

In my family, regarding unhealthy habits and sin patterns, my maternal grandmother has anxiety over many things as much loved as she is. This was because she was accustomed to a harsh life when she was living day to day with her husband and four children to take care of. When she and her whole family immigrated to America from Korea, they were only permitted to bring \$10,000 in U.S. dollars even though they were millionaires in Korea. This created many of the worries of my maternal grandmother such as paying the mortgage bill on time, possible robbers, the academic grades of the children when they could not speak English fluently at that time, and so forth.

My grandparents back in the day had a grocery store. This was where she had to always remain vigilant of any thieves and also because of possible customers who needed her help regarding the food products. She would even leave the restroom door wide open so she could hear anyone entering the store, to which she still does to this day when she uses the restroom as a habit. My maternal uncle and aunt complained how their lives were affected by her seemingly constant worries and anxieties about possible problems because they also developed general anxieties in their lives as well even though they are trying to get rid of them.

When she had talked to me about her dilemmas of her many worries and anxieties, I was happy to discover that she was not too proud to admit this. She knew she worried too much, but at times could not help it, especially when there was a discrepancy in her bank statement or if a tenant had paid her too little as she is a land lord. She was glad that I offered to pray for her and I was happy to discover that she was very welcoming to have this discussion and viewed me as a children's pastor and not simply her grandson. When I suggested that she practice the spiritual disciplines, she said that she has already been practicing them in the early morning for the past four decades.

My maternal uncle also had problems with lust and his disposition towards African Americans. The first problem was because he was lonesome, he had resorted to other means to relieve that loneliness even though it was unhealthy and delusional. My grandmother had found out because she had discovered certain magazines which he had collected in his high school years and had reprimanded him and prayed for him. It would be nice to say that he has overcome his lust now that he is fifty-five years old, however I do not think that it is the case as I had seen contraceptives in his luggage as he was putting away his things. I knew that he had a girlfriend he was living with even though they were not married yet, as he had told my family and I about it.

In regards to my maternal uncle's second problem which was his view of African Americans, more than being racist, he was and still is scared of them, although he would never admit it publicly. It was all due to his past experience of walking alone by himself in New York City and getting mobbed by a gang comprised of mostly African Americans. He relinquished his money to them; however, they were not done with him even after that. As they were forming a circle around my already severely injured uncle when he was a young man at that time, he saw the smallest and weakest member of their gang and charged toward that weak link. It was a gamble in his weakened state; however, it had paid off, and he had run away from them like his life had depended upon it, which was the actual case and not an exaggeration according to my uncle.

When he had returned home, his eyes were black and blue with severe bruises all over his body as well as fractured bones. My grandmother had wanted to call the ambulance as my uncle had fainted and was in a life-or-death situation, but my grandfather who had become a pastor stopped her. Then he began to pray for his eldest son to be healed, to which God has answered

his prayer. Ever since that day, he had refused to date any African American women or befriend any African American men due to their relatives possibly being in gangs or the same African American being in a gang himself. When I had confronted my maternal uncle about this, he had said that he has no anger towards African Americans and does not consider himself racist. His issue with them was just that there is always that lingering possibility that some of them are gangsters, and that he was not willing to risk it due to his life being endangered once already.

I had listened to one of his major life stories and offered to pray for him and told him about the spiritual disciplines to which he had respectfully but firmly refused as he had his pride and did not want to be embarrassed as he was thirty years older than me. In Korean culture, it is considered impudence for a younger individual to tell the older individual what to do, even more so in the family structure where age plays a major factor. Thus, I could only pray for him on my own time which I felt was the next best thing I could do for him. His issues aside, his Christian faith in general has been declining over the years, as I am wary of the possibility that he might abandon his Christian faith altogether.

On my paternal side, my grandparents are slightly distrustful towards Jews due to one traumatic experience they had with one. When they had immigrated to America, they became poor because of their lack of English-speaking skills. While my paternal grandfather had went to college in Korea, all of his skills were not recognized in America, since it was a different nation. Thus, they had start from the bottom of the social ladder and began a small laundromat business. One of their business rivals was a Jewish man who was also their land lord. One day, as they both had to go somewhere, they returned to find their laundromat is flames. They called the firefighters and the fire was eventually put out, however the cause of the fire was very suspicious

to my grandparents, as they had no stoves and had made sure that their drying machines were turned off, however they had found a single used match on the floor.

After that incident, my grandparents had asked their Jewish landlord to pay for the damages, to which he had refused to pay the appropriate financial portion. During that time, the business of their landlord was thriving more than usual as the laundromat of my grandparents was now ruined. They had suspected that he had paid someone to light their business on fire with a match. However, they simply did not have a sufficient amount of evidence to sue the man. They had eventually saved enough money working odd jobs to invest in establishing another laundromat business, and this time, at least one of them stayed behind to make sure there were no possible arsonists.

After I heard the story, I could understand their bias towards Jews given their past situation, however I did feel as though they had generalized how people behaved based on their race which is not the right thoughts to have. Of course, because I was in a shame and honor-based culture as mentioned previously, I could not outright say to my paternal grandparents that their thought process was wrong and my way of thinking was right. It was simply not my place to correct their beliefs, as it is much harder to convince an older person to change than a younger one. Thus, I could only listen and pray for them and suggest that they practice spiritual disciplines to help forgive their past transgressors to which they had told me that they would think about it. Just as it states in Matthew 6:15, if we cannot forgive our transgressors, the Lord cannot forgive us on judgement day.

While at first glance, some of my family members may seem racist for no reason, the fact of the matter was that there was indeed a reason behind their dispositions. My maternal uncle is overly cautious of Africans Americans because of his near-death experience while my paternal

grandparents were distrustful of Jews because of their financial ruin of their first laundromat. Moreover, due to a harsh life bordering on poverty, my grandmother had many anxieties and still has them, although since she is now retired, she has less of such worries overall.

What I learned from this experience of listening to my relatives is that there is a lot of pain and anguish in their past experiences, and it does not surprise me that it has affected their lives. I would be surprised if they were not affected at all by their unpleasant experiences. I also discovered that by listening and giving them my undivided attention, I could give them emotional support and let them vent out their frustrations and stress. This was obviously a good thing as they did not have many close people to share their beliefs, experiences, and issues with. Additionally, it was a beneficial experience for myself as a future senior pastor and as a listener. I had always perceived myself as a relatively decent listener, however after having such serious conversations on the receiving end, I had learned that I have much more room for improvement. Thankfully, I had deliberately avoided saying statements, like “You should do this.” This was because I did not want myself to sound insensitive and arrogant. This entire experience has made me more aware of my potential sin patterns and it had emphasized the importance of forgiving the key transgressors in my life, one of whom had bullied me all throughout my high school years.

In terms of the chapter of Soul Care called “Overcoming Family Sin Patterns,” it was intriguing to learn that individuals need to focus on a specific spiritual discipline to overcome a specific sin pattern in their lives. (Reimer 113). I also concur with the statement that “Family sin patterns always affect us. We can gain victory over them, but not without a fight.” (Reimer 103).