

Questions for discussion

1. How do you feel about blessings and curses?

I feel dumb because there seems to be no really good answer as to why God appears to bless or curse. If there was a way to receive blessings and avoid curses I would do it. I am happy when I feel blessed. There is a sense of doom when I feel cursed. I know there are voices in our head that tell us we are good or bad by what we did. Well at least they are in my head. Seriously though, some people spend time holding a door for someone because it's about building good karma. How do you feel about blessings and curses?

"No matter how smart I get it seems I appear dumb. I know God does not bless based on the work we do. God does not shine his face upon us just because we are nice one week. On the flip side God does not curse us because we are naughty. The love or anger of God does not work that way, yet at times we feel blessed or cursed. This chapter will explore the cursed side of life. Who causes this absurd cursed feeling and why do we think that way about blessings and curses?" Chapter 7, p, 2

2. Do you avoid curses?

Because curses hurt I want to avoid them. I know people that avoid relationships because they were hurt. In some cases, they feel they are cursed with people. I saw a girl the other day walking ahead of me, but she was purposely avoiding the lines and cracks in the sidewalk. Avoiding curses? I say it's about the pursuit of happiness rather than sadness. It's a noble effort but in your life there will be triumphs and trials.

"We avoid curses. When I went through a cursed period of driving what was I to do? Pray more? Sometimes we just have to go through it. Maybe a curse is really a period of time where things challenge you. Adele says in her song Someone Like You, "Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead." Things don't always go the way we planned (like taxes) but life is a journey. However, a curse might hurt more than a blessing." Chapter 7, p, 4

3. Do we expect more from God than ourselves?

If I had a dime for every person that told me that God could have saved someone I'd be rich. Many people think they can do what they want but are annoyed when God allows them to fall. Is that how it goes? I feel at times I push the limit just to see when God will have had enough. I consider myself a sinner far too often. Do you feel that God

Blessings and Curses Chapter 7 (*Curses*)

should take care of us? What about free will? If we are a dumb ass, then can't God let us be a dumb ass? I wonder if we would be far better served failing enough to hate failing?

"I admit that it seems like sin (evil) is waiting for us to mess up. I wonder if Satan wants to kill us or maybe he is waiting for an opportunity to invoke disappointment. It's like feeling, "God didn't bail us out" or another little voice inside is chiding me, "I knew God did not love me." Is God obligated to bail us out? Inside, surely we expect to be saved. The questions I hear about God all the time are, "Why did God kill the child?" or, "Why did God let this curse happen?" We expect a lot from God but do we expect a lot from ourselves?" Chapter 7, p, 6

4. Is a curse self made?

I most certainly think that 95% of curses are self made. I tell the story below of the perception of the Jews in Germany during World War Two. It may seem harsh but there is some truth in everything. Years ago a friend of mine phoned me because he was in trouble with his wife. I did not go see him because I needed time with my own family. Six months later I was split up and crying in his basement. Did my lack of compassion come back to bite me? I don't know the real answer but I sure have changed my view since those days.

"A curse is self made for the most part. Oh, I know you automatically disbelieve that. People seem to have bad luck. I guess the Jews had bad luck in the concentration camps. Maybe, but maybe there is more to bad luck. Maybe the Jewish nation could have loved the German people more in the years preceding the death camps. Maybe all their wealth made a picture within the minds of the German people. Hitler preyed on the perception forged by the perception within the Jewish community. That was played out on derogatory posters in Germany depicting the Jews as money-grabbing monsters." Chapter 7, p, 7

5. Is God obligated to answer your prayer?

I know many Christian people who say that God does not answer the prayers of the non believers. My story is saying that is false. I did not believe, but asked God to fix my marriage. He did within a month through divorce. So did God answer my prayer? I say yes but some would say no. I became a Christian another month later so maybe there was more dialogue going on than meets the eye. Prayer could be more powerful than we are led to believe.

"Prayer is meant to be a communication with God. Is God required to answer prayer? The Bible says God will never leave or forsake us if we are his children. So we pray and expect help. We are good and expect blessings. Honestly, we expect bad things

Blessings and Curses Chapter 7 (Curses)

to befall bad people. Hitler is cursed just like Judas was, right? Those who don't talk to God will not get God's attention so they say.

I love J Vernon McGee (an American preacher). He has said at times that God does not help those who are not his children. He is under no obligation. Obligation? Is God obligated to save you? There are two answers to this. But before I do, let's have a small chat on expectations. They are those things we deserve because we were good."
Chapter 7, p, 11

6. Admit that curses have taught you something?

I know curses have taught me. Once bitten twice shy. I bounced a check once and that really hurt because the bank and the company charged me a fee. I never did that again. I got a speeding ticket and drive slower now. Looking both ways before you cross the street is smart. The lesson might be death if you don't. Some lessons come from other people's stories while many come from our own lives. Curses are extremely valuable to your piers and the mirror. *We live, we learn* as Alanis Morsette said.

"I don't care for Mr. and Mrs. Happy all the time. Sometimes life hurts. However, I believe a curse is a good thing. I drive better because of my cursed driving years. I love better because I bled through divorce. Sometimes the lesson learned is that a curse is required. Why, God only knows. I think telling us the truth rarely sinks in. The Good Witch Glenda, in the Wizard of Oz, said Dorothy needed to find out the answers for herself. Lessons are information, but experience is the truth. A fire is too hot only when you burn yourself." Chapter 7, p, 13