

Questions for discussion

1. What are blessings?

Blessings are what we want right? I heard a friend last night say they would bless us if they won the lottery. So they would not consider blessing us anyways? I know that is harsh. We bless when we can. I think we don't curse when we can. A blessing could be a gift, deed, or action towards someone. Is a blessing something that makes us happy like a kiss? Sometimes I wonder where they come from and why do they not always work out well. What are blessings to you?

“Why are our prayers about receiving the blessings of God? Why do we ask for things we need, want, or desire? Isn't it enough to have what has been given over what has not? With blessings there are so many questions. Maybe it's because a blessing is such a good thing. It's like receiving presents at Christmas. We love blessings and presents. It makes the day special and memorable. They say it's better to give than receive, but do we really believe that?” Chapter 6, p, 1

2. Why does God bless?

God blesses us so that we will like him right? The verse below tells us why? A God who hates sin should hate sinners. However, God is not in the hate business. He loves to love. Why? I don't really know because we never get to see into the real life of God. We do however, get to see into his character. That character tells a ton of the life of God. I have heard people say God sits in judgment all the time. I think it's more likely he is wandering around looking for blessings to give. The character and actions of God tell me that. He blesses because he loves first and hates second.

“Why does God bless? I think it's for two reasons. One is that he created us. We tend to cherish the things we make. The second is that He has walked in our shoes. I think real grace is forged through, care, compassion, and love for the things around us. We want to give people a second chance because of those things. I think it's that way with God too. It says in 1 John 4:19, “We love because he first loved us.” God desires to bless rather than curse because he chooses to love rather than hate.” Chapter 6, p, 3

3. Are we waiting for curses?

People seem well acquainted with Murphy and his law. *What could happen usually will happen.* Fair enough we have all seen this law at work. I cut my finger and then proceed to reinjure it over and over. I am warned to not marry a girl and then we are divorced ten years later. So do we love tempting curses? Why do we avoid blessings

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then? You would think we would ignore curses and think about blessings. Here we stand waiting for a shoe to drop. That is a cool saying. I guess in New York they tend to live above another. At some point you hear something like a shoe dropping above. We are waiting for the enviable other shoe to hit the floor. Maybe it's more about being observant and knowing how this life works. This is a fallen world.

“That seems crazy but half the time we are waiting for the other shoe to drop. I am certainly not a great Christian. Depending on who you ask, I may be somewhere from bad to very bad. I probably don't deserve to enter heaven. I read my Bible and pray for blessings. When good things happen I still think I don't deserve a blessing because I'm not good enough. I expect a ton of shoes to drop. When they don't I seem to be waiting for the curse. I wonder if that robs me of the full effect of a blessing.” Chapter 6, p, 6

4. Do we deserve blessings?

Do we deserve a blessing? So many people say they feel they are good enough to go to heaven. So they are really saying that they have been good enough to be blessed with the ultimate blessing. Other religions talk about paradise. I have heard people say “It's about time I won.” Why is it time you won? I suspect we think we have a nice bank. We put our nice deeds in and our endurance of curses in too. Once that bank is full then it's about time for a withdrawal. The interesting part is that we expect others to withdrawal from our kindness bank and bless us with it.

“Is it possible that we are saying to God, “Because you have blessed in the past, we expect more of that good stuff now?” We expect greetings and we expect a thank you. We have been trained from birth to expect these things. Traditions and words have been formed to guide us in the world of blessings. God and people should bless us because we believe we are good. Is that the way blessings work?” Chapter 6, p, 8

5. Are there good and bad blessings?

I have been blessed with a new pair of sandals. I have stubbed my toe in them and drawn blood. Blessed or cursed? I loved my first wife and felt that it was a blessing we reunited after high school. It was a curse the day she told me to leave. We love blessings. I bet we don't weigh them too much but we do weigh curses. A blessing is really a happy moment in time that feels good. Why can't we just accept, in the moment, that things are ok. Maybe, if we put less weight on a blessing then if it turns into a curse it might not feel so heavy.

“It's weird, but in a way there are good blessings and bad ones. Do all blessings make us happy? Maybe they do at first but blessings seem not to last very long. We gain a TV and it is awesome. The next day we find a car for sale that is perfect. There are now

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two blessings but the first is out of sight as soon as the new one appears. I tried three times this year to get the right present for my wife. They all were good choices, but each one had different drawbacks. The one constant was the thought of blessing her, yet I returned the gift twice trying to make it perfect. I was afraid my blessing could turn out badly. Isn't any gift good?" Chapter 6, p, 10

6. Do we make our own blessings?

They say if we prayed more or had more faith then God is obligated to bless us. Is that true in your eyes? Do we curse ourselves? Do we make a way to deserve a blessing? I have wondered if we prayed more good might befall us more often. I do believe hard work brings good karma. I do believe that a bad attitude brings failure. Is that how blessings and curses work?

"There are people who change their name to change their lives. A football star has the last name luck. Is that partly why he is a star? Do we make our own blessings? God helps those who help themselves. It's not in the Bible so why accredit it to God? Proverbs 12:24 says, "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor.""
Chapter 6, p, 11