

“For it is by grace you have been saved ...” Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)

THE GRACE CARD

WITNESS THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS
THE GRACE CARD MOVIE . COM

LEAVING A LEGACY

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Let's Watch ...

Blake in the Counselor's Office (Clip 3)



For obvious reasons, Blake blames his father for all the bad that is happening in their home. Through the efforts of Dr. Vines, a Christian counselor, Blake is gradually realizing that he is being eaten up by the same bitterness that possesses Mac. That bitterness is ruling the household. Dr. Vines explains that *someone* must break that cycle of bitterness by throwing out a line of hope to the others, allowing grace to begin to transform this vicious situation within their home and their lives.

Let's Read ...

“You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Deuteronomy 5:8-10

Other Key Scripture: John 20:31; Exodus 20:5-6; Numbers 14:18; Psalm 78:4; 2 Timothy 1:5

Let's Consider ...

My father died on December 19, 2008 but in many ways, he lives on. My dad left a legacy of faith to his family. The verse he lived by was John 20:31: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” My dad's hobby was fishing, but his calling was fishing for men. His life reflected both.

The legacy my father left me is extremely different from the one Mac appears to be leaving his son. Mac has grown bitter at God ... and just about everyone else. He throws blame in every direction and that bitterness is being passed along to Blake. We read in Exodus 20:5-6, Deuteronomy 5:8-10, and Numbers 14:18 that for

the unrepentant, God allows the sins of the father to be visited upon succeeding generations. We see that being played out in Blake's life.

Self-pity is a debilitating dilemma. It causes one to fight and destroy the good relationships of love that are around us. Dr. Vines correctly points out to Blake that "it does not take a man to fight, it takes a man to reach out his hand." She explains that there is greater power in surrendering to God than in struggling with bitterness in our own strength. We were all created in the image of God and to be all that God created us to be, we must invite God into our lives. If we do not, we are subjected to the influences of self-pity, bitterness, rage, and rebellion. These influences destroy the relationships God seeks to bless us with.

We will all leave a legacy. I am grateful that my father left me one filled with blessings.

Let's Discuss ...

When you see a child act rebellious or respond with bitterness, what do you tend to think of their parents? Is that a fair way to assess parents?

Can you name a circumstance in your life where you fought to keep bitterness from ruling you? Were you able to succeed? Why or why not? How important is it to allow the grace of God to help you from becoming bitter?

In Psalm 78:4, we read: "We will not hide these truths from our children. But we will teach the next generation." In what ways have your parents or grandparents specifically shaped you? What are you teaching your children?

Paul gives a good example of leaving a multiple-generation legacy in 2 Timothy 1:5. ("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.") What kind of legacy are you leaving those who are looking to you? What person who has had a substantial impact on your spiritual life will you take the time to thank personally this week?

Grace can take on many forms. In what area of your life can you show more gratitude to God and complain less? In what specific way do you need God's strength and grace so as to take a stand for him? Are there key areas in your life you need to fully surrender to God?

Let's Not Forget ...

Many of us know from personal experience the feeling of overwhelming pressure that piles up when the circumstances of life come crashing in upon us. In those times we have a choice: we can choose to be *bitter* or we can allow those situations to force us to be *better*. If we choose the latter, we realize that we need a source of strength and help beyond ourselves. When we surrender to the awesome power of God, we discover there is actually greater power and greater peace in the "surrendering" than there ever was in the struggling. Through spiritual new birth, the Spirit of God enters our lives and enables us to become what God originally intended for us to become: children of God who reflect the image of our Heavenly father. Talk about a legacy ...

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