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"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105

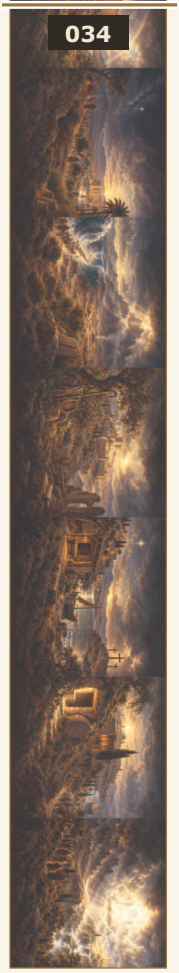
Family Sins



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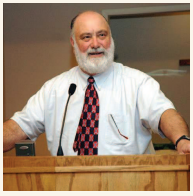
Honour thy father and thy mother.

EXODUS 20:12, EXCERPT

The choices made within a household can reach beyond a single generation. John Weaver considers honor, obedience, the guarding of the senses, and the influence of family conduct. These messages bring biblical accounts into the practical work of examining habits, accepting responsibility, and cultivating a home responsive to God's instruction.

“We have to learn that we cannot dabble with sin and escape.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Family Sins

Part One of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 34:1-17 (KJV)

Introduction: The Reality of Family Sins

I'm not preaching the normal message today. Open your Bibles to Genesis 34. I'm preaching what the Lord gave me. I want us to read as far as I can, because I'm going to begin a message today, which I have entitled "Family Sins." I will actually finish the message next Sunday, but I think the subject is vitally important. Begin there with verse one.

And Dinah, the daughter of Leah, which she bare to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father, Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his cattle in the field, and Jacob held his peace until

> they were come. And Hamor, the father of Shechem, went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it. And the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter, which thing ought not to be done. And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter.
>
> I pray you give her to him to wife, and make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us.
>
> But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance and

every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field. And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

I can imagine the surprise in each one's mind as I announce the title of this message, "Family Sins." The title sounds almost like a TV drama or soap opera series. Unhappily, we do not need to turn to Hollywood for direction in this message. We have been given ample material in the Bible. If we were to examine our personal lives and our family lives, I'm sure that we could find an additional wealth of material on the subject.

Individual Responsibility vs. Corporate Influence

You have been taught and have understood, I hope, biblically and correctly, that each man, each individual, is responsible for his own sin. The Bible says in the book of Ezekiel 18 and verse 20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Notice that every man shall die for his own sin. The father shall not die for the son, and the son shall not die for the father. Each one is responsible and accountable. When you get to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 24 and verse 16, God says it like this: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Each of us should understand that we are answerable and accountable for our own sins. Our sins are our own, and we must face the consequences for our attitudes and our actions.

However, there is another principle in Scripture. Hold Genesis 34, but look in your Bibles to the book of Romans, chapter 14 and verse 7. Watch carefully. The Bible simply says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." It is true that we are each responsible for our own sins, but here is another verse that says no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself.

Do you realize there are such things as learned behavior patterns? There are such things as learned sins. In fact, many children learn their sins from their parents. Greediness, selfishness, anger, rebellion, lustfulness, and even idolatry can be learned. Scripture gives verses that demonstrate this. In 2 Chronicles 30 and verse 8, God says, "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you."

“Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were.” In other words, do not imitate them, emulate them, or take their sins for your sins. Then, in Zechariah chapter 1 and verse 4, he said it like this: “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.”

What did God say to these children? Do not be like your fathers. Do not copy their sins or follow them in their wickedness and rebellion. But God said they would not listen. They would not hearken. Stephen, the first martyr, in Acts chapter 7 and verse 51, when speaking to the people, said, “Ye stiffnecked and

uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

I hope you understand that what Stephen and Zechariah are saying is that these children learned their sins from their parents. Sins are not only oftentimes based upon our own lusts, but they are oftentimes learned behavior patterns. It should be an eye-opening concept to most parents to understand that, in all probability, your children will turn out to be a carbon copy of you. Stop and think about that. They will embrace our attitudes, our actions, and our conduct. Sometimes they will go beyond us in our sin and rebellion.

For instance, in Judges chapter 2 and verse 19, concerning the children of Israel, the Bible says, "And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." Notice what he said: they corrupted themselves more than their fathers. Their rebellion and wickedness exceeded what they learned from their parents.

It is not always the case, but usually and generally so, that if children are taught biblically and given a godly example, they will turn out to be responsible, godly children. I said generally and usually because I do not want to presume upon the grace of God. It is true, based upon the Scripture, that God normally and usually sets His elect in families.

The Sin of Jacob

That's why the Bible says in Proverbs 22 and verse 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." However, you and I have known absolutely corrupt and wicked families in which, all of a sudden, there is a godly individual. Read the Bible. You will find many times that a wicked, ungodly father produced a godly son, especially in the kingship line. Read about Hezekiah. Hezekiah was a good, godly king, but his father was wicked. His son turned out wicked, and his wicked son's son turned out godly.

The point is that, as a general rule, God normally places His elect in families. As a general rule, if we train up children in the way they should go, live a godly example before them, and teach them godly ways, generally they turn out to be godly individuals.

Now I just read to you Genesis chapter 34. The question we have to ask is, What happened in Dinah's case? Jacob is known as the father of Israel; in fact, his name was changed to Israel. He produced twelve sons, the twelve tribes. So what happened in Dinah's case? The answer is what usually happens today, what has happened in times past and continues to happen down through the ages: our sin, or our sins, always affect others. Not only do our sins affect others, but sin will beget sin.

The Sin of Jacob: Disobedience in Location

Before you argue that what happened to Dinah was not Dinah's fault, consider all the facts. Let us consider first the sin of Jacob, secondly the sin of Dinah, and then some more family sins. Look in your Bibles at Genesis chapter 28. We know that Jacob is in Shechem. Here is the question: What in the world was Jacob doing in Shechem?

Isaac and Rebekah had sent Jacob to Paddan-aram, which is Syria, to get a wife for himself. Genesis 28:5 says, “And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.” There he served Laban fourteen years for Rachel and Leah, and then another period of time for all the sheep that he got.

Now, on his way back, Jacob journeyed to Succoth. Genesis 33:17 says, “And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.” But he did not stay in Succoth. He came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and pitched his tent before the city.

"And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel." What in the world was Jacob doing in Shechem?

Was there anything wrong with living in Shechem? Undoubtedly, there could not be anything wrong with living in Shechem if that was where the Lord wanted Jacob to live. Why did Jacob stop in Shechem and buy a parcel of land?

Laban's countenance had changed against Jacob because he saw that God was giving him all of his cattle. The Bible says, "And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock. And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me."

Jacob said that God had called him to leave, but notice what God told him: he was to return to the land of his fathers and to his kindred. His kindred did not live in Shechem. Jacob understood this, for he prayed, "And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee."

Twice Jacob had been told, and understood, that he was to return to his country and his kindred. You know the story. As Jacob came back into the land, Esau heard about it and came to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was afraid. He divided his family into companies and sent presents to Esau to try to pacify him. Esau came, and he and Jacob embraced. Jacob encouraged him to keep the gifts and presents he had sent.

Esau says, “I have plenty.” He is asking Jacob to come with him to Mount Seir. Jacob answers in Genesis 33:14, "Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir."

But wait a minute. God had told Jacob to return to Canaan and to his kindred. If you look in Genesis 36, verses 8 and 9, notice this: "Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom." These are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: these are the names of Esau's sons. Esau lived in Mount Seir. Esau is

Edom. Edom was not Jacob's country. Esau may have been his kin, but it was not his country.

What did God tell Jacob to do? He told him to go to his country and to his kindred. Where did his kindred live? His father was still alive, and his father lived in Hebron. Genesis 35:27 says, "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."

This was later, after Shechem, after his time in Shechem in Genesis 34. Why in the world did Jacob stop in Shechem, when his elderly father was in Hebron and evidently dying? He had not seen him in about twenty years. Why would he stop in Shechem? Remember when Jacob left his parents to go to Paddan-aram to seek a wife. On his way, after leaving Isaac and Rebekah, he came to a place where he went to sleep, and God revealed Himself to Jacob.

In Genesis 28:16, Jacob was leaving his family and his country and going into Paddan-aram. He was sleeping not far from where his parents lived. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place!"

“This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Jacob rose early, took the stone he had used for pillows, set it up as a pillar, poured oil upon it, and called the place Bethel, though the city had formerly been called Luz. Jacob vowed, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God.” He declared that the stone would be God's house and promised to give God a tenth of all he received.

God had particularly and peculiarly revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel. Jacob said, “This is the house of God.” What did God tell Jacob? He said, “Arise, go back to your country and to your kindred.”

The incident with Dinah, and the incident with Simeon and Levi, occurred in Genesis 34. Now look at Genesis 35:1: “And God said

unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Jacob was in Shechem. After the incident with Dinah and with Simeon and Levi, God told him to go back to Bethel, where He had revealed Himself—the house of God.

Had Jacob obeyed God initially and returned to his country and kindred, Hebron was only thirty miles from Bethel. What in the world was Jacob doing in Shechem? Why did he not go to his country and kindred? Had he gone there at first, the incident in Genesis 34 would never have happened.

Go back to Genesis 33:19. Remember that God had told Jacob to return to his country and kindred. When he reached Shechem, "he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money."

Let me ask you a question. Since God had told Jacob to go back to his country and to his kindred, wanting him back around Hebron and Bethel, why did Jacob buy a parcel of ground in Shechem? Why do you buy land when you are traveling? We just came back from Indiana. I did not stop on the way up or on the way back and buy a parcel of ground. I have not lost anything in Indiana or any of the other states I passed through.

The point I am trying to make is this: Did Jacob do like Lot? You remember, Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. Did Jacob just lift up his eyes and say, "Man, look at the pasture here. I have cattle. I have sheep. This is a wonderful place to raise cattle and sheep"? Sodom and Gomorrah was a wonderful place to raise cattle and sheep too. It was not fit for children or families, but it was a wonderful place for cows. Is that what Jacob did? Or maybe Jacob said, "I am just tired. I have wrestled with God. I faced my brother Esau. I am just going to give in and give up and give out and rest a while." I do not know. But he bought a piece of land, and God had told him, "Return to your country and to your kindred." Shechem was truly in the country, but it was not anywhere near his kindred.

Now watch something else he did. In Genesis 33 and verse 20, when he got to Shechem, the Bible says he erected there an altar and called it El-elohe-Israel. Let me tell you something about building an altar unto God. I do not care if you follow it through Abraham, Isaac, or anyone else: altars were only built to God where God had peculiarly and particularly manifested Himself. God had never manifested Himself to Jacob in Shechem. He had manifested Himself in Bethel, when Jacob anointed that pillar with oil and said, “This is none other than the house of God.” If God did not manifest Himself to Jacob in Shechem, why did Jacob build an altar there? Jacob simply took it upon himself to erect an altar. An altar is meaningless if you are out of the will of God. What good is it to try to worship God if you are in rebellion to God?

The Sin of Dinah

Our Lord said it like this: if you come to the altar to worship God, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave your gift at the altar, go and be reconciled to your brother, and then come back and offer your gift. What good would it do to offer a gift when you are harboring hatred, malice, ill will, and unforgiving attitudes in your heart? It is worthless.

You know what Jacob was doing? Jacob was doing what so many people do. He was erecting a front and a facade. He was pretending that he was really right with God and really wanted to do that which was right, while at the same time he was living in rebellion to God's plain command. God had told him, “Return to your country and your kindred,” and Jacob had refused to do that.

Had Jacob obeyed God, Dinah would never have been in Shechem. If Dinah had never been in Shechem, then Shechem, the son of Hamor, would never have defiled her. Our sins affect every member of our family. Our sins affect our church and other people. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. We cannot harbor even secret sins and not expect them ultimately to influence our children.

Jacob's sin is connected to Dinah's sin. It is true that Dinah is responsible for her sins and Jacob is responsible for his sins, but the

sins are connected. They are family sins. The sin of one affects the lives of others.

The Sin of Dinah: Curiosity and Disregard for Authority

Consider, secondly, the sin of Dinah. Genesis 34:1 says, “And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.” The word Dinah is the feminine of Dan, which actually means judged or avenged. Note how casually and apparently innocently her actions are stated: “And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.”

What could possibly be wrong for a young girl to go out and visit other girls? What could possibly be wrong with visiting the daughters of the land?

First, Dinah was at this time between the ages of 13 and 15. That was a marriageable age back at that particular time. But here is a young girl between 13 and 15, and she goes out to visit the daughters of the land. Secondly, the daughters of the land that she went out to see and visit were Canaanites. The Canaanites in the Bible were some of the most wicked and vile people that ever lived.

When you look at Genesis 34 verse 1, "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land."

The word "see" in the Hebrew actually means to see, to perceive, to comprehend, to gaze, and to regard. In other words, there was something about the daughters of the land that attracted Dinah. Basically, she went out to see the manners and the customs and the fashions of the women, and according to the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the word actually means she went out to learn the fashions of the land.

Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that there was a festival going on, and Dinah knew there would be plenty of young women there, giving her an opportunity to see how they lived, dressed, and conducted themselves. Other commentators suggest that Shechem had previously seen Dinah and had put on the festival to draw her

away from her parents. Whether that is true, I do not know. Regardless of how it came about, in all probability Dinah left home without her parents' permission and certainly without their protection and authority.

You and I have heard the expression, "curiosity killed the cat." Curiosity may not only kill cats; it will get us all into trouble, especially when we are curious about things God has forbidden. When God forbids something, we do not need to be curious about or interested in it. I have no desire to know how tarot cards work or how fortune-tellers cook up their lies. I do not want to know. God has forbidden that. When God forbids anything, you and I should never be curious about it. God had certainly forbidden young women to go out without their parents' permission and protection.

John Calvin comments on this section: "Dinah is ravished because, having left her father's house, she wandered about more freely than was proper. She ought to remain quietly at home, as both the apostle teaches and nature itself dictates; for to girls the virtue is suitable which the proverb applies to women, that they should be keepers of the house. Therefore fathers of families are taught to keep their daughters under strict discipline, if they desire to preserve them free of all dishonor."

"For if a vain curiosity was so heavily punished in the daughter of holy Jacob, not less danger hangs over weak virgins at this day, if they go too boldly and eagerly into public assemblies, and excite the passions of youth toward themselves. For it is not to be doubted that Moses in part cast the blame of the offense upon Dinah herself, when he says she went out to see the daughters of the land; whereas she ought to have remained under a mother's eyes in the tent."

In other words, Calvin is saying that her place was at home, not wandering around without parental permission and protection. Now let us cover some lessons we need to learn from Dinah's sin.

Look at verse one again. Notice how apparently innocently this is stated: “And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.” First, we need to be concerned about what we see and hear. The eyes and the ears are direct channels to the soul. When we behold, or even desire to

behold, that which is forbidden, we are setting ourselves up for a horrible fall.

Guarding the Eyes and Ears

In 2 Peter 2, verses 7 and 8, the Bible says that God "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." How did Lot vex himself with the filthy conduct of the wicked? "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." If the Bible had not told me that Lot was a righteous man, I would have said that Lot was as lost as a hound dog. But the Bible says that he vexed his righteous soul in seeing and hearing. Remember that the eyes and the ears are the channels to the soul.

It is true that television has become an absolute plague in our homes today most of the time. If I know in advance that a program involves sodomy or adultery, I refuse to watch it. If I see a movie that sounds good and look at what it is about, and it talks about women having affairs and men having affairs, I am not watching it. I do not want to see it, think about it, or hear it.

Lot dwelt with the wicked and vexed his righteous soul every day—in seeing and hearing. There are certain things we ought not to be seeing, and we ought not to be hearing.

Our Lord said in Matthew chapter 6, verses 22 and 23: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" We should have an eye that is single.

We are not going to watch, look at, or listen to that which is contrary to His Word and His truth. We need to learn to pray like David: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." Do you realize what the New Testament tells us in Colossians 3:2? We are commanded to set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth. After we set our affection on things above and refuse to behold vanity, we need the determination David had: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."

David said, “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes. I hate the work of them that turn aside,” those who turn aside from God and God's law. “I hate that. I will not have it.” We have to learn that we cannot dabble with sin and escape. Our eyes and ears have to be guarded equally as our tongues are guarded. As we guard our eyes, ears, and tongues, we basically guard our minds. We need to remember this principle of Scripture: when God forbids any sin, He also forbids any and every action that would lead up to that sin.

The Role of Parents and Children

When Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land, it was not just a casual glimpse. Had Dinah not wanted to see the daughters of the land, it never would have happened. Secondly, Dinah did not properly regard or understand the role of her parents. God did not give parents to hinder their children. God gave parents to help their children—to lead, guide, direct, teach, educate, provide, and protect. And I know when you get to be about eighteen, you think your parents are the dumbest people in the entire world.

When you are young, it may seem that your parents are only trying to keep you from having fun. But when you reach thirty or forty, you begin to think, “My parents weren’t so dumb after all. They knew exactly what they were talking about.” When Dinah undertook to be her own authority—“I’ll do what I want to do”—she sinned and got herself into trouble.

Scripture is very explicit concerning the role of children. If you are twenty-five years of age, still at home, and still under your parents’ authority, God still says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” How few children understand these principles, and fewer yet obey them. They disobey to their own detriment.

Why did God give parents to children? There are three reasons. God gave parents so that they could be, to their children, a prophet, a priest, and a king. As a prophet, they are to declare unto their children the word of God. As a priest, they are to make intercession,

praying for their children. As a king, they are to rule over their children.

When a child disregards the authority of the father and mother, he is at the same time disregarding the authority of God. It is God who placed parents in the role of prophet, priest, and king. When children deliberately and maliciously depart from God's standard and ordained plan, they bring destruction and heartache upon themselves. That is exactly what happened to Dinah: she disregarded her parents' authority and fell into heartache and trouble.

The hardest thing a child should ever face is leaving home and leaving his parents. Grown children who leave home must know that there is a proper biblical way to do it. If you try to leave apart from God's orderly way, you will end up in trouble. It is good for children to love home and their parents. It is the parents' wisdom to make that home and themselves lovable, so that the children rejoice in their duty to their parents and to their home.

Children Who Dishonor Their Parents

In one sense, the sin I am talking about could be on either party, the children or the parents. If a father refuses to rule his home in love, it is his sin. If the children refuse to submit to a loving and godly father and mother, it is their sin. That is why the shoe could be on either foot.

Things never go well when the authority of a parent runs low in a family. Scripture admonishes us, "Let every man bear rule in his own house, and have his children in subjection with all gravity." So what was Dinah saying? She was curious about that which God had forbidden, and evidently had no regard for her parents' authority and protection.

Dishonoring Parents Brings Shame

Thirdly, it is a sin as well as a shame when children dishonor their parents. There are many ways to dishonor your parents, from the general to the specific. Proverbs 17:2 says, "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the

inheritance among the brethren." In other words, the son is such a disgrace that the parents elevate the servant above him.

Interestingly, the word shame here would include any and every form of shame, and any and every form of shame is condemned. The Hebrew word for shame could also be translated as confounded or disappointed. Thus, the verse could say, "A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth disappointment"—one that does not amount to anything.

Shame may be either general or specific. Proverbs 19:26 says, "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach." Proverbs 17:2 is very general; here we are getting more specific. "He that wasteth his father" describes a spendthrift, someone who tears up property or maliciously destroys it. He has no concern for his father, his father's work, or his father's savings. "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother" is a son who has no respect for his mother.

He is only willing to harm her and hurt her; he is willing to chase her down to do it. You and I could sit here all day and talk about children who are drunkards, dopeheads, gamblers, and whoremongers. They have destroyed their families, wasted their father's earnings, and shown no respect for him. God says, here is a shame. I want to point something out. Do you realize that for a child to bring shame and dishonor upon a family, he does not have to be a drunkard, whoremonger, or dopehead?

Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 10:5: "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." What is a wise son? Someone who has learned a biblical work ethic. What is a son that causeth shame? Someone who is lazy, a sluggard; he is worthless, or, as we say in South Georgia, he would not hit a lick at a snake. The Hebrews had a saying: "He that does not teach his son the law and a trade, teaches him to be a crook and a thief." That is exactly what this word is saying. A son or child who is a pure sluggard brings dishonor and shame upon his family. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 29:15. Earlier, I told you that the sin could be on the parent or the child. The shoe could be on either foot. But Proverbs 29:15 says this.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." What's a child left to himself? It's one who's undisciplined, uninstructed, and left to his own devices. You want to know how to turn out a sorry child? Just let him do what he wants to do. That's the way to do it. Let him have his way. You can turn one out. But the Bible says the rod and reproof give wisdom.

We're talking about family sins. Now, I'm going to be honest with you. I don't know if Dinah was raped or seduced. She may have been consenting. Who knows? I'm simply pointing out the fact that Dinah was responsible for her own sin. If she was seduced, if she gave in, that was her sin. But she would never have been put in that place had Jacob gone where God had told him to go. And she would never have been put in that place had she respected the authority of her parents.

The Bible is talking about the rod and reproof giving wisdom. I understand that fathers oftentimes are far more willing to correct a son, far more ready to correct their son, than they are a daughter. And I know that daughters have special places in their fathers' hearts. I understand that the sin could be the child's, or the sin could be the parents'. Family sins work both ways. Was Jacob wrong? Yes. Was Dinah wrong? Yes. Jacob sinned and Dinah sinned. But I want you to understand that Jacob's sin affected Dinah and his family.

Conclusion: The Interconnectedness of Sin and Obedience

And you're going to find out next week that Dinah's sin affected her brothers and her family as well. No one lives to himself and no one dies to himself. We have to consider that whatever we do reflects upon our family and affects our family; it reflects upon our church and affects our church; it even affects our state and our nation. I can show you the Scripture on that. We do not live to ourselves, nor do we die to ourselves.

Would you like to know what eventually happened to Dinah? Did she marry later on? Did she have children? Was there a happy ending? No one knows the answers to those questions. But when Jacob went down into Egypt, Genesis 46:15 says, "These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were

thirty and three." Dinah did go into Egypt with Jacob. Was she married? I do not know. Did she ever have children? I do not know. This is the last we read of Dinah. She went into Egypt, and that is all. What a sad ending. When we live disobedient, disrespectful, and dishonorable lives, our lives have no meaning and are basically not worth mentioning.

It was wrong and wicked for Dinah to go without her parents' permission, and it was certainly wrong and wicked for her to remove herself from under her father's protection. When young men and young women assume that they may do as they please, go where they please, and go whenever they please, they dishonor God and dishonor and disrespect their parents. Children, even grown children, have to learn that God has an orderly way of leaving home, marrying, and starting a new home. One does not end up in the right place unless he starts off on the right road.

Parents, if we want our children to be right and do right, it is important that we be right and do right. How can we expect our children to turn out right if we are unwilling to be their instructors and examples? We cannot take the attitude, "Do as I say, not do as I do." We have to lead them and expect them to do as we do. If we want them to turn out obedient and godly, we must be obedient and godly.

The third application is this: if we want our lives to count, we have to learn to be obedient to God and His Word. Otherwise, we, like Dinah, will drift into obscurity.

You say, “My sins are my own.” Yes, they are. But what you do affects your family—your brothers, your sisters, your father, your mother, your children—and a multitude of others you may not even know. For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

Let us pray. Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us, speak to our hearts, teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us see these two truths: that we are answerable, accountable, and responsible for our own sins, but our sins also affect others. Make us holy, obedient, and godly. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Family Sins

Part Two of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 34:1-16 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

Genesis 34, verse 1:

"And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his cattle in the field, and Jacob held his peace until they were come. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in

Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 34:16-30 (KJV)

daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

> And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites:

"And I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?"

One of the greatest proofs that the Bible is indeed the Word of God is that it does not endeavor to cover up the imperfections, the faults, the failures, and sins even of godly individuals. However great and however godly men are, or however great and godly some families are, they are still human, and therefore they are still sinners.

Here is a clear biblical statement: There are no perfect individuals, and there are no perfect families. The very fact that there are no perfect individuals and the very fact that there are no perfect families should not hinder us from desiring and following after perfection. Although we have to understand that perfection is unattainable in this life, we should still endeavor to be as holy, as godly, and as obedient as we can be by the grace of God.

The apostle Paul said it like this in the book of Philippians, chapter 3 and verse 12: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Paul said, "I'm not perfect. I haven't attained." But that did not hinder him from following after. In other words, Paul's attitude was this: I may not be

able to be perfect in this life, but I want to be as holy and as godly as I can be by the grace of God. Certainly, that should be our attitude. We understand that we cannot be perfect, and we cannot have a perfect family, but we should still endeavor to be as holy and as godly and as obedient as we could be by the grace of God.

Two Biblical Principles: Individual Accountability and Shared Influence

We have been correctly and biblically taught that each individual is answerable and accountable for his own sins. Each individual is answerable and accountable for his own sins.

God said in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Also, in Deuteronomy 24:16, God said, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

Here is a clear principle from Scripture: Each one of us is answerable and accountable for our sins. However, there is another principle that stands equally alongside it. Romans 14:7 says, "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

In other words, what we are and what we do always affects others. We are not living in a vacuum. We do not live by ourselves, nor do we die by ourselves. There are many shared family sins. These shared family sins are usually learned behavior patterns, such as greediness, selfishness, anger, lustfulness, rebellion, and even idolatry. In fact, these sins can be so much a family sharing that God warned, in 2 Chronicles 30:8, "Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary." In other words, God told the children, "Don't be like your fathers."

He said the same thing in Zechariah: "Be not as your fathers." There are indeed such things as shared family sins. Many have learned their sins, attitudes, and dispositions from their parents. Consequently, they also bring upon themselves the judgment of God.

In Exodus 20:5, God says, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them"—speaking of false gods—"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Why does God visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and the children's children, and the children's children's children? The answer is very simple: because the children continue in the same sins of the fathers. It is learned behavior patterns; it is shared family sins.

Last week, I took the whole time to show you the sins of Jacob and the sins of Dinah. I demonstrated from Scripture where God had told Jacob to arise and go back to his country and to his kindred. Jacob did not return to his kindred. He returned to his country, stopped at Succoth, according to Genesis chapter 33 and verse 17, and then, when you get down to verse 18, went to Shechem and dwelt there in the land. God told him to return not just to his country, but also to his kindred. Why in the world would you stop and buy property when you are not where God told you to be? Scripture after Scripture shows how Jacob basically disobeyed God. He was not where he should have been.

Then we considered Dinah's sin. When Dinah went out to see the daughters of the land, remember that the daughters of the land were Hivites and Canaanites. They were wicked, corrupt, and depraved. Dinah was about thirteen to fifteen years of age when this happened. She was either raped or seduced; I do not know which. The point being, she got herself in problems. Have you ever stopped to think about this? Had Jacob been where he was supposed to have been, Dinah never would have gotten into the trouble that she had gotten in.

The Sins of Simeon and Levi

Of course, I pointed to her sins. She defied her parents' authority. She probably left without their permission. She certainly was without their protection, because this came upon her. The point I tried to make last week is this: sins are usually interconnected. Sin does not exist by itself. Sin begets sin, and usually, when there is sin

in one member of the family, there is sin in other members of the family as well. I simply pointed out how the sins of Jacob and the sins of Dinah are interconnected.

Now we come to the third point. We want to consider the sins of Simeon and Levi. Simeon and Levi were the brothers of Dinah. They were the sons of Jacob. All the sins that we have talked about—the sins of Jacob, the sins of Dinah, the sins of Simeon and Levi, and, as I will show you later, the sins of the whole family—are all connected. The principle that I want you to learn is this: sin does not exist by itself. Sin always begets other sins. One sin can set in motion a whole series of sins, which will ultimately result in great harm.

It was Jacob's sin that ultimately set in motion all of the sins we read about in Genesis chapter 34. Jacob was in the wrong place, and Dinah was in the wrong place. Of course, something happened that should not have happened.

Without defending Shechem's actions by any stretch of the imagination, we must admit from Scripture that at least Shechem endeavored to make things right. He should not have taken Dinah. That is a fact. He should not have raped or seduced her, whichever the case may have been. I do not know. His sin cannot be overlooked or excused by any stretch of the imagination. He was guilty.

But remember something else: he was a prince. His father was undoubtedly the king over this tribe or group of people, however large it may have been. Many in that day, like politicians in our day, believed they had a free hand and could do whatever they wanted. Who was going to bring charges against a prince? Who was going to accuse the second in command in a country?

Whatever Shechem did—whether he raped her or seduced her—I do not know. Whatever he did was wrong, but at least he tried to make things right. Look in your Bibles at verse 19. Concerning Shechem, the Bible says in Genesis 34:19, “And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.”

In other words, he was now willing to marry Dinah. He was not only willing to marry Dinah; he was willing to pay the dowry

according to the custom of the land. Genesis 34:3 says, “And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem said unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.”

Hamor said, “The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.” Shechem said to her father and her brethren, “Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.” Then he added, “Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.”

Shechem was not only willing to marry her; he was also willing to pay the dowry—more than the normal custom of a dowry.

Now let me show you how clear biblical law is. Deuteronomy 22:28 says, “If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.” God's law governs a situation like this.

Now notice what God says. If this happens and the man lies with a young woman, he is to marry her, pay the dowry, and never, under any circumstances, put her away. In other words, there can never be a divorce. According to Deuteronomy chapter 22, the man would be obligated to marry the woman, obligated to stay with her, and unable to divorce her.

There was only one way out by which he would not be obligated to marry the young woman. You say, what way is that? In Exodus chapter 22, verse 16, the Bible says, "And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed"—that is, she is not married or engaged—"if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife." Here is marriage: he must marry her. But here is the only way he can get out of marrying her. Verse 17 says, "If

her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins."

The father still has the final say as to whom his daughter marries or does not marry. He also has the final say when she marries. If the father utterly refuses to give her unto him, the man must pay the dowry according to virgins. Do you know how much a dowry was in Bible times? It was normally two to three years' wages.

Let me break it down. Suppose that in this community the annual wage is 50,000 Federal Reserve notes. If the man did not marry the girl because the father utterly refused to give her unto him, he would owe the young lady $150,000. That dowry was to be hers in case something happened to her husband. It would give her something to live on until she remarried.

Now look at Genesis 34 and verse 12. Stop and think about this: the dowry was normally two to three years' worth of wages. Here is what Shechem said to Jacob and his sons: "Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife." Isn't that interesting? He said, "I don't care if you ask me five years' wages or ten years' wages, I'll pay it."

Shechem wanted to marry the young woman. So, in this sense, at least Shechem was trying to make amends and do what was right. That is not excusing his sin. That is not overlooking his sin. But at least he said, “I’m willing to marry her, and I’m willing certainly to give the dowry.”

Incidentally, most people do not know this, but life insurance—though it has become really corrupt in this day and time, especially the life insurance companies—was begun in this country by preachers. Preachers believed in a biblical dowry, and some of them did not have the money up front. So this concept of life insurance came in: If I die, she’ll be taken care of. In other words, life insurance literally took the place of the dowry. It gives the woman something to live on. Interestingly enough, some of the leading companies, like Prudential, originally had a name something like this: the Prudential Widows and Orphans Fund. Isn’t that amazing? Everything has totally gotten out of hand, but preachers began the insurance company because they believed in the dowry.

Now, notice: he is willing to pay the dowry. Nevertheless, look, if you would, please, in verse 7. Of course, Jacob has heard what has happened, and the sons have heard what has happened. Verse 7 says, "And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter. Which thing ought not to be done."

The Bible tells us these brothers were grieved and very, very wroth. Why? Because he had wrought folly in Israel. The word "folly" refers to that which is senseless, vile, immoral, sinful, and dishonorable. In other words, he had wrought something that was absolutely immoral and sinful.

I am absolutely sure that these brothers, as well as Jacob, were upset not only because of what Shechem had done, but also because of whom he was. Shechem was a Hivite. What does that mean? The Hivites were descendants of Canaan, who was the son of Ham, who was the son of Noah. You remember, Noah cursed Canaan, the son of Ham. The Hivites were descendants from Canaan. Shechem was not only a Hivite; he was also a Canaanite. These were the people God ordered to be destroyed when He brought Israel out of Egypt. So I can assure you they were upset not only with what Shechem had done, but with whom he was as well.

They understood that they were not to intermarry with the Canaanites or mix the professors of faith with the profane. Such intermarriage was forbidden not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament as well. In Exodus 34:15–16, God specifically says not to intermarry with these people. In Deuteronomy 7:1–6, He says not only not to intermarry, but not even to make any kind of covenant with them. That is why, in 2 Corinthians 6:14–20, the Apostle Paul said, "What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" None. Therefore he said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

The point is this: Shechem was a profane, wicked Hivite and Canaanite. At least he was trying to do that which was honorable in the sense that he was trying to make amends. He was willing to marry Dinah, although it was not necessarily right for him to do so,

and he was willing to give the dowry. Shechem may have been somewhat honorable, but his father Hamor was not necessarily so. Verse 19 says that the young man “deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob’s daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.”

How, then, can we say that the father was not honorable? Look at verse 20: “And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.”

Then Hamor says, “Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.” All that went out of the gate of his city hearkened unto Hamor and Shechem, and every male was circumcised. What was Hamor saying? Let us integrate and confiscate. Let us intermarry, and shall not everything they have become ours? Shechem may have been interested in Dinah, but Hamor was interested in what Jacob and his sons had. He wanted that.

I believe that Hamor was probably acting deceitfully toward Jacob and his sons. At the same time, the sons of Jacob were acting deceitfully toward him. When you look back in Genesis 34:7, it says, "And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth." The word "wrath" literally means to burn with anger. They were very, very angry.

Hamor, although he may have been acting deceitfully and may have wanted what Jacob and his sons had, suggested a treaty, or a coalition based upon a working agreement between his people and Jacob's family. That is why he said, "These men are peaceable with us. Let them dwell in the land. Let them trade in the land." He continued, "Let them give us their daughters. Let us give them our daughters. We're such sharp traders that eventually everything they're going to have is going to be ours anyhow. We'll get it." What

he was suggesting, then, was a coalition based upon a trade agreement.

Notice something that Jacob did. In one sense, it was wise; in another sense, it may have contained a little foolishness. Genesis 34:5 says, "And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come." Whose daughter was Dinah? Jacob's. Who had the responsibility and authority to settle this issue? Jacob. But he waited on his sons.

When the sons came in, they told Shechem and Hamor, in effect, "You want us to get together on a trade agreement, but we cannot do that. We have to get together religiously. If there is an agreement worked out between us, you have to consent to become like we are. We're circumcised. It's based upon our religion. It's the seal of our covenant."

In other words, no matter how much money they had or what they were willing to give, unless they became like Jacob's family, the two groups could not work or prosper together. But Simeon and Levi had other plans. Their plans were not trading or prospering. They said, "This is the only way it's going to work." When Hamor and Shechem heard that, it seemed like a simple act, requiring no money.

They said, “We’ll all be circumcised. All the men will be circumcised.” They could do this religiously because the Canaanites were idolaters; the Canaanites cared little, so long as it prospered them. On the third day, after the men had been circumcised and were so sore they could barely move, Simeon and Levi took their swords, entered the village, and slew every man. Then they took Dinah, their sister, out.

They then captured all the wives and children. They took all the sheep, cattle, riches, and everything that belonged to Shechem, Hamor, and all those Hivites.

Matthew Henry wrote concerning Simeon and Levi: "The intention was malicious, as appears by the sequel of the story. All they aimed at was to prepare them for the day of slaughter. Note, bloody designs have often been covered and carried on with a pretence of religion. Thus they have been accomplished most

plausibly and most securely. But this dissembled piety or this hypocritical piety is doubtless double iniquity. Religion is never more injured nor are God's sacraments more profaned than when they are thus used for a cloak of maliciousness. Nay, if Jacob's sons had not had this bloody design, I do not see how they could justify their offering the sacred sign of circumcision, the seal of God's covenant, to these devoted Canaanites who had no part or lot in the matter. Those who have no right to the seal have no right to the promise. It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. But Jacob's sons valued not this while they could make it serve their turn or their purpose."

They had no right to offer the seal of circumcision to these Canaanites, because the Canaanites had no part of the promise. Having no part of the promise, and no part of the covenant, they had no right to the seal.

Simeon and Levi murdered an entire group of men for the sin of one man. If Shechem had raped Dinah, he deserved the death penalty. But if he deserved death, it was Shechem and Shechem alone who was to die. Do you not remember Ezekiel 18 and verse 20? God said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." You shall not visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, nor the iniquity of the sons upon the father. Everyone who sins shall die. If Shechem deserved to die, it was Shechem alone. The conduct of Simeon and Levi was wicked, atrocious, vile, hateful, and extremely stupid. How can I say it was extremely stupid?

Angry people do not think; angry people only strike out. My father, when he was a young man, used to box professionally. I never will forget one thing he told me. He said, "Son, if you're ever in a fight and you really want to whip the man, make him angry." And that's right. Because when you get angry, you've lost it. You don't think; you strike out. When you stop thinking and protecting yourself, that's when you get hurt.

These boys were extremely wicked and extremely angry. Notice Genesis 34:30. Here's why they were stupid. Jacob said, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number,

they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house." Simeon and Levi may have won the battle, but they could not win the war. Jacob was saying, "What in the world are you thinking about? Yes, you whipped that one little village and killed all those men, but there are plenty of other Perizzites and Hivites out here. Now they are going to surround us. We do not have enough men to fight the whole country. You have endangered the entire family."

Jacob's Rebuke and the Consequences of Anger

What saved Jacob? Genesis 35:5 says, "And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." The only thing that saved Jacob and his family was a sovereign act of God. God placed His fear upon those people, so that they did not follow after and destroy Jacob and his sons. Had God not intervened, surely they could have been destroyed.

Look again at Genesis 34:30. Jacob said, "You've acted stupidly, boys. You've put the whole family in danger." Note their only defense in verse 31: "And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" Jacob could have rightly responded, "No, he should not have done so." Their question did not answer the danger they had created, nor did it remove their responsibility for acting in anger without thinking about the consequences.

But what did these other men do whose lives were forfeited because of your unrighteous, wicked anger and rage? Why did they deserve to die? The sins of Levi and Simeon were grievous. Years later, when Jacob was dying, he blessed his sons and said concerning Simeon and Levi: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

"O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Jacob had not forgotten their self-will and anger.

Simeon and Levi were responsible for their actions and accountable for their sins. Jacob said, "My soul is not coming into that sin. My honor is not being united with them. They did things that I would never do and should never have been done. I'm not even going to identify with that." Yet have you ever stopped to think? Had Jacob been where he was supposed to be, Dinah would have been where she was supposed to be. None of this would ever have happened, and Simeon and Levi would never have killed all those people. One sin begets more sins.

Genesis 35:1 says: "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother." Jacob was not where he was supposed to be. God was telling him to get back to Bethel, where He had first appeared to him, and dwell there.

The Sins of the Family as a Whole

The Sins of the Whole Family

Romans 14:7 says, “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” Whatever we do affects other people. We may be answerable and accountable for our sins, but our sins still have an effect upon other people.

Fourthly, consider the sins of the family as a whole. We have looked at the sins of Jacob, the sins of Dinah, and the sins of Levi and Simeon. We singled them out because they were the main actors in this theater of wickedness, yet there was more wickedness than that which has been pointed out.

God used this wicked incident to stir up Jacob and to let him see firsthand what happens when you are out of the will of God. He allowed Jacob to glimpse what happens when people place their will above God’s will and their way above God’s way. God allowed Jacob to see and understand in a real way that when one is not right with God, nothing is right.

Genesis 35:1 says, “And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that

appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother."

Jacob was on the way to Padan-aram to get a wife when God revealed Himself. Genesis 28:16 says, "And Jacob awaked out of my sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Now God said, "Arise, get thee to Bethel."

You remember I pointed this out last week, and it is very important. God had told Jacob to arise, go back to his country, and return to his kindred. Isaac was in Hebron. If Jacob had gone where God initially told him to go, Bethel would have been less than 30 miles from Hebron. Instead, Jacob stopped in Shechem, bought a parcel of land, and built an altar there. Nowhere in the Old Testament was an altar supposed to be built except where God particularly and peculiarly revealed Himself. That is why God said, "Jacob, you get up and go back to where I made a revelation of Myself to you. Go back to Bethel."

The call to return to Bethel was a call to return to the God of Bethel. If he was going to return to the God of Bethel, he must do so in repentance. Listen carefully: he must forsake his sins and his false gods.

It is impossible to serve the one true and living God while holding on to our idols and sins at the same time. Our Lord said in Matthew 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." You cannot serve but one

God. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, said, “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” You have to turn to God from your idols. You cannot hold on to both your idols and God. If you are going to serve God, you have to repent and let go of your idols.

We have seen the sin of Jacob, the sin of Dinah, and the sins of Levi and Simeon. You do not have family sins. Watch this. God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” Then Jacob said to his household, “Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my

“And was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.” Jacob said unto his household, his wives, his sons, his daughters, and his grandchildren, “Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.”

It seems every family member had secret sins and earrings. In the Bible, these earrings were associated with idolatry. They were not simply ornamental, but amulets and charms, usually consecrated to some god or formed under some constellation on which magical powers and images were drawn and worn in honor of a false god.

Is it possible to determine the effect of these false gods and earrings upon Jacob, Dinah, Simeon, and Levi? Who knows? Who can tell what influence or effect they had upon them? I know each of us is responsible and accountable for our sins. But how did these secret sins and false gods influence people? Suffice it to say this: God said in Numbers 32:23, “Be sure your sin will find you out.” They found out Jacob, Dinah, Simeon, and Levi. God told Jacob, “Arise and return to Bethel.” Then Jacob told his household, “Get rid of your false gods, get rid of your superstitions, get rid of your secret sins, wash you, make you clean, and put on new garments.”

That was supposed to indicate a change of heart and mind: they were going to serve God. You cannot serve the one true and living God and hold on to your sins. If you hold on to secret sins, they will destroy you, your family, your friends, your church, your state, and even your nation. What did it take to get Jacob back right with God?

The Need for Divine Intervention

You say, "Brother Weaver, that was a hard price to pay." It was. But what finally woke Jacob up? It was not the rape of Dinah, nor even the murder of all those people. What really woke Jacob up was this. Look in verse 1: "And God said unto Jacob." It took God speaking to Jacob to open his eyes.

It will take nothing less than a word from the sovereign God of heaven and earth to open our eyes and ears. It will take nothing less than the sovereign God of heaven and earth to save our families, and nothing less than His word to bring order out of chaos and confusion in our lives and families. David said it in Psalm 85 and verse 8: "I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly." Like Jacob, we have come to the point that we need to hear God speak—to hear what He says to us in His Word.

Applications for Today

According to Scripture, the father and husband is the head of the home and is responsible for the leadership and direction of the family. You say, "I will buy that. That is very plain in Scripture." Yes, it is. But when the father is wrong, the whole family is wrong. That was true in Jacob's case. He allowed things he should never have allowed. When the father will not be right and do right, how can he expect his wife and children to be right and do right?

There is an awful lot of responsibility with headship and authority. We must learn that our sins affect others, even those in our families. Our sins may be secret; they may not be open. Yet their effect is often communicated through our spirit and attitude, reaching every member of our family.

I never will forget observing a man and feeling a sinking feeling in my stomach. Something in my mind told me, “Something’s not right.” It was true: when his sins were made public, it was exactly as I supposed. I did not yet know his sins, but I knew something was wrong. It had a chilling effect upon me; consequently, I no longer wanted to be around him. It does not matter if your sins are secret. An attitude, disposition, and spirit will be communicated that affects everyone else. No one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

The third application is this: If we want our families right with God and to have God’s blessings, we must repent individually. When every individual in the family repents, the family has repented. That is why Jacob said to his wives, sons, and children, “Up, put away your false gods and your silly superstitions. Wash yourself and be clean. You do it. I’m to do it. You’re to do it.” Family repentance is impossible without everyone repenting.

The fourth application is this: We must be aware of the consequences of unrighteous and uncontrolled anger and rage. There is such a thing as righteous anger, but it always manifests itself in a biblical manner. Unrighteous anger will ultimately destroy not only the angry individual, but others as well. You can see that in Simeon and Levi’s actions.

The fifth application is this: shared sins. Family sins are unbiblical attitudes, dispositions, and conduct learned from our parents, brothers, sisters, and other family members. If we do not stop, repent, and change our lives, we will pass our sins down to our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. As we pass down our sins, we also pass down God’s judgment upon those sins. The only answer is for you and me to obey God, deal with our sins openly, honestly, biblically, and genuinely repent of them, bringing our lives into conformity with the Word of God.

It's interesting that when Jacob got where he was supposed to be, he had the blessings of God upon him. We need to be right smack dab in the middle of the will of God for our lives. Father, we bow to Thee this day and ask You for Your grace and mercy in our lives. We recognize, Lord, that so many times we fail to comprehend the simple fact that, although we are responsible and accountable for our sins, our sins also affect others. Give us the gift of repentance,

obedience, and faith, and help us to live for Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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