Eli's Household (1 Samuel 2-4)**: The sins of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who "***had no regard for the LORD***" (**1 Samuel 2:12**), brought judgment upon Eli's entire household. Despite Eli's warnings, his sons continued in their wickedness, leading to their deaths and the loss of the Ark of the Covenant. God's pronouncement against Eli's house demonstrates the impact of familial sin, especially since Eli never disciplined his sons for their sinful and wicked behavior (**2 Sam 3:13, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, for his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them"**).

- ❑ **David's Sin (2 Sam. 21:15-17):** Though David received mercy and his fellowship with God was restored after he committed adultery with Uriah's wife and later killed him, the consequences of his adultery lingered throughout his life. Beyond the death of the child born from the sin, David's strength, and victories as a warrior king diminished, and as the prophet Nathan prophesied, "***the sword shall never depart from your house***" (2 Sam. 12:10). The **sword**, symbolizing violence and conflict, was foretold to never depart from David's house. This not only meant violence but also foreshadowed the turmoil and the strife that would come upon his family as a direct result of his actions, leading up to and beyond the dividing of the kingdom.
- ❑ **Gehazi's Sin (2 Kings 5:20-27):** The sin of Gehazi, servant of Elisha, involved greed, lies, deception, and an attempt to "**personally profit**" from ministry. Gehazi desired the material possessions that Elisha refused from Naaman, leading him to lie about needing gifts for the prophets, when in fact, he desired them for himself. As punishment for his actions, Gehazi was cursed, transferring Naaman's leprosy to him and his descendants forever (2 Kings 5:27, "**Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever**").
- ❑ **Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11):** In the early church, Ananias and Sapphira willingly conspired together to deceive the apostles about the proceeds from a land sale. Their sin of **lying to the Holy Spirit (v. 9)** resulted in their immediate deaths. This account illustrates how **shared sin within a household** can lead to **shared consequences**.

III. Difference Between Testing and Temptation

In the Biblical context, "testing" and "temptation" are terms that often appear together but have distinct meanings. In Greek, the words for testing and temptation are closely related, often represented by the term "**peirasmos**."⁵ This term encompasses both the concepts of trial and temptation, depending on the context in which it is used:

"No temptation (peirasmos) 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 a way of escape, that you may be able to bare it" (1 Cor. 10:13). As already stated above, this term can refer to both a **trial** or **test** from God intended to refine us, as well as a **temptation** or enticement from ourselves or Satan meant to lead us astray. The context of the passage helps determine its specific meaning.

- ❑ **Testing** refers to the trials and challenges permitted or orchestrated by God to strengthen our faith and character (**James 1:2-11**). Trials are the refining fire God uses to bring about something beautiful in our lives ----- development of our character and the

⁵ Fritz Reinecker and Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 723.

strengthening of our faith (1 Pet. 1:7, *“That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ”*).

EXAMPLE - Abraham's Test of Faith: One of the most notable examples of testing in the Bible is the account of Abraham, whom God tested by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac, thus proving Abraham's faith and obedience (**Genesis 22; Heb. 11:17-19**). Other examples of God testing the faith of His followers include **Job** (Job 1-2; 42:10-17); **Israel in the wilderness** (Deut. 8:2-3); and **Peter** (Luke 22:31-34; John 21:15-17). See also Psa. 26:2; 139:23; Jer. 17:10).

▣ **Temptation** is *the enticement to sin*, often associated with the work of Satan or our sinful natures (**James 1:12-18**). Temptation seeks to exploit our weaknesses and entice us to break divine laws.

EXAMPLE - The Temptation of Eve: The first instance of temptation in the Bible occurs in the Garden of Eden, where the serpent tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit (**Genesis 3**). This narrative highlights the deceptive nature of sin, which often presents itself as desirable and beneficial, masking its true destructive potential. The Book of Proverbs warns us against the enticing, seductive nature of sinful paths (**1:10-15**).

Four Observations from Eve's Enticement to Sin

- Satan wants to take God's place (Isa. 14:12-17). He has no power to fight God directly, so he attacks God indirectly by seeking to corrupt people created in God's image (Gen. 3:4).
- Satan will always challenge the Authority of God's Word in our lives (Gen. 3:4-5)
- Satan still uses the same sinister strategies that he used to deceive Eve; including lies and disguise; misquoting, questioning, and denying God's Word; and impugning God's motives. Awareness of Satan's devices is crucial to resist similar temptations in our own lives.
- There will always be pivotal moments of choices and consequences in our lives (Gen. 3:6). Eve had the freedom to choose whether to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or not. Despite God's clear command not to eat from it, Eve was tempted by the serpent and made the choice to disobey God. This decision had profound consequences not only for herself but for all of humanity. It teaches us the importance of making wise and obedient choices in our own lives.