

## PARENTAL IMPRINTING

**Request:** There seems to be so many dysfunctional marriages / families in our society and churches today, what effect does parenting have upon the children from these marriages?

Psychologists have coined a word to describe one effect dysfunctional parenting can have on children. The word is imprinting.

Psychological imprinting is a form of learning that occurs early in children that determines which type of instinctive behavior is formed in them.

Jacob's family is a classic example of psychological imprinting of dysfunctional parenting. We will examine our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

Jacob	(Gen.37:1)	Intimacy problem	Unhealthy love for wife transferred to Joseph
Joseph	(Gen.37:2)	Intoxicating affections	Unhealthy toxic parental relationship
Jealousy	(Gen.37:3-4)	Insufferable relations	Unhealthy family inter-personal relations

**This lesson will study FIVE aspects of the effect of Parental Imprinting upon children in the family of Jacob.**

### **1. One of the effects of negative parental imprinting is scar-tissue built upon the heart of children.**

When parental imprinting goes against the norm and standard of reasonable conscience or common sense or against the word of God, it produces scar-tissue upon the heart.

Scar-tissue is the build-up of callousness to truth and a hardening of OMCD thinking and behavior. The Greek word for scar-tissue build-up is skleruno: "Today if (3cc) you hear His voice, do not harden (skleruno / p.a.subj) your hearts."

The process of developing scar-tissue on the heart is described in **Heb.3:7-19** (provoked Me, tried Me, go astray in heart, do not know My ways, evil, unbelieving heart, falling away from living God, harden by deceitfulness of sin, sinned, disobedient, unbelief).

We will see the development of scar-tissue from parental imprinting in the children of Jacob.

### **2. Scar-tissue produces two different effects upon the heart. It produces desensitization as well as hypersensitivity.**

A child developing scar-tissue becomes desensitized to the pain of others. His insensitivity might be acted out towards animals and siblings and others in his peer grouping.

If not corrected, his affliction of pain on others can get off the chart. This person could become an abuser of intimate relationships (Gen.37: 4, 11, 18-20, 23-28).

How did Jacob's children deal with it? They brought it home to him (Gen.37:31-36).

**3. This same child grows-up hypersensitive to his pain. His threshold for emotional pain is very small. The least little thing can set him off.**

Thirteen years later we meet Joseph's brothers who have not changed. We see their hypersensitive side of scar-tissue (42:21-23; 50:15-21).

**4. God wants the believer's heart to be free of scar-tissue, desensitization, and hypersensitivity.**

Joseph changed from OMCD parental imprinting to NMDV thinking and behaving (Gen.45:5-8; 50:15-21).

Each child must decide for himself to pursue spiritual health – “Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.” (3 John 2)

“I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.” (3 John 4)

Joseph replaced human parenting imprinting (OMCD) with divine parenting imprinting (NMDV).

**5. God gave them both the same test to change their pattern of OMCD to NMDV (Gen.37:12-20). All the children are outside the father's sphere of influence and authority.**

You might think that it would have been easier earlier since the brothers only had to deal with jealousy (MAS). Later they have to deal with bitter hate, murder attempt, slavery, deceit and lying, and funeral and big family secret and cover up.

This show how difficult it can be to remove scar-tissue developed from parental imprinting.

Confession of sin will not remove scar-tissue or correct incorrect thinking of OMCD parental imprinting from the heart of the grown up child.

- What could Jacob do to help? (Gen.50:15-17)
- What could Joseph do to help? (Gen.50:19-21)
- What will the brothers need to do? (Gen.50:18; 37:8-10)

They will need to get out of conformation (OMCD) and into transformation (NMDV) – “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:22-25).