

Set Free

From Iniquity

By A.L. and Joyce Gill

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Scripture

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Introduction

Believers, caught in an endless cycle of sin and repentance, have been living defeated lives under clouds of frustration, guilt and condemnation. Many with abusive fathers, have exclaimed, "I'll never be like my father! I hate what he did." And yet, to their dismay, they find themselves doing the same things.

Deep within there is a bent, a weakness, a propensity, for certain sins that they despise. No matter how many times they have repented and confessed, no matter how often they have asked God for forgiveness, they haven't been able to stay free of its grip on their lives.

Iniquity isn't sin or transgression. It's the bent or "want to sin." The Scriptures reveal that God places the iniquities of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations. This means the iniquities of our great-grandfathers, grandfathers and fathers have been placed on us. And if we aren't set free from these iniquities, they will be placed on our children and grandchildren.

The good news is that in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus, He wasn't only wounded for our transgression, He was also bruised for our iniquities. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquities of us all. Now by faith and obedience, we can confess our iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers and God will cleanse us thoroughly.

We can experience freedom from the bent, propensity, or weakness, of sin in our lives. We can boldly and joyfully exclaim, "I don't want to sin anymore."

A.L. and Joyce Gill

Understanding Iniquity

The word, iniquity, is used over 250 times in Scripture. And yet most of us could ask, “What is iniquity? Isn’t it the same as sin?”

In Exodus, we learn that iniquity is inherited from our forefathers. The same weakness for a certain sin that was in our great-grandfather, grandfather or father could be causing us to live defeated lives today. Exodus 20:5 says, **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 on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.**

Iniquity originated with Lucifer. It was iniquity that caused him to sin and rebel against God bringing about his expulsion from heaven. In Ezekiel, we read that, **You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you (Ezekiel 28:15).**

The Bible makes a distinction between sin, transgression, and iniquity. It’s not sin; it’s the bent, propensity or “want to sin,” within us. Personal, or inherited iniquity, is the reason so many find themselves caught, like a hamster running on a revolving wheel, in an endless cycle of sin and repentance.

You may be thinking, why should I take time to learn about iniquity now since I have lived all my Christian life without knowing about it?

Understanding iniquity is the key to freedom from many of the problems within ourselves. It is a barrier between us and God. It keeps us from hearing God and it keeps God

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from hearing us. It keeps us in bondage, sickness, poverty, and even brings death. Worst of all, according to God's Word, unresolved iniquity is placed on our children.

We are living in a time when many Christians have become cold toward God. Jesus gave us the reason when He said, **And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12 KJV).**

By this time, you are probably thinking, How can I be free from the iniquity that is causing defeat in my life? Is it possible to be set free from this seemingly endless cycle of sin and defeat?

We read in John, **Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32).**

We have gone into this study with these words of Jesus ringing in our ears. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free!" As we are searching for the truth about iniquity, we should always remember we can be set free! We will learn:

- ⇒ Iniquity is from our forefathers. It's not sin; it's the "bent to sin."
- ⇒ The iniquity of our forefathers must be acknowledged and confessed to be forgiven.
- ⇒ When we become "workers of iniquity" the iniquity becomes our sins, and our transgressions.
- ⇒ The penalty for all sin, all transgression, and all iniquity was paid by the sacrifice of God's only Son, Jesus! All we must do is appropriate it!

The truths that we discover will break the hold iniquities have had on our lives and will bring us into a new realm of freedom and victory. We will be able to boldly declare, “I don't have the ‘want to sin’ anymore!”

The Struggle Within

We all have known a person who is continuously up and down in their Christian walk. They are close to God, and then fall into sin – usually the same sin. They still love God, so they repent and for days – weeks – or months serve God. Then they are into sin again. They seem to be caught in an endless cycle of sinning and repenting, as they repeat the same sins over and over. It seems that no matter how hard they try to be free, or how long they maintain their freedom, the desire is always there. This repetitious sin may be having worry instead of faith – bitterness instead of forgiveness – pride – rebellion – lying – anger – lust – sexual perversion. The list would be endless.

Others, who because of their love and commitment to God, don't yield to iniquity and become “workers of iniquity,” and yet they are still plagued with temptations because of the weakness for that sin in their souls.

The apostle Paul described this struggle in his life in Romans 7:15-25. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

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For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh). nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin (Romans 7:15-25).

What a descriptive, heart-felt question this is. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Paul wrote again later concerning the law of sin and death. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1).

We may have confessed our sins to God and received forgiveness for them in the past. We may even have experienced deliverance from demonic bondage, but we still seem to be slaves to the same overwhelming desires.

It seems that Satan has a right to attack our lives over and over again with the same temptations. In Ephesians 4:27, Paul wrote that we are not to **give place to the devil**.

The writer of Hebrews 12:1 refers to it as **the sin which so easily ensnares us**.

How do we close the “door” and remove from our lives any place or legal right the devil has to attack, tempt and defeat us? How do we escape the seemingly endless cycle of sin and repentance?

Remember our theme verse for this study. **You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:32)**. Bible-based knowledge about iniquity can set us free!

Distinction between Sin, Transgression, Iniquity

In many places in the Bible, a distinction is made between sin, transgression and iniquity. For years, I thought of them all as one – as “sin.” This is not so. In one verse, Job mentioned all three – sin, transgressions, and iniquity – as separate.

How many are my iniquity and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin (Job 13:23).

In the wonderful, prophetic chapter, Isaiah 53, we find sin, transgression and iniquity listed separately.

Verse six talks of iniquity ...**the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

Verse eight mentions transgressions ...**for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.**

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Verse ten speaks of sin. ...You make His soul an offering for sin.

Isaiah continued in verses eleven and twelve, He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

David had to deal with sin, transgression and iniquity in his life to be free from its controlling oppression. He wrote, Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight – that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me (Psalm 51:2-10).

Since the Bible deals with sins, transgressions, and iniquity separately – we need to understand what the differences are.

Sin

The Greek word for sin is *hamartia* which means “missing the mark.” We have all “fallen short” or “missed the mark” of the absolute righteousness required for relationship and fellowship with God Who is absolute righteousness and holiness.

Harmartia is used in Romans 3:23. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

It's also used in Romans 6:23. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We know Christ died for us, that through Him we have forgiveness of our sins, that God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

We know that in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:7).

At the moment of salvation, our sins were forgiven and removed forever by God. According to 1 John 1:9, following salvation, God is still faithful to forgive our sins if we confess them to Him. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Transgression

The Greek word translated “transgression” is *parabaino*. It means to overstep pre-established boundaries, to abandon a trust, to depart, to be in violation, rebellion, disobedience,

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or deviation from an original truth. To know the truth and to rebel, or turn away in disobedience from the truth, is transgression.

The book of Acts gives us Judas as an example. Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place (Acts 1:25b).

David wrote, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Psalm 32:1).

Everything we receive from God, we receive through faith. Salvation is through faith. Each of the benefits of redemption is received through faith and obedience.

By repenting and confessing to God our rebellious disobedience when we turned our backs on the truth, we receive, through faith, forgiveness of our transgressions.

Iniquity

The Hebrew word for iniquity is *avon* meaning “blame, evil, moral illness, perversion and crookedness.” It comes from the root-word *avah* meaning to bend or to distort.

Iniquity is that “bent to sin” on the inside of us. It’s the propensity (the inclination, tendency, or weakness) to commit sin. It’s the inner weakness for a particular sin.

Iniquity isn’t sin. It’s not transgression. It’s the desire to, the bent to, the perversion toward sin on the inside of us.

An arrow is a good example of both sin and iniquity. An arrow must be perfectly straight, without any flaws, to stay on target. If it is bent or has an unseen flaw, it will always veer off course and miss the mark. The bent or weakness in the arrow that causes it to miss the mark is like iniquity in us. The act of missing the mark is sin. When a person is

known for his integrity and honesty he is sometimes described as being “as straight as an arrow.”

Sin is the fruit of the iniquity which is allowed to remain in our hearts.

Referring to iniquity, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states, “Primarily, it denotes not an action, but the character of an action and is so distinguished from sin.”

Iniquity, instead of being the same as sin, is the distorted nature that is the source of sin in our lives. Iniquity, unlike sin, doesn’t separate us from God. It’s when we become “workers of iniquity” that we are separated from Him.

There is the iniquity we inherit from our forefathers, but there is also the iniquity we create in ourselves by being continuous workers of iniquity.

David wrote about God’s attitude toward workers of iniquity, You hate all workers of iniquity – Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity (Psalm 5:5b and 6:8a).

Solomon also referred to the workers of iniquity, The way of the LORD is strength for the upright, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity (Proverbs 10:29).

Many who are experiencing an inner struggle with iniquity do not repeatedly give in to those desires because of their love and obedience to God.

How do we reconcile this truth to the fact that at the moment of salvation we are a new creation in Jesus? Our spirit, at the moment of salvation is as perfect, righteous, and holy as Jesus is. But we do carry “baggage” into the

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new creation attached to our soul and our body. We live in the same body, and we have the same soul – our will, our emotions and our intellect. It's in that area that God has visited the iniquity of the forefathers.

This iniquity can be our downfall. It can lead us to the wasting away of our lives and even to destruction.

We all have a God-given volition or choice. We don't have to give in to our desires. All who still have unresolved iniquity are not “workers of iniquity.”

We will deal with being set free from iniquity in the ending sections of this study.

In summary, sin is missing the mark, falling short of what is right. Transgression is knowing what is right and choosing to do it anyway. Iniquity is the bent to sin that is passed down through to the third and fourth generations

Iniquity Passes through the Fathers

From Scripture, we learn that iniquity passes from a father to his daughters. However, it doesn't pass through his daughters to his grandchildren. Iniquity passes from a father through his sons, and from them, as fathers, to their descendants.

It has been suggested that the word “father,” when referring to iniquity being passed down, means both father and mother, much as the word “man” can mean an individual man, or mankind including women.

In Hebrew, there are two words translated as “man.” *Adam* means a human being or mankind in general, and *iysh*

means a man as an individual. This isn't the case in the word translated father. *Ab* is the Hebrew word for father and it means a father, either literally or figuratively – either an actual father, or a father figure.

Jesus Has No Iniquity

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit. He did not have a human father. This made it possible for Him to come as the Last Adam, without iniquity or a sin nature just as the first Adam was before the fall. Since iniquity passes only through the fathers, Jesus had no iniquity in Him. He had no inclination or desire to sin.

Jesus was truly God – He was also truly human. As a human, He could be tempted by sin, but He had no inner desire to sin because there was no iniquity in Him. He was tempted to sin, but He didn't sin.

The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote, *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).*

In Corinthians we read, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

Iniquity Passes to Third and Fourth Generation

The Word of God tells us that God places the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation in four separate passages.

In Exodus twenty, Moses reported God's words when He said, *“You shall have no other gods before Me.”* He went on to

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warn them not to make any carved images or idols because iniquity would come as a result. We minister in many countries where almost everyone has come from a background of idol worship. They truly understand what God means when He speaks of idols. In our country, the idols may not be quite so obvious but they are there. Anything that is placed before God in our lives is an idol.

We read in Exodus, 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 on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me (Exodus 20:5). This thought is so important that it is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:9.

Paqad, the Hebrew word used for “visiting” means “to go, to come, fall upon, or to attack.” Exodus and Deuteronomy both say, God will “visit” iniquity, the weakness to sin from the fathers, on the children to the third and fourth generation.

God doesn’t visit iniquity on the children because He desires to punish them. Iniquity is a real and tangible entity. Through the blood of Jesus it can be washed away, but until it’s put under the blood of Jesus, it has to go somewhere. It cannot just “disappear.”

This generational placement of iniquity is revealed in other passages in the Scriptures.

It is referred to in Exodus. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children

and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6,7).

It is referred to in Numbers. 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 (Numbers 14:18).

Unforgiven Iniquity Placed in Children

The responsibilities of the fathers are made clear. Any iniquity they haven't taken care of passes to their children. It doesn't "just go away" when they die. God finishes, completes and settles the account of iniquity by repaying or placing unacknowledged and thus unforgiven iniquity onto one's children.

Jeremiah wrote about this. 'You show lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them – the Great, the Mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts. 'You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings' (Jeremiah 32:18,19).

The unconfessed and unforgiven iniquity of a father, which is the fruit of his doings, is repaid by placing it on his children. God doesn't leave any account unsettled. Children do receive the fruit and result of the unforgiven iniquity of their fathers.

Isaiah wrote, Prepare slaughter for his children because of the iniquity of their fathers... (Isaiah 14:21).

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If men don't acknowledge and confess their iniquity, the weakness for sin, that is within them either as a result of their own habitual sin or that which was passed on to them from their father, grandfather or great-grandfather, it will pass on to their own children.

Women aren't left out. They do receive iniquity from their fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers, and need to confess it and repent to be free, but nowhere in Scripture do we read that it will pass on to their children even if it remains unconfessed.

Often the things that people hate the most in their father's life they find themselves doing to their own children. Many, who were neglected by their fathers, will find themselves neglecting their own children. Many who were abused by their fathers will become abusers of their own children.

Many who have hated their abusive alcoholic fathers have declared, "I will never be like that!" However, to their dismay, they can't understand why they grow up to repeat the same sins as their fathers.

The reason is generational iniquity which is passed from the fathers to their children to the third and fourth generation. How often have we heard it said, "Like father, like son"?

Even Christians, who have been born of the Spirit as new creations, may carry the baggage of iniquity in their souls. Unless it's acknowledged, forgiven and removed by God, it can and will pass down even to the children of Spirit-filled believers.

Example

There have been extensive secular studies done on family genealogies. When a family is on welfare, it's the normal situation for the children, generation after generation, to be on welfare. In the family of a habitual criminal, it's normal for generation after generation to become criminals. We could use the Mafia family as an example.

These studies have also shown there are some wonderful exceptions to the norm. We know of two brothers – one became a world-famous heart surgeon, the other continued in the family pattern of being a misfit in society. Two brothers, each receiving the same generational iniquity, still had a choice.

We can choose not to be a slave to inherited iniquity. We can choose not to be “workers” of that inner bent that we inherited from our fathers.

David and Solomon

David and Solomon's lives are a biblical example of iniquity. David struggled with problems of lust in his life, which eventually led to adultery and even murder. This propensity to sin in David's life was iniquity passed down to him from his father.

David wrote, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity... (Psalm 51:5a).

He also wrote, We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly (Psalm 106:6).

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David was “brought forth in iniquity” from his father, and he acknowledged, “we have sinned with our fathers.” Because of the iniquity which passed to David from his father, he realized that he was struggling with the same sins in his own life.

Solomon, the son who inherited the kingdom, was a man of great wisdom and success, but he also inherited iniquity from his forefathers. He also had a problem with the iniquity of lust. He was so driven by lust that he fell away from God and took seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines in a futile attempt to satisfy his sinful desires. Separated from God by his iniquity-driven sin of lust, he turned to worshipping the goddess, Ashtoreth, the same lustful spirit, which was manifested in, and worshiped by Jezebel.

“My Father Made Me Do It!”

Is the iniquity passed down from our forefathers a reason, or an excuse for our sins? Does God punish us for the sins of our fathers? No.

Jeremiah talks about this. In those days they shall say no more: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge (Jeremiah 31:29,30).

Ezekiel tells us, “Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live.

“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

“When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies (Ezekiel 18:19,20,26).

Samuel tells us, I was also blameless before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity (2 Samuel 22:24).

The iniquities of our fathers are the “bent, the weakness” but whether we give in to that weakness is our decision. It’s our responsibility!

Knowing Our Iniquity

Is iniquity something ambiguous, something indefinable, something we cannot identify, or something mysterious God is asking us to deal with? No.

Read what Isaiah said, For our transgressions are multiplied before You, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them (Isaiah 59:12).

How could a just God tell us to acknowledge or confess something we don’t know? It’s easy to know our own “working of iniquity,” and the iniquities of our forefathers when we practice being honest with ourselves and God.

We can know the iniquities of our father and forefathers even though they may have kept it secret, or through discipline in their lives, they didn’t become “workers of

iniquity.” The weakness or bent to sin in our lives is the iniquity in our fathers and forefathers.

The writer of the book of Hebrews described the iniquity of our forefathers when he wrote of the “sin which so easily ensnares us.” Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).

The children of Israel knew the iniquities of their fathers because Nehemiah tells us, Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers (Nehemiah 9:2).

David wrote, For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin (Psalms 38:18).

Financial Iniquity

Joyce and I were praying with a pastor and his wife one evening. He told us about a situation that was really bothering him. When he had been a contractor, he always had a good reputation. He paid his employees well. He paid his bills on time. But on the last job he finished just before he went into full-time ministry, the building’s owner wrote him a bad check for many thousands of dollars. He had paid employees and suppliers with that money. All over town, his checks were marked “Insufficient Funds” and people and companies were going without being paid. He had no more “big jobs.” There was hardly enough money coming in to buy food. His heart was broken. “What am I

going to do? I'm sure God said it was time for me to step into full-time ministry. I know I can go back into construction and pay off all these debts, or I can sue the man for what is owed me. What does God want me to do?"

We began to talk to them about financial iniquity in his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He said, "One of the reasons I have been so honest in all my dealings is because my father didn't have a good reputation. I wanted to let my reputation be an example of what a Christian is supposed to be."

We led him in a simple prayer, and he confessed the iniquity of his forefathers. In just a short time, he told us how God had miraculously made it possible for him to pay all his debts. And today, he has a thriving church!

There are some obvious areas of financial iniquity such as having a forefather who was imprisoned for theft, or had a reputation of dishonesty. However, we need to look at some areas that aren't so plain and could be easily overlooked or perhaps even excused.

How do we know if we, or our forefathers have financial iniquity? Look for the symptoms. Do we have trouble paying our bills, live in areas of poverty, find it hard to tithe, give offerings, or to honor our vows to God? If any of this is true in our lives or the lives of our forefathers, we should deal with financial iniquity or the tendency to work financial iniquity.

Curses Come with Cause

If our finances seem cursed, there is a reason – an open door. Remember it's by knowing the truth that we can be set free! Our desire must be to find that door and shut it! Proverbs 26:2 says, *Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight.*

This isn't to make us feel put-down or discouraged. It's to help us bring the light of God's Word into our finances! It's to help us acknowledge our financial iniquity or the financial iniquity of our forefathers, so that we can be free!

Just Weights

Years ago there was a well-known artist who was known for his paintings of real life situations. One of his paintings is of a grocer weighing a lady's purchase on a scale. Behind the purchase where the customer couldn't see, he was pushing the scale down with his thumb to make it weigh more. On the front of the scale, where he couldn't see, the customer was using her hand and lifting the package so that it would weigh less. Both the grocer and the customer were being dishonest. They were both "workers of financial iniquity."

The disturbing thing about this painting is its popularity. People think it's funny, but God has a different view. We can find his view in Deuteronomy.

"You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just

measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

“For all who do such things, and all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 25:13-16).

King Solomon told us about false balances and weights. He wrote, A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is His delight (Proverbs 11:1).

How do we report an accident, file an insurance claim, fill out a tax form, an expense report, or fill in a time card? Do we want to change it just a little? What makes a person want to do that? Financial iniquity.

Judas, an Example

Judas is a clear, biblical example of a person who was a worker of financial iniquity.

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii (about three years wages) and given to the poor?”

This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it (John 12:1-8).

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Judas had financial iniquity and he tried to cover it with something that sounded very religious. “Oh, we could have given that to the poor.”

Judas didn't care about the poor. He wanted more money in the box so he could get his hands on it. Why?

He was a disciple of Jesus and still there was iniquity in him. He walked and talked with Jesus, and yet because that iniquity was unresolved, he didn't resist the weakness, the bent on the inside, the financial iniquity, and it became his ruin.

How do we know it was iniquity? Look at Acts 1:16-18a.

“Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.”

(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity...).

What are the wages of iniquity? They are what we earn by holding on to iniquity. Even while Judas was traveling with Jesus hearing Him teach, seeing the miracles He did, unresolved iniquity was causing him to steal money. This financial iniquity, this uncontrolled desire for money, caused him to betray Jesus. The end of his unresolved financial iniquity was total disgrace and suicide.

Putting “Ours” Before “His”

The prophet Haggai gives us a powerful example of financial iniquity as it pertains to setting our financial priorities right before God.

Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." '

Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?" (Haggai 1:2-4).

There's nothing wrong with having nice houses. The problem was with the timing. Most of the houses of that day were built with adobe, with a plaster coating on the inside and out. But for the houses of the rich, they had gone into Lebanon and taken some special cedar and made paneling to line the walls. They were living in beautiful paneled houses and yet God's house was lying in ruins, in desolation. Through Haggai God asked, "Is it time for you to dwell in paneled houses and this temple to lie in ruins?"

Their priorities were wrong.

Jesus told us in Matthew 6:33, **Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Seek God and He'll add the things.** They were seeking the things first.

The Results

Look at the result of having the wrong financial priorities – or having unresolved financial iniquity in our lives. In Haggai 1:5-11, we read.

Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!

- You have sown much, and bring in little;**
- you eat, but do not have enough;**
- you drink, but you are not filled with drink;**

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- you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;
- and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.”

What were they to do?

Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD.

God didn’t want them in any doubt about what was happening. He continued:

- You looked for much, but indeed it came to little;
- and when you brought it home, I blew it away.

Why?” says the LORD of hosts. “Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit.”

“For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands” (Haggai 1:5-11).

The economy of that day was based on the land – the crops and livestock. The same truths apply to our more urban economy today.

Barrier to God’s Blessing

Isaiah warns us that we have wearied God with our iniquities.

You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings, nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices. I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings, nor wearied you with incense.

You have bought Me no sweet cane with money, nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices; but you have burdened Me with your sins, you have wearied Me with your iniquities (Isaiah 43:23,24).

Iniquity is a barrier to receiving God's blessing.

But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good things from you (Jeremiah 5:23-25).

Who Are the God-Robbers?

We think of a robber or a thief as being someone who would point a gun at a person and say, "Stick 'em up!" Most of us cannot picture ourselves doing that, and certainly not trying to do it to God. And yet God says, we have robbed Him!

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

We can be faithful in our tithes which belong to God and still be robbing Him in our offerings. God's Word says this! What is the result?

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“You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation” (Malachi 3:8,9).

In the same way we rob God by not obeying Him in our giving, we can rob the people or companies we owe money to by not paying them. When we don't pay our debts, we have become workers of financial iniquity.

Tithes and Offerings

Immediately after God warns us about robbing Him, He gives us the positive side of tithing.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” says the LORD of hosts; “And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says the LORD of hosts (Malachi 3:10-12).

If we tithe, God says He will open the windows of heaven and pour out His blessings. He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes – that all the nations will call us blessed!

Our Covenant

A covenant is a serious binding agreement between God and His people. God will always keep His part if we obey and do our part. Just think, when we are born again, we enter into a covenant relationship with God. All the

covenant blessings God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob become ours.

Unresolved iniquity resulting in sin and disobedience causes our covenant blessing to be withheld. Disobedience to God in our tithes and offerings brings a curse on our lives which prevents us from receiving the blessings of God. We will find ourselves “wasting away” in our iniquities.

However, if we humble ourselves and accept our guilt, if we confess our iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers and obey God in our giving, God will rebuke the devourer and restore our covenant blessings in full and overflowing measure.

And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away.

But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies;

If their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt – then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land (Leviticus 26:39-42).

We are given a prayer by the prophet Jeremiah in which he refers to iniquity and the covenant of God.

We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You. Do not abhor us, for Your

name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of Your glory. Remember, do not break Your covenant with us (Jeremiah 14:20,21).

What covenant is Jeremiah speaking about? The covenant God had made with Abraham, and renewed with Jacob, Isaac and the people of Israel. Today, we have an even greater covenant with God. We are entitled to covenant blessing as His children.

Jeremiah pleaded, “We acknowledge our wickedness, the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned but remember, do not break Your covenant with us.”

The working of financial iniquity is a wickedness that withholds from us the benefits of the covenant. It withholds the blessings of God.

Responsibility to Warn Others

Years ago, it came as a surprise to us that Christians would write bad checks and never make them right. We have received these, often for large amounts of money, both in offerings and for books. When this first happened, we would say, “Oh, it’s in God’s hands.” We would forgive the person and do nothing more about it.

After a time, God talked to us seriously about doing and saying nothing. By our attitude, we were leading the person to feel he or she had done nothing wrong, but in God’s eyes this wasn’t true. If the check was put in the offering, it was a vow to pay that amount of money. When the person didn’t make the check good, it became a broken vow – not between them and us – but much more serious, between them and God.

When the check was for books and tapes, they had done the same as steal from us. Only one time, after we wrote to the person involved, were the books and tapes returned with a letter asking for forgiveness!

We have a responsibility to warn those who have iniquity, even financial iniquity in their lives. God says He will require their blood at our hands, unless we warn them!

But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.

So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me.

When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins lie upon us, and we pine away in them, how can we then live?"'

When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die (Ezekiel 33:6-13).

These words are hard, but they are God's Words. He has commanded us to warn those who are workers of iniquity! Remember, it's knowing the truth that sets us free!

Give Back the Pledge!

There seems to be a difference in the way we are to handle financial iniquity. We are told to give back the pledge and to restore what we have stolen. In the case of finances, acknowledging our iniquity is only the first step to freedom. There must also be restoration.

“Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge (the pawn, the item given as security), gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him” (Ezekiel 33:14-16a).

Solomon said a thief was to restore – even to giving up all his substance.

People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; he may have to give up all the substance of his house” (Proverbs 6:31).

Zacchaeus is another example of this.

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house” (Luke 19:8,9a).

It's Our Choice

We have a choice. Either God will not remember our righteous works because we trust in our own righteousness and commit iniquity, or He won't remember our iniquity because we acknowledge and confess our iniquity, restore the pledge, and give back what has been stolen. It's our choice. It's up to us!

Our Blessings

When we look at Isaac and Jacob, and see the great covenant blessing that was on their lives, it's absolutely awesome.

Then Isaac sowed in that land, (and this was a time of drought). and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him (Genesis 26:12-14).

We should be the envy of every "Philistine" – of every person who has no covenant with God.

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him... "May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham" (Genesis 28:1-4).

Set Free from Iniquity

When we are set free from financial iniquity in our lives, and restore the pledge, God says He will remember His covenant with Jacob, His covenant with Isaac, His covenant Abraham, His covenant with us!

If you have been claiming all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the blessings of the land, but your finances have been a disaster, could the reason be unresolved financial iniquity in your life? Could financial iniquity, that you have inherited from your father, your grandfather, or your great-grandfather, which you have acted on, be the reason your promised blessings have been withheld?

Painful Results of Iniquity

Rebellion and Witchcraft

Rebellion against God was the original sin of Lucifer. It was also the original sin of Adam and Eve and thus the iniquity of rebellion has passed from generation to generation. The ultimate rebellion on this earth will be manifested in the last days by the Antichrist, the Man of Sin. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7 KJV).*

The sin of rebellion which manifests itself as stubbornness, witchcraft and idolatry, has become an iniquity which has been passed down from generation to generation. For

rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23a).

It's the iniquity of rebellion that has caused many to stubbornly reject the Word of the Lord, even when they know it's true. This can only lead to destruction in their lives, as they continue to hold on to sin and transgressions.

Personality Problems

Loneliness, grief, sadness and depression are often a result of either personal or inherited iniquity.

And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away (Leviticus 26:39).

The words "waste away" are translated "pine away" in other translations. The Hebrew word *magag* used here means to become wasted or consumed. This same expression is used in Ezekiel. ... you shall pine away in your iniquities and mourn with one another (Ezekiel 24:23b).

Unanswered Prayer and Sickness

Iniquity hinders our prayers. David wrote, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me (Psalm 66:18).

He also wrote, For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away (Psalm 31:10).

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The prophet Isaiah wrote, And the inhabitant will not say, “I am sick”; the people who dwell in it will be forgiven their iniquity (Isaiah 33:24).

Iniquity can hinder us from receiving healing. The apostle Paul wrote, I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness (Romans 6:19 KJV).

Many people aren't able to receive healing because of unforgiven iniquity in their hearts. After being set free from iniquity, they can say along with Isaiah, “I am no longer sick.” The hindrance to receiving the manifestation of their healing has been removed.

National and Personal Slavery

Iniquity will cause destruction to our nation and leave us in slavery to others, or in slavery to our own desires.

But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt – then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land (Leviticus 26:40-42).

Iniquity brought the children of Israel into slavery, but we are told that if they confessed their iniquity and that of their

father's, humbled themselves and accepted their guilt, God would heal their land.

Serious Warnings about Iniquity

God's Word gives serious warnings about failing to deal with the iniquity that may be in our lives.

Iniquity Gives Place to the Devil

Iniquity in our lives which has either come because of our own repeated sin or by inheritance from our fathers, if not dealt with, will give place to the devil and his demons to continually possess, oppress, or control. The apostle Paul warns us not to give place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27).

Many haven't been able to be completely free, even after deliverance, because iniquity hasn't been recognized and dealt with in their lives. They have been delivered from demonic activity, but to their dismay, the demons have come back even stronger. Because of the iniquity that has been allowed to stay, the demons still find a place, or an open door to return.

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation (Matthew 12:43-45).

Set Free from Iniquity

If we are going to get free and stay free, we must first discover from God's Word how to be set free from iniquity. We will do this later in the book!

Iniquity Brings Death

To give in to the “bent to sin” and commit iniquity can result in death. When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die (Ezekiel 33:13).

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die (Ezekiel 3:20a).

“But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.'

Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the Lord God. “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin” (Ezekiel 18:24-26,30).

You may be thinking but this was in the Old Testament, and I live under a new covenant. Consider these solemn words of warning that Jesus spoke.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23 KJV).

Notice that Jesus said, “ye that work iniquity,” not, “ye that have iniquity.”

It’s “the iniquity they have committed” not the inherited iniquity of their fathers, which can cause death. However, the inherited iniquity will continue to lead them toward sin and transgression, as long as they haven’t dealt with it.

The solemn warnings in these passages have to do with the iniquities that we have personally committed. It appears from these passages that no matter how much we have done for God, how many gifts of the Spirit we have ministered in, or how many people we have ministered to, if we continue to work – to commit iniquity, God will say “I never knew you; depart from me!”

Iniquity Manifested by Our Words

When people speak negative words, they are expressing the iniquity in their hearts. Demons are activated to manifest, like a roaring forest fire, a world of iniquity in their lives.

The apostle James wrote, Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (James 3:5-8).

Job said, Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things? (Job 6:24,30 KJV).

If our lips are unclean by the words that we have spoken, if we repent as Isaiah, God will purge our lips and take away our iniquity.

Then I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged” (Isaiah 6:5-7).

Jesus Redeemed Us from Iniquity

Most of us think of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. But Jesus was portrayed in the Old Testament both as the Sacrificial Lamb and as the Scape Goat. The scape goat found in the Old Testament, carried away their iniquities.

The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness (Leviticus 16:22).

As we wrote before, because Jesus was conceived by the Spirit and had no earthly father there was no iniquity in Him. He lived without sin. Because Jesus now lives within us, we too, by faith, can be set free and live free from iniquity. This is possible because of the great redemptive work of Jesus, our Substitute Redeemer.

Let's go once again to Isaiah's prophecy of the death of our Redeemer. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:3-6).

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Jesus was “wounded for our transgressions.” A wound is caused from an object piercing the flesh from the outside.

Transgression is an external manifestation of sin. Transgression, like a wound, is something that can be seen on the outside.

He was “bruised for our iniquity.” A bruise is an injury on the inside that shows on the outside. Iniquity is deep within our being. While our sin and transgressions cause wounds from the outside, iniquity causes a bruise from the inside.

In Jesus’ redemptive work on our behalf, He not only bore our transgressions, sins, diseases and pains; He was also bruised as He bore the iniquities that are on the inside.

Just as we must appropriate our salvation and our healing by faith in Jesus and His redemptive work on our behalf, even so we must appropriate our freedom from iniquity by faith in Jesus – in His redemptive work on our behalf. Just as surely as Jesus bore our sins, transgressions, diseases and pains, He also bore our iniquities.

Iniquity is deep within our souls. It affects our thoughts, our wills and our emotions. At Calvary, Jesus not only redeemed us from sin and transgression; He bore the bent to sin that is within our hearts.

He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11).

An illustration of iniquity affecting our thoughts, wills and emotions, as the inner bent to sin and transgress God's laws, is found in the teachings of Jesus.

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:28).

Here Jesus revealed, in addition to there being serious consequences of outward acts of sin and transgression, there are also serious consequences of the inward thoughts of the soul. These thoughts often originate from the inward bent, or iniquity that is our old nature.

Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others (Ephesians 2:3).

Our old nature, with its deep-seated iniquity, wants to sin. It contains the propensity, bent, perversion, or desire to sin.

Many have been to Calvary for the forgiveness and cleansing of sin and transgression without receiving the cleansing of the old nature from its deep-seated iniquity.

Calvary provided total redemption for mankind – spirit, soul and body. At Calvary because Jesus bore our sins, we received spiritual forgiveness and cleansing. Our spirits were born again as new creations.

Because Jesus was wounded and stricken at Calvary for our transgressions, through faith our bodies are cleansed and forgiven and have become the temples of the Holy Spirit. By faith, we can receive healing because He bore our sickness, diseases and pain. By His stripes we are healed.

However, many have missed another part of the redemptive work at Calvary – the salvation of our souls from the bondage of iniquity. Jesus was bruised for the iniquity that is deep within our souls. There is a need to acknowledge

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and confess our iniquity and by faith receive purging from the bent, propensity, weakness and desire to sin that has remained on the inside.

Isaiah continued, He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11).

Three times in Isaiah 53, it's made clear that Jesus bore the desire, the weakness for sin, the appetite for sin, that bent on the inside, so that we don't have to bear it!

When I was ten years old, I had a revelation of the redemptive work of Jesus – He bore my sins and my transgressions. He bore them so that I didn't have to bear them any more. When I received that revelation, faith to receive my salvation – the forgiveness of my sins and transgression came and I was set free!

When I was thirty-three years old, I was dying. My sins and transgressions were forgiven, but I didn't have the revelation that Jesus had also borne my sicknesses. One day that revelation came. I understood that just as surely as Jesus had borne my sins, He had borne my sicknesses and my pain. With that revelation, faith to receive my healing came and I was healed!

But now I have another revelation. In that same redemptive work of Jesus, He not only bore our sins and transgressions; our sicknesses, diseases and pain; He bore our iniquities so that we don't have to carry them anymore.

When I received this revelation, faith to receive freedom from my iniquity came. I acknowledged and confessed my

iniquity and the iniquity of my forefathers and I was set free.

Paul wrote, **Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered (Romans 4:7 KJV).**

The writer of the book of Hebrews put it this way, **Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more (Hebrews 10:17 KJV).**

The Lord Removes Our Iniquity

It's the Lord Who visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. It's the Lord Who imputes the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children. And since God put iniquity on us, only He can remove it.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (Psalm 32:1,2,5).

Repent, Confess, or Acknowledge

It's important to understand the difference between repentance, confession of our sins, and transgressions, and the acknowledgment and confession of our iniquity and the iniquity of our forefathers.

Repentance

Repentance implies a complete change of mental attitude. When we repent, we see our sins and transgressions as God sees them. They become repulsive to us. We hate them. We no longer want them in our lives.

To repent means a complete change of lifestyle from the inside out. It means that while we have been walking in one direction, we turn and begin to walk with God in a brand new direction.

Ezekiel gives us God's word on this subject. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin" (Ezekiel 18:30).

We must repent of our sins and transgressions, or the iniquity that is within us will bring us to ruin.

Again, from the writings of Ezekiel we read, "Cast away (repent) from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!" (Ezekiel 18:31,32).

Confess or Acknowledge?

Confess means to make known one's sins to God. Acknowledge means to admit the existence, the reality, or truth. In 1 John 1:9, we are told If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our first step to freedom from iniquity is to repent as David did, and acknowledge our sins to God. As we confess our sins and our transgressions, we mustn't hide our iniquity. Many have confessed their sins, while their iniquity, which drives them to continue sinning, has remained hidden.

David is a wonderful example of one repenting of sins and transgressions and acknowledging iniquity. Just as God forgave David's sin and transgression, God washed away the iniquity – the perverted nature in him that wanted to sin.

We read, So David said to God, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly" (1 Chronicles 21:8).

We also find David's prayers and thoughts revealed in the Psalms.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:1,2).

Be Free!

By faith and obedience to that which is revealed in God's Word regarding iniquity, we can be set free from the root, or source of the struggle within.

Our Part

⇒ **We must acknowledge and confess our iniquity.**

We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against You (Jeremiah 14:20).

Set Free from Iniquity

We are not only required to acknowledge our wickedness, and our sins, but also the iniquity of our fathers. Why? Because the iniquity of the fathers has been visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt – then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land (Leviticus 26:10-42).

If we will confess our iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers then God will remember His covenant. We're never told to repent of iniquity because iniquity isn't sin.

We're told to repent of transgressions and sins, but to acknowledge and confess our iniquity and our father's iniquity. If we do that, God will forgive them.

Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases (Psalms 103:3).

For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more (Jeremiah 31:34b).

God says He will forgive our iniquity! He will pardon our iniquity, and He will subdue our iniquity.

Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Hebrews 1:9).

To do our part, we must receive by faith what God has already done for us in His redemptive work on our behalf. If we will acknowledge and confess our personal iniquity and the iniquity of our fathers and forefathers, God will set us free from all iniquity.

God's Part

God has already done His part in our redemption. It's complete!

⇒ **Jesus was bruised for our iniquity.**

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5).

⇒ **Our iniquities were laid on Him.**

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:60).

⇒ **Jesus bore our iniquities.**

...He shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11b).

God Will...

⇒ **Forgive our iniquity**

The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. (Numbers 14:18a).

Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases (Psalm 103:30).

Set Free from Iniquity

... "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34b).

⇒ **Cleanse us from iniquity**

'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me." (Jeremiah 33:8a).

⇒ **Pardon us from our iniquities**

...I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me (Jeremiah 33:8b).

Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? (Micah 7:18).

⇒ **Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity**

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 51:2).

⇒ **Subdue our iniquity**

He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19).

⇒ **Take away our iniquity**

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged" (Isaiah 6:6,7).

⇒ **Blot out our iniquity**

Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities (Psalm 51:9).

Prayer of Acknowledgment and Confession of Iniquity

Now that we know what iniquity is, how it came to be on us, and what God has done to provide freedom for us, it is important that we take time to pray.

Father, I acknowledge and confess my iniquities, and the iniquities of my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather.

I confess my iniquity, that tendency within me, to sin. I confess the following weaknesses for sin; the perversions that are within me that are driving me and causing me to desire sin. I agree with You that these are iniquities in Your sight.

I recognize them as iniquities. Lord forgive and cleanse me of the following iniquities: _____, _____, _____.

As the Holy Spirit brings these iniquities to our remembrance, we should acknowledge and confess them one by one to the Father.

Lord, I continue by acknowledging and confessing the iniquities of my father. I forgive him and I ask You to forgive the iniquity in my father's life that has come on me.

We should mention the iniquities of our fathers that we are aware of, or that the Holy Spirit reveals to us. Continue praying,

Set Free from Iniquity

Father, I confess all the rest of my father's iniquities. Take them away from me!

We should continue in the same way with our grandfather (on our father's side) and our great-grandfather. We may not know anything about our forefathers, but by faith and obedience, we are still to acknowledge and confess “all of their iniquities” forgiving them and asking God to forgive them as we do. It's very possible that some of our forefathers worshipped false gods – that they were in idolatry or witchcraft. Confess this possibility to God and accept His forgiveness and cleansing from all iniquity.

Freeing Our Children from Iniquity

Iniquity or Sin?

Just as salvation must be appropriated by every person, so must freedom from iniquity. There is no way we can remove all iniquity from children that have been born, or that will be born. No one will ever be born without iniquity, or the sin nature, except Jesus.

A question that always seems to come up in this study is about the mothers and what part they have in the sins of the children if iniquity isn't passed down from them. Why do we have children that have their mother's traits?

We still have many areas that do come from both parents such as learned behavior – things learned by seeing what is done. Children learn by example. There are also generational curses that must be dealt with separately.

David identified the source of iniquity and sin.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me (Psalms 51:5).

Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD, And let not the sin of his mother be blotted out (Psalms 109:14).

In these two verses, David referred to both iniquity and sin. In the second verse, he identified their source. Iniquity, in addition to sin, was from the father. Sin, not iniquity, is from the mother.

Nothing, we have found in the Word of God, supports the theory that iniquity comes from both parents. However, this doesn't leave the mothers as having no effect on the children. Through David, we are told that children are born in the sins of the mother.

What Can We Do?

What can we do for our children? We can confess our own iniquity and put it under the blood of Jesus so that it will not be passed to the third and fourth generation. How wonderful it is to realize that there is also an inheritance of good that passes down through the generations.

We can give them good examples and a good inheritance.

David wrote, Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth (Psalms 25:12,13).

In Proverbs we read, A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children (Proverbs 13:22a).

When our children accept Jesus as their Savior, we can teach them about iniquity, and with them break the control of iniquity in their lives.

Neither Cold nor Hot

Jesus told us how the prevalence of iniquity would affect us. We can see it all around in our generation. Jesus said that **because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12 KJV).**

The church of the Laodiceans was an actual city and church at the time John wrote the book of Revelation. It also accurately portrays the seventh period of church history. We are in this period, and need to listen to Jesus' words to our generation.

"And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked – I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 3:14-22).

If, because of iniquity, our love for the Lord has grown cold and our heart has become lukewarm spiritually, Jesus is standing at the door of our heart, knocking, wanting to come in and restore us to our first love.

As we once again, open the door of our heart, repenting of our sin, acknowledging and confessing our iniquity and the iniquity of our forefathers, He will come in. He will forgive us, cleanse us, wash us thoroughly, subdue and blot out all of our iniquity.

Our love for the Lord will once again be restored. Our love for God will burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit. He will become Lord of our whole life.

As we submit those things that have become habits in our lives to the discipline of His Lordship, our desires will be totally changed. Instead of living a life defeated by the endless cycle of sin and repentance, we will become over-comers. We will be able to boldly and truthfully say, "I hate iniquity! I don't want to sin anymore!"

Set Free from Iniquity

Then it can be said of us, Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Hebrews 1:9 KJV).

We will experience the overwhelming joy of knowing we have been set free from iniquity!