

### **Questions for discussion**

#### **1. Where does truth come from for you?**

Everyday I read posts on social media. I am amazed at the ignorance when it comes to truth. What I mean is that things are posted that make people mad. However, time after time these posts are not true. I just think it's crazy reading something and just believing it. I am currently reading a book that argues if God really exists. The main sticking point is existence in the physical world. The truths in social media are not personally explained or seen yet people believe them. Why does God not get the same treatment?

*“My point is simple. It has been over two thousand years since Jesus was apparently on this earth. Is his story myth, fable, or legend? To many, the Bible says he existed, so he did. To the rest of humanity, he is a story like C.S. Lewis described in his quote. How do we separate Jesus and his wisdom from Confucius, Plato, and comedian George Carlin? Did the Greek philosopher Plato exist or is he invented in the mind of Socrates? This chapter is going to explore blessings and curses. Are they real? Are they part of our story history? Is there truth to be gained from their existence or have figures like Jesus and Confucius been relegated to myth, fable, and legend?” Chapter 8, p, 3*

#### **2. Who is the curator of blessings and curses?**

Who is your go to source for truth? Is it Wikipedia or the Bible. Maybe Twitter is where you find knowledge. What about blessings and curses. Where do curses comes from? If you ask for blessings do you seek a wishing well? In fables and myths there are good truths found in the story. We understand what fate is by someone's actions. Is fate random? Is our fate directed by an unseen force? Many of us send our prayers for victims. Who are you directing them to or is a nice thing to say.

*“To believe in blessings is to believe what? Who brings or takes blessings from us? Is a curse Voodoo or from God? Even the most staunch Christians are nervous around voodoo dolls. For some reason we believe in the supernatural. These ideas seem to come from myths, fables, and legends. The Genesis story says we sin because Adam and Eve sinned first. They passed down sin through their genes. Is this a fable or truth? This is called the curse or fall of humankind. If we were so cursed, then why do we seem blessed over all other creation?” Chapter 8, p, 3*

### **3. What has shaped your view of blessings and curses?**

Did you have a run of bad luck? Do you feel that lady luck has been on your side? What experience do you have that had shaped your view on life? A blessing might bring you back to that place. A curse might make you avoid an event. Things happen to us. Those things shape our view on blessings and curses. Do we think certain people are cursed? Are rich people blessed? Your perspective on these things will direct you on what you do and where you go.

*“There is a great book in the Bible called Romans. I wonder if it’s the greatest because of its profound remarks. One of those remarks is Romans 3:23: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” How does this statement work with Judas and Peter? How does this work with my friend who thinks he was handpicked before time began? Could Peter sin like nuts and remain saved while Judas could study and memorize the scriptures and be destined to quote them in hell? Is my friend beyond reproach no matter his actions while other predestined souls work tirelessly at a food bank and receive hell as a reward? It seems it still comes back to who is blessed and who is cursed.” Chapter 8, p, 6*

### **4. Do we make our own luck?**

People will say they make their own luck. To some degree that is true. We make decisions. Those choices might become through blessings or curses. If you continually make poor choices, then is it bad luck or your fault and fate? If you find yourself on a winning streak are you finding your groove? What if something else was guiding or directing the world around you? Maybe you are part of a bigger picture? Blessings and curses are so subjective. Where, why, and how are they part of our lives?

*“Do we make our own luck or are we predestined to fail? Are some unlucky people born cursed? Some people say America is a blessed nation. I know American evangelists on TV have stated many times that their country might have lost that distinction by the actions they do. In reality many Americans believe they began as a blessed people. Some even believe the Bible will end within American borders. I don’t want to pick on America, but many people believe they are the chosen ones.” Chapter 8, p, 8*

### **5. Who appears blessed and cursed to you?**

I feel I am a blessed man in looks. I’m not Brad Pitt but I’m good looking. Why do I say that? Am I arrogant and conceded? Maybe, but I think it comes to experience. Girls seem to find me attractive. That is where I get my observation. Does that make me blessed? I have a friend who never found a girlfriend. Is he cursed? Are poor people in

## **Blessings and Curses** Chapter 8 (Myths, Fables, and Legends)

Cambodia cursed because they live in poverty while Americans seem blessed with abundance. Maybe a rich person feels cursed and a poor person feels blessed. What do you think?

*“My point with all this is that what we see as blessed is based on our criteria. What God deems as blessed quite possibly looks a little different. In my church planting adventure, I saw firsthand the human arrogance with picking the right people. One couple had started a church of over 40 people and was looking for support. They were turned down. Another was given support because it fit an initiative to an unreached area in Quebec (they spoke French). The planting organization blessed based on criteria more than what God was already doing. I severely doubt Peter would have made the cut, but I wonder if Judas might have.” Chapter 8, p, 10*

### **6. Blessings and curses grow us.**

I feel that blessings and curses most certainly grow us. There is a story of King Hezekiah doing right by God. It even says in the Bible that God blessed him. Yet, at one point God inflicted him with a curse because he lived with Pride. In the end Hezekiah's pride brought down the whole nation. God continued to provide blessings and curses to open the king's eyes. Some of King David's best heartfelt Psalms came from blessings and curses. How have they shaped your life?

*“All these stories have molded us into how we look at life. The stories we have heard and witnessed have bolstered our belief in the blessed and cursed. We know what blessed looks like. I have seen the cursed. I have experienced both a blessing and a curse. All I can say is be careful of what you think and see. All the fables tell tales that challenge what we think. The granny might be a wolf. The nice scorpion might be bad news for an unsuspecting frog. The stories passed down have wonderful truths. Whether they are true stories or not is a different matter.” Chapter 8, p, 12*