

11th Grade Devotional 1



2 Kings 21:19-23:30

Does your family have that "black sheep" that no one wants to talk about? If their name is brought up at a family event, is it accompanied by rolling eyes and tones of disapproval? What if your family had a long list of those characters that went back generations, creating a legacy of evil?

The kings of Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord for decades. Then, an eight-year-old named Josiah replaced his assassinated father as king. In the eighteenth year of his reign, at age twenty-six, his high priest, Hilkiah, found the Book of the Law in the temple. The book had been hidden or lost for so long that no one really knew what it said. When Josiah heard the contents of the Book of the Law, he was so moved that he tore his clothes and enacted reforms to return Judah to a place where the one true God was honored and revered. **2 Kings 22:18-20** records the LORD'S response.

¹⁸Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: ¹⁹Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse[b] and be laid waste and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord.

²⁰Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am coming to bring on this place.'"

Though Josiah's legacy is a long line of evil kings, when confronted with the truth of God's Word, his heart is touched, his mind is changed, and he takes steps that only he can to bring his nation the truth he has learned and attempt to bring about the same change for his kingdom that he has experienced. And although Judah returned to their wickedness upon Josiah's death, he postponed God's judgment for the length of his reign and gave his entire kingdom the opportunity to know God.

Because a young man responded to the Word of God, he was able to break from a legacy of evil and influence a generation for good. Regardless of the bad you may already know about or the surprises you may discover, God's grace is sufficient. He will use every situation to grow you into the person He created you to be if you will respond to His Word in faith and obedience.

Parents:

Share with your student the impact that your parents had on your walk with God either for the good or the bad.



11th Grade Devotional 2



Read Ezekiel 22:30-31

Jack was raised on the wrong side of the tracks. Broken families and broken lives were as common as the broken down shanties where they lay their heads. Early in life his dad chose a bottle full of stupor over his family and while his step-father stayed around, he was a slave to the bottled spirits as well.

Jack was introduced to alcohol at the age of two because some of the adults in his life thought it would be funny to watch a drunken toddler try to walk. He says he gave up alcohol and cigarettes at the age of six because he knew he could not do that while he was at school.

Life was a struggle for him in many ways and learning was on that list. His plight captured the heart of his sixth grade teacher who decided he would learn to read and do his multiplication tables if it killed them both. She grew so fond of him that she kept him in her class for an extra year to be sure she accomplished her goal. She did something else for him that had a greater impact than his two-year education; she introduced him to Jesus.

He still faced struggles and difficulties as he made his way through the rest of his years of schooling, but he held fast to the One who had hold of him and grew to become a fine young man.

As God brought a perfect bride and a family of his own into his life, he never lost sight of the One who had changed his life and given him a purpose for living.

Now in his eighties, Jack is the patriarch of a growing tribe that includes his lovely wife of nearly sixty years, five children, thirteen grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren who all know and experience the glorious benefits of being part of a family where God is honored and his commands are obeyed as a way of life.

God told Ezekiel, *"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one."* God continues to look for those who will stand in the gap and say, "enough is enough, the bondage and destruction stops here. From this point forward I will say as Joshua said, *"for me and my house we will serve the Lord!"*

Each new generation is presented with that challenge. I'm glad that Jack made that decision years ago because, as his son, it changed my life and life of my children and grand-children as well.

Parents:

Share with your student the people that have had an impact on your life spiritually.



11th Grade Devotional 3



"As long as I'm not hurting anyone else, what difference does it make what I do?" Ever heard someone say that when trying to justify their questionable actions? Ever said that yourself?

It is a popular rebuttal when being corrected for inappropriate behavior. However, none of us live in a bubble. The things we do, whether good or bad, affect the lives of others. According to scripture, they can affect our family line for generations. Deuteronomy 7 lists the benefits that will be passed down for those who obey God's commands.

Read Deuteronomy 7:7-15

That's quite a list of blessings and protection that is promised. And not just to the next generation but to "a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments." However, there is a flip side to this principle as well. Look at what Numbers 14:18 has to say.

Numbers 14:18

¹⁸The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.'

We can be dealing with problems that are brought on by ancestors we never even met, yet their sinful choices are still affecting their family line for generations after they are gone.

Now, it is important to acknowledge that the overriding principle of scripture is that each individual is ultimately responsible for their own choices and actions through their relationship with God. However, it is helpful to understand the source of some of our tendencies and desires.

Know your legacy. Understand what you might expect because of your family heritage and do all you can to hand down the blessings of loving and obeying God to the generations to come.

Parents:

Share with your student how family has impacted your life for the good or for the bad. Talk about your hopes for their future as a husband or wife, a mother or father, and other aspects of family. Pray with your student for their future spouse and family.