

Cleaning Up Hand-Me-Down Messes

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (Rom. 12:2, NLT).

“Actions have consequences.” We know this on a scientific level and on a spiritual level. Many of us have suffered or celebrated as a result of our choices. It’s one thing to take on the task of putting out our self-started fires, but suffering the results of someone else’s mischief, mayhem and misdeeds is a messy other thing altogether, especially if that someone is family.

For two generations, King Josiah had no godly examples in his life. His father and grandfather, Manasseh, were both corrupt kings. 2 Kings 21 details Granddad’s wickedness – raising altars and wooden images to Baal in the house of the Lord, sacrificing his own son in fire and practicing witchcraft. But the Spirit of God planned a different path for Josiah. Instead of following in his family’s idolatrous footsteps, the Lord made King Josiah responsible for cleaning up their messes and turning Judah back to God’s Word (2 Kings 22:8-13).

Have you ever been tempted to excuse your behavior and choices by blaming the cards you were dealt? Do you get stuck on a loop, feeling destined to repeat the same unhealthy, ungodly lifestyle you grew up around? The “sins of the fathers” can become a crutch, a justification, a set-up for failure. Or you can identify the problems, see the consequences as warnings of worse to come and accept that not being responsible for the chaos does not mean you are not accountable for the clean-up.

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