

## **Questions for discussion**

### **1. How do we look at blessings and curses?**

Blessings come and blessings fade away. I find that curses linger. Why is it that way? Our feelings towards good times and bad are real to us. I suppose it's hormones invoking a response within us chemically. Yet, one person is happy a game ended the way it did and another is upset. We see things and feel things differently. Each event in our lives looks like a blessing or a curse. What are your feelings on blessings and curses?

*"This book is all about how we look at blessings and curses. We have been raised to see things as good and bad. I have had people tell me that God is good and religion is bad. For years I have heard people say that our good deeds bring good times, and evil never wins in the end. Yet, we judge our lives daily by the blessings and curses we get, and we judge ourselves by what happens to us. However, maybe blessings and curses don't work that way." Chapter 1, p, 1*

### **2. Who delivers blessings and curses?**

I have talked with several people about blessings and curses. One believes in fate or karma. Another believes God controls it all. Yet, there are those who think that what happens is just random. Where do your blessings and curses come from? They say that everything goes through God first. Is that true for you? Do your good actions require blessings? Do bad people get what's coming to them? Who really is the one that dispenses blessings and curses?

*"If we could look God in the eyes would we see the same thing? Do we picture the Lord almighty as we picture Santa? I bet the answer is no for most of us. Christmas might represent good or bad times for us but we rarely blame Santa. However, we do blame God. When things go wrong, God is always brought up in one way or the other. Blessings and curses come from God, don't they? Do they come from our actions, karma, or fate? It seems to me we base our lives on these things." Chapter 1, p, 3*

### **3. We measure everything by what's good and bad**

I feel good today. I am fat because I feel bloated. How do you measure your day? Did you hold a door for someone and find twenty dollars? Did fate smile upon you for being so kind. We were good this year so we deserve a nice Christmas. I got into an accident twice. Gee I wonder if I'm cursed this week. We measure everything by what happens to us. God knows it would drive us crazy. That's why he said don't worry about

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tomorrow because today has enough trouble of it's own. How do you rate or measure your day?

*"Karma literally means "actions" that are good and bad. Fate means "inevitable and unavoidable circumstances." We cheer on the hero because we want them to win. The boy gets the girl of his dreams. Everyone dreams of the perfect soulmate. We have dreams because, in our hearts, dreams are real. They scare us and inspire us. Overall I am trying to paint a picture of who you were as a child. Children are raised to be like their parents. Parents were once children too. That is where traditions are forged. Right and wrong; good and bad; blessings and curses, all forged in our hearts as we grow up. In the end, we measure everything by what is good and what is bad." Chapter 1, p, 5*

### **4. We have been trained to believe in blessings and curses?**

We expect a fate. Every time we do an action or say a word we expect a return. My daughter calls it equivalency exchange. One thing or action is exchanged for another. Do good and receive good. Be bad and you will be punished. There are fables that echo that sentiment. Santa checks his list twice. As children we have been trained to expect the best and worst in life. In most cases we believe in blessings and curses. Why is that?

*"The trouble is, we expect something. We also expect that someone will or has caused good and bad events in our lives. We have been trained as children that bad things happen to bad people. All good people go to heaven, right? If Santa checked his list twice then surely (if I'm good) I'm in with God too. Satan needs coal to run hell, doesn't he? Is that why bad people go there? How often do we say, "I'm due to win, aren't I"? How about, "I'm waiting for my ship to come in." We wait and we expect things to go right, wrong, good, or bad within our lifetime." Chapter 1, p, 6*

### **5. Do our actions deserve a blessing or curse?**

Were you born cursed? I have often wondered if I was. I know people who appear to live blessed lives. I am reading a book on the caste system in India. It's gut wrenching to be born blessed or cursed. Did you deserve this curse? Did you deserve that blessing? How often do we say "It's about time I won" Do you wait for the other shoe to fall? Admit it, you do spend some time during the day waiting for a blessing or curse.

*"I truly believe that, "A blessing can be a curse, and a curse could be a blessing." I have a friend at work who has since retired. Let's call her Beth. One day she approached me to say she had been blessed by God today. She knew I was a Pastor and had to tell me. She went on to say that a few weeks ago she made amends with her father and re-started a relationship with him. Within a week he gave his life to the Lord. Further*

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*to that she was given a large inheritance by him. She told me that God's face was shining upon her because of her actions towards her father." Chapter 1, p, 8*

### **6. What if blessings and curses were tools to grow us?**

I know a guy that was great at hockey. A bad coach here and an overlooked draft pick there put him out of the pro ranks. He had a chance but it appeared doomed from the start. Another player is small but played big. He is picked in the fourth round but found a way to make 7 million a year. Lessons are learned by what happens to us. We either learn and grow or become depressed. If we feel slighted, then we feel slighted. What if everything good and bad was a blessing and a lesson to learn? Maybe God knew that is how life grows us through blessings and curses.

*"Blessings and curses are tools God uses to open our eyes to the Truth in life. A blessing can become a curse. And I have witnessed a curse become a blessing. My friend Beth has indeed got it all wrong. We don't love because we love. We love because it makes us feel and look good. If that's not true, then why tell anyone about our good deeds? It's because they are the warm fuzziness we desire. My intent is not to persuade you to stop trying to love. My intent is to help you see what Paul saw. A blessing is nice but a curse can be nice too. Blessings and curses open our eyes to the things we refuse to see. To the things that can humble us and help us." Chapter 1, p, 13*