Chapter 6: Sins of the Fathers
Summary and Questions by APU Faculty Roman Dial

SUMMARY
Chapter 6, “Sins of the Fathers,” describes the intergenerational problems passed on among the poor. It begins with a description of sexual abuse within families, and particularly foster families. While sexual abuse crosses racial and economic lines, the unfortunate aspect among the poor is that there is much less opportunity for overcoming it with therapy, achievement, or ambition. Instead it has a tendency not only to burden its victims psychologically, but to cascade to the next generation as well, with little hope for correction. Other ways of poor parenting and lack of attention seem to resurface through compensation in the form of early pregnancies and inappropriate mate choice. While money may not be able to buy us love, it seems like it can at least help make up for its lack. No love, no money, no hope. Indeed, the theme of the chapter is poor-quality parenting that is trans-generational. Bad parents beget bad parents, the sins of the fathers become the sins of the sons, or in most of the case studies in this chapter, the sins of the mothers become those of their daughters. The chapter ends with an upbeat note about counseling that works for the poor, but it takes the right kind of people and the right kind of society to both help and be helped.

QUESTIONS
1. If sexual abuse in families is not only a problem of the poor, why is it a more significant problem?
2. What can money do to solve problems related to poor parenting?
3. How are poor parenting problems compounded by lack of money?
4. Who are the people who suffer the most from poor parenting? The children? The grandchildren?
5. Is this a never ending cycle, a generally tragic ending, or is there hope?