

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your correspondence to the Al Denson Show and for tuning in every week to our program. My prayer for you is to be encouraged in your daily walk with Christ through the words of this booklet. Our hope is that in turn you will tell others of what God is doing through our ministry to youth and parents on TV. I am convinced you will not find another program on any network anywhere that deals with issues today's youth and their parents are facing, and provides answers from a Godly perspective.

In addition, we would love for you to help us by going to our web site at www.aldenson.com. Here you can write to us, order additional material like this booklet, check out all my music, have a daily bible study, and stay up to date on the ministry. You can also send us a prayer request and questions for the TV show. But more importantly, please continue to be in prayer with us as we work together to help those that are in need.

Thanks for watching and God Bless!

Sincerely,



An Outreach of Celebration Ministries

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**Breaking Free From
Your Family Tree**



Most artists create for only a brief moment in time. That phenomenon was once known as “15 minutes of fame”. Yet even in a fickle world, there still emerge a talented few that transcends time and trends. With nearly 15 years as a major label recording artist and seven hit

albums to his credit, Al Denson is that kind of artist.

But the attention and acclaim his artistry has brought him over the years are anything but the routine rewards of worldly success. Rather, they are the fruits of a life of purpose and passion, and a mission that has always reached far beyond merely making music.

The millions of young people Al has performed for, befriended, counseled, consoled and clowned around with in his career already know that. And thousands more are finding out every day.

This past year has seen Al expand his efforts to a global audience through the reach of his daily syndicated television production, “The Al Denson Show.” “You’ve got to reach out to people where they are with the most powerful means and this form of media allows you to build trust and a rapport,” says Al. “This has all been so amazing. I can’t imagine what lies in store when the Lord finally calls me home, but I don’t have to wait for heaven to receive rewards. I get them every time a kid comes up to me and says, ‘I heard what you said, and I accepted Christ.’ You can’t ask for anything more or better than that.”

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Breaking Free From Your Family Tree

When God created the human race, He created a corporate race where His covenant relationship and the blessings of faith could be passed through the family from generation to generation. It was God’s intent that the benefits of strength, security, love, grace, and mercy be inherited by the children of His children. Here are some scriptures which show us the way God designed this to work:

“Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in His commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.” Psalm 112:1-2.

“He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress and for his children it will be a refuge.” Proverbs 14:26.

“The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.” Proverbs 20:7.

“I have been reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.” II Timothy 1:5.

However, just as the blessing of a right relationship with God can bless a family for generations, so the curse of unrighteousness can follow a family through generations as well. The Bible says in Exodus 20:5, 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9; and

Galatians 6:7-8 that “the iniquity of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations.” This basically means three things:

1. Satan will attack a child in the area where the parents have had a weakness.
2. Children will be open to the same sins which they see the parents commit.
3. If parental sin is not cleansed and forsaken it can reoccur in children, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren.

Most Christians today would agree that the sins of a parent can have a negative

affect on children while they are in their parent’s care. But the Bible teaches that the effect of a parent’s sin on a child’s life can actually reach far beyond the time the child lives at home. Parental sin can give Satan a foothold in the lives of children which will follow them into adulthood. These “curses” can even affect the lives of grandchildren and great-grandchildren for generations yet unborn.

The first recorded attack of Satan was on the family and the family is still his number one target today. In Ephesians 4:27 we are told not to give the devil a foothold in our lives. The word “foothold” means an “opportunity” or “chance” for Satan to exercise influence over us.

It was God’s intent that the benefits of strength, security, love, grace, and mercy be inherited by the children of His children.

In World War II invading U. S. troops would come ashore in boats and attempt to establish beachheads on foreign soil. These footholds in enemy territory would give the Americans an opportunity to establish strongholds there. Their strategy was that from that base of operations to further invade and take over other inland areas. This is exactly what Satan wants to do in each of our lives. We must make no mistake about it; Satan hates all Christians and has an individual plan for each of us to destroy our lives.

Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to kill, steal, and destroy; I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full." Satan is the thief who wants to rob us of our significance and our worth, our peace and joy, and the meaning and purpose in life Jesus came to give. Ultimately, he wants to kill us. He can't do that without God's permission, so he tries his best to get us to do it for him. His goal for each of us is either total destruction or at least, total uselessness to God.



Satan can't have a foothold in our lives without our permission and cooperation. When we allow willful sin to become ungodly behavior patterns in our lives, we have given Satan the permission he needs. Over time, a stronghold is built in our lives out of the lies of Satan. Those lies are literally the bricks of which the stronghold is erected. A stronghold is a belief system or a mind-set that causes us to believe things about ourselves which are contrary to the Word of God. Once we believe Satan's lies, those lies become the truth for us, and once we believe something, we will hear and see it whether it is the truth or not.

Satan wants us to believe that our situations and circumstances are hopeless. But we are never helpless victims where Satan is concerned. The only power he has in our lives is what we give him. Satan is not the problem—we are the problem. Every time we refuse to let go of our sin, confess it, and turn from it, we give the Devil the beachhead or foothold that he needs to build a stronghold in our lives. We were created by God to be mastered and if we aren't surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ as our master, by default, we will be mastered by other things. Any area of our lives we don't allow the Spirit of God control, Satan will control.

The Bible clearly warns about blessings and curses and the "iniquities" of the fathers being passed on to their children—this is the heritage of sin. Like a set of antique luggage that is passed down through a family from one

generation to the next, there can be some spiritual baggage passed down, too. When the Bible warns repeatedly that the effects of sin can be felt for generations in a family, it is imperative that we understand what God is saying. The first time we see this concept is in the Ten Commandment in Exodus 20:5. After warning Israel not to worship or bow down to any idols, God tells Moses, "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."

Iniquity is simply a stronghold of sin and self-will in a certain area of our lives. A parent who has allowed Satan to build a stronghold in their life can also open the spirit of their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to the

influence of Satan. King David had a stronghold of lust in his life and, in ways that we don't completely understand, that same sin became a stronghold in the life of his son, the great King Solomon. David repented and ended his life being the one man God called, "a man after my own heart." His son, however, slid further and further into sexual sin and died with his heart far away from God. Any sin which a parent practices in moderation, their children will usually practice to excess. A parent's influence is so great on their children that even if they are too young to imitate the actual sins, the children can still be subject to great attack. What parents allow to come into their lives and to their homes will either have a positive effect or a negative effect on their families.

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The Scripture is clear that we can either pass the inheritance of a blessing to our children or the pain of a curse. In II Samuel 12:5-6, after King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan came to him and told him a story about a rich man who stole a poor man's pet lamb. David became so angry when he heard this story that he put a curse on the guilty party and said that the rich man should be made to pay back the poor man "fourfold." David didn't realize at the time that he was the guilty man Nathan was referring to and David's curse came back on his own family when he lost four sons; the baby conceived in his adultery, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.

Families can put curses on their children. When we think of a curse, we think of parents who are practicing occultists or Satan worshipers. Of course, even dabbling in things God calls an "abomination" are dangerous and can have far reaching effects into future generations. But many parents who have never been involved in anything like this can still curse their children. Children are often cursed when they are crippled emotionally by abuse or constant criticism. A curse is simply something that opens a person up to the influence of Satan. If the lie contained in the curse is believed, then Satan has gained a foothold or a beachhead in the life of a child from which he can build a new stronghold.

When we think of generational sins, we usually think of sins such as alcoholism, drug addiction,

occult involvement, or sins which are sexual in nature. Of course these are all very destructive but there are others whose effect on future generations can be just as deadly. Four of these are rejection, bitterness, anger, and pride. Let's look at each one individually:

~ REJECTION ~

The most hurtful form of rejection anyone can experience is rejection from their parents. Most of us value the acceptance of our parents more than the acceptance of anyone else. There are professional men and women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are still seeking their parents' acceptance and approval even though their parents are dead, and here is why:

Every person comes into this world with three basic emotional needs: the need to be unconditionally loved and accepted; the need to feel valuable and capable; and the need to feel that they are not alone.

These are needs that our parents are to meet in our lives. When these needs are met, we "feel" loved. Rejection occurs when we don't "feel" loved, when love is withheld knowingly or unknowingly. Rejection can come from the feeling of abandonment which occur when one parent leaves the home through death or divorce. But rejection can just as easily take root when a parent simply doesn't take the time to make a child feel valued.

Too often a parent will reject a child by making their love conditional based on the child's performance. When the child's performance is not up to the expected standard, love is withdrawn, or when the child finally attains the standard, the standard is raised so he never quite measures up. Acceptance, then for the child, always seems just out of reach. If the child ever does manage to measure up, he is accepted for what he does—not for whom he is. This means the child's performance is accepted but his personhood is rejected.

The consequences of rejection in our lives are very serious. Rejection is anything that conveys to us that we are unloved or unwanted. This can be communicated in many different ways, both overt and covert:

- When our parents say things like "I wish you had never been born," "I wanted a girl/boy," "you were a mistake," "you'll never amount to anything," "why can't you be like ..."
- When our parents show no affection toward us, or interest in us.
- When our parents physically, verbally or emotionally abuse us.
- When our parents love us conditionally or offer us acceptance which is performance based.
- When our parents continually express disapproval or disappointment to us.
- When our parents place unrealistic expectations on us because they see us as an extension of their own identity.

Rejection is anything that conveys to us that we are unloved or unwanted.

- When our parents are permissive. This lack of discipline is actually neglect, and comes across as a lack of love and concern for us.
- When our parents are overprotective. This sends us the message “you cannot do life without my help; you are not a capable person.”
- When our parents do not give us their undivided time and attention.
- When our parents do not listen to us with their ears, eyes and heart.
- When our parents abandon us through death, divorce or suicide.
- When our fathers abandon their leadership roles in our families. Fathers who don't provide strength, protection, discipline and values in their homes, make us feel that we are not a priority in their lives.

Regardless of the form rejection takes, it always causes feelings of:

- Low self-esteem
- Being unloved
- Being unacceptable
- Being unworthy
- Being inferior
- Guilt for even living

When rejection isn't dealt with it can turn into:

- Anger
- Bitterness
- Refusal to communicate
- Ambivalence

- Distrust
- Rebellion against all authority

Our parents can also reject us when they:

- Don't allow us to think for ourselves.
- Don't allow us to speak our minds.
- Regard our feelings as unimportant.
- Avoid spending time with us.
- Don't respect our individuality.
- Speak harshly to us.
- Tell us or act like our opinions don't matter.
- Take us for granted.
- Are rude to us in front of others.
- Dismiss our needs as unimportant.
- Don't admit when they are wrong.
- Don't say they are sorry and ask for forgiveness.

Here are some of the consequences of rejection that can follow us into adulthood:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Chronic lying
- Procrastination
- Extreme pride and self-centeredness (narcissism)
- Workaholic and the need to achieve more and more
- Vicious emotional ups and downs
- Extreme submission
- Unhealthy legalism
- Severe withdrawal from society
- Feelings of loss of control (anxiety attacks)
- Stress-related heart problems

- Homosexuality
- Deep feelings of loneliness
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts
- Poor mate selection
- Clinical depression
- Sexual dysfunction in marriage
- Poor decision making
- Lowered career achievement
- Outbursts of anger
- Low energy in accomplishing work tasks
- Extreme self-criticism
- Gravitation toward cults and fringe religious groups
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Eating disorders

Even good parents who love their children and mean well can still pass on the patterns of rejection to their children, if that is the way they, were parented. People who experienced rejection from their parents have received the message that they are unwanted. With the feeling of being unwanted always come feelings of worthless, inferiority, and guilt, because our parents are like a mirror in which we first see ourselves. Our self-esteem will largely depend upon the worth or worthlessness we see reflected in the people who mean the most to us.



This lack of worthiness will make us feel unacceptable to God, and we will more than likely also see God as a rejecting father. Christians who have rejection passed on to them through their family, usually will accept Jesus as Savior, and then spend the rest of their lives trying to get Jesus to accept them. They find it difficult to believe God could love and accept them unconditionally, and they feel unworthy and unsaved, even though they know the Bible assures them of their salvation.

Jesus understands rejection. John 1:11 says, "He came to His own and His own received Him not." He understands the hurt that comes with rejection; that's why Jesus went to the cross, so as it says in Ephesians 1:6 that we, as children of God, could be "accepted in the Beloved." That acceptance is unconditional and unending. God never says:

I accept you because
I accept you since
I accept you for as much as
or
I will accept you if
I will accept you when
I will accept you after,
I will accept you provided
I will accept you presuming

Any of these statements would make God's acceptance of us conditional. But God's

acceptance of us does not depend on what we do or don't do, but on the finished work of Christ on the cross. We are accepted because we are "in Christ" (the Beloved). Once we are saved, God can never reject us because He can never reject His Son.

If we were to take a cup of boiling water and put a tea bag inside, we would see the tea instantly become one with the water and the water become one with the tea. From the first second the bag hits the water, the two are one and can never be separated again. It would be impossible to accept the tea and reject the water or to accept the water and reject the tea. If we have been saved, our lives are like that tea bag and Jesus is like the boiling water. We were placed in Him and He is in us for eternity. God cannot reject us because He can't reject His Son. We are "accepted in the Beloved!" Acceptance is God's remedy for rejection.

If we will be willing to accept what the Bible says, we can break the generational cycle of rejection. In order to do this there are several things we will have to do:

1. We must accept God's Word was written for us. When we read all the promises in the Bible we may feel like they are for everyone else, but they are written for us.
2. Instead of rehearsing the pain our earthly parents have caused us, we need to rehearse on

a daily basis the truth of how God loves and accepts us. The Bible promises that our Heavenly Father will fill all the emptiness in our lives caused by neglectful or absent earthly parents. Psalm 27:10 says, "Though my mother and father forsake me, the Lord will receive me."

3. We must accept the fact that our Heavenly Father is nothing like our earthly parents. Our

earthly parents may have disappointed us, ignored us, abused us, or even abandoned us. But our Heavenly Father never has and never will hurt us in any way.

The feelings of a lifetime of rejection won't change overnight. It will take constant reminding and the daily "renewing of our minds" to have the old information replaced with the truth.

If we will be willing to accept what the Bible says, we can break the generational cycle of rejection.

~ BITTERNESS ~

The emotional wounds parents inflict, whether intentional or unintentional, are the deepest and most long-lasting of any we can ever receive in life and many people carry those wounds throughout their lives. Hurt will happen—this is a fact of life. If those emotional wounds are not treated, the result will be a bitter spirit. The only way those hurts can be healed is through forgiveness. Unfortunately, not even many Christians understand real, scriptural forgiveness. Most mistakenly believe forgiveness is a feeling—it is not. Forgiveness is an act of the will and an act of obedience. It is giving up our right to get even and it is making a decision not to hold on to anger, hurt, or negative emotions.

Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as God forgave you.” This is a commandment and not a suggestion. God gives it to us for our own well-being because He knows unforgiveness is the soil in which bitterness grows. When we have been offended, we experience the pain of the offense when it happens. But the initial pain of the wrong done to us is usually quite small compared to the pain of reliving the offense over and over again in our minds when we haven’t

forgiven the offense. Our unforgiveness will be like a tape recorder on automatic rewind that replays the hurtful experience again and again. Every time that old tape plays in our minds, the bitterness in our hearts is fertilized.

Bitterness is a poisonous plant with very ugly fruit such as depression, anger, hostility, resentment, rage, physical, mental and emotional disorders, and the inability to trust others, to only mention a few. Bitterness will make us extremely vulnerable to unwise decisions and destructive patterns of living. It can keep us from being able to love and be loved unconditionally, it can cause us to doubt our salvation; it can keep us from being able to pray effectively and make it impossible for us to live a consistent Christian life. In short, bitterness is like a cancer of the soul which will destroy us physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. It is a highly contagious condition that will spread down through generations if left unchecked.

When we choose to forgive, we are simply refusing to allow the actions of another person to control and destroy our lives. The forgiveness Jesus offers us is unconditional and complete. We don’t deserve it, but He provided it before we ever asked for it or even knew we needed it. This is exactly the kind of forgiveness which must

be active in our homes and in our relationships. The impressions parents give their children about life and about themselves will have long-lasting, sometimes life-long effects on their personalities. Just as parents have the greatest potential for helping their children, parents also have the greatest potential for hurting their children. Children will either learn forgiveness or unforgiveness from their parents. Whether parents forgive or don’t forgive, will either draw their children to the Lord or turn them away.

Many people are reluctant to forgive others because that have misconceptions about forgiveness. Here are some that must be dispelled or the curse of bitterness will be passed to future generations:

1. *Forgiveness is not a feeling.* It is a decision we make with an act of our wills. It has nothing to do with the person who has offended us. It is first done for our own good. It is an emotional release that must happen before there can be healing in our lives.

2. *Forgiveness is undeserved pardon and an undeserved release.* If we think forgiveness is only for those who ask for our forgiveness, or deserve our forgiveness, then we don’t understand forgiveness at all.

3. *Forgiveness is not denying, or excusing, or minimizing what happened.* It is being honest and objective about the offense, the pain and the consequences caused by the offender.

These same people may also have a hard time forgiving others because they believe if they forgive; it will be letting the other person “off

the hook.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Forgiveness is acknowledging that what was done is wrong and inexcusable, but choosing to show someone else the same kind of forgiveness God has shown us. Colossians 3:13 says, “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as God forgave you.”

When we choose to forgive, we are simply refusing to allow the actions of another person to control and destroy our lives.

Forgiving is not a suggestion; it is a command; and God gives it to us for our own well-being. We must remember that no matter how horribly we have been treated, it could never compare with how horrible we have been to God. Our sins drove the nails through the hands and feet of His only Son, and yet He forgave us completely while we were still in our sin. We must not allow unforgiveness to have a foothold in our lives or become a stronghold by which the enemy gains access into the lives of our children or grandchildren.

~ ANGER ~

Anger is not a sin—in fact, anger is a God-given emotion. In Ephesians 4:26-27, the Bible makes this very clear and goes on to give us four commands regarding anger: (1) Do be angry, (2) Don't sin, (3) Don't stay angry, (4) Don't give the Devil a foothold. Paul was saying in these verses that while it is normal to experience anger, we can choose to express our anger in ways which are either sinful or not sinful, healthy or unhealthy, in ways which heal or in ways which hurt. We can be angry and sin, or we can be angry and not sin. Whether or not anger is a sin, has nothing to do with the emotion of anger but how we choose to express that emotion.

Anger is one of the most powerful emotions a human can have. Whenever we experience

anger, a dose of adrenaline is pumped into our systems. Over time, it is possible to become addicted to the rush that comes from anger. This is why God says it is OK to be angry; it just isn't OK to stay angry. When we choose to camp-out with our anger, we are giving Satan a foothold in our lives.

When something bad happens we think that anger is the feeling we experience first, but this is not true. Anger is a secondary emotion, not a primary feeling. Anger is born out of fear, frustration, hurt, or some combination of the three. When stripped down to its core, anger is really about unfulfilled expectations. It is either:

Frustration from not receiving what we had expected from other people or from life.

Hurt when we don't hear the words or receive the actions we expected.

Fear because either we expect something bad to happen, or fear that what we want to happen, won't.

When anger is not properly dealt with, there can be serious consequences in our lives such as:

1. Physical Problems. Backaches, headaches, and neck aches. Chronic hostility has also been linked to ulcers, stomach and digestive problems, as well as heart disease.

2. A lowered sense of self-worth. The cycle of anger and low self-value feeding off each other produce all kinds of problems so the

greater the pain we carry inside, the greater the temptation will be to engage in addictive behaviors like drugs, alcohol, sex, food, work, etc., to get even temporary relief.

3. Difficulty letting people get close. Anger can take many forms. It is not always aggressive and explosive. A person can be passive, detached, or sarcastic and still be angry. Angry people will only let others in so far because anger blocks their ability to give and receive love. It is almost impossible to please, or get close to, an angry person.

4. Difficulty having a relationship with God. God offers an intimate, loving, personal relationship, but that relationship will be very hard for an angry person to enjoy or even accept because that anger has darkened and hardened their heart.

After a hurtful, fearful, or frustrating experience, we can move in one of two directions: Toward getting better or getting bitter—it is our choice. If we ignore or justify our anger, we allow our anger to grow into resentment, hostility, or rage, and we will surely pass our anger down to future generations.

...no matter how horribly
we have been treated,
it could never compare
with how horrible we
have been to God.

We must first deal with any strongholds...

~ PRIDE ~

Pride was the original sin. Before Adam and Eve were ever created, the angel Lucifer, who stood in the very presence of God, allowed pride to lead him into rebellion against God as he tried to take over the very throne of God. Pride is still Satan's weapon of choice today as he seeks to influence and destroy the people of God. In Isaiah 14:13 the Bible tells us that Satan made his five prideful statements to God, not out loud, but "in his heart." God judged Satan for the thoughts of his heart, because as it says in Proverbs 23:7, as a person thinks in his heart, "so is he." Satan wanted to be like God, not in character, but in control—he wanted to be in charge.

Pride is the worst sin any of us can commit. It was repugnant to God then, and it still is today. It is rebelling against the authority of God as Ruler of the Universe. When any of us attempt to run our own lives we are saying to God, "I know better than You to what is best for me and I can do a better job running my life than You can." Pride sets us up as the final authorities in our lives and makes us the judge of what is right or wrong. In the book of Proverbs there is a list of the seven sins God hates the most and pride tops the list. (Proverbs 6:17) Pride will cause us to shove God off the throne in our hearts and He hates it.

Proverbs 16:5 says, "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." The word "abomination" is one of the strongest, hardest words in the Old Testament. It means "detestable" and "repulsive." God takes the sin of pride very seriously and in Proverbs 15:25, He gives a warning to families: "The Lord will destroy the house of the proud." Parents who set themselves up as God in their own lives or in their families will have their house destroyed, one way or the other. The fallout of this sin may be felt for generations. There will never be any spiritual power in a life or in a family where pride resides. James 4:6 says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Grace is the remedy for pride. A person who has a problem with pride has never understood grace. Grace is the most humbling experience that there is because the only people who are candidates for God's grace are those who have come to realize and admit their total helplessness and hopelessness without Him. They are aware of how great their need for God is and are completely dependent on Him for everything. The recipients of grace can only be those who have submitted themselves completely to the Lordship of Christ in their lives.

So what then is the future of a person who has had less than perfect parents? Are we victims? Do we have to continue to repeat the cycle of

sin that may have been passed to us? Because our parents have messed up, does that mean we are doomed to turn out just like them? The answer is no, No, NO!!! There are some things we can do to ensure that things will be different for us. We must first deal with any strongholds which Satan may have built in our family tree as a result of generational sin. Jim Logan in his great book, *Reclaiming Surrendered Ground*, gives us four steps for doing this. These are:

1. **Acknowledge the sin.** In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah and Daniel, we see both these men of God confessing the sins of their "father's house." This is simply being willing to be honest with God and agree with Him that there has been willful, specific, sin in our family lines.

2. **Ask God to cleanse the sin in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.** It is the blood of Jesus that sets us free from the effects of generational sin.

3. **Ask God to reclaim any ground given to Satan by any of our family members, and to tear down any strongholds Satan has erected.** We must tell Satan that in the name of Jesus Christ, we declare that every legal hold and every legal ground of his is destroyed and broken. Satan has no right to harass us or our families.

4. **Claim Psalm 103:17 that from now on, righteousness will be the heritage for our families and for future generations.**

...which Satan may have
built in our family tree as a
result of generational sin.

We must never, never forget that Satan is a defeated enemy. God rendered him powerless at the cross of Jesus Christ and he has no power over God's children except the power we permit him to have. If we have, even unknowingly given him this permission, we can regain our personal freedom by:

1. **Repenting.** Genuine repentance is not about quitting what we shouldn't be doing, or starting to do what we should be doing—those are the result of repentance. Real repentance is surrendering the control of our lives back over to God. It is about beginning to live a dependent life on Christ, instead of living independently of Christ as our own boss.

2. **Taking back the ground we have personally given the enemy in our lives.** We do this by verbally announcing in the name and power of Jesus that we are asking God to reclaim any ground and by renouncing the works and ways of Satan in our lives.

3. **Building a "Refuge of Truth" in our hearts and minds with the Word of God.** A refuge is a place we can go to when we are under attack. Satan is a deceiver and the "father of lies." We are deceived when our minds and emotions believe something that isn't true. We must replace Satan's lies with God's truth. That truth will protect us from the lies that Satan will continue to bombard us with every day.

4. **Keeping our thoughts in line daily with the truth of God's Word.** We are not to be controlled by our thoughts—we are to control them (II Corinthians 10:5). We can't always control what thoughts come into our minds but we can decide where they are coming from and whether or not to accept them. God tells us what kind of thoughts to reject and what kind of thoughts to dwell on in Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever

is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Philippians 4:8 lists the things we all want to characterize our own lives and to live in the lives of our children and grandchildren for generations to come. This may seem impossible if our family trees have been diseased and blighted by sin for generations, but that doesn't mean they have to continue to be. With God's help, we can begin new branches and establish holy heritages which will be a blessing to us and to those we love.

With God's help, we
can begin new
branches...