

**1. The reality of blessings and curses.**

“...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live...” (Deut. 30:19). This is an important topic!

**2. What is a blessing?**

Blessedness can be a state of happiness we’re enjoying because of our situation:

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...” (Psalms 1:1).

But the word *blessed* can also refer to a *supernatural release of grace*. In that sense of the word, a blessing brings about several results:

1. Life
2. Favor
3. Help
4. Protection

**A blessing is a supernatural impartation of life and favor.** For example: “...the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy... the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper” (Genesis 39:21-23).

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However, a curse will release four very **opposite** things into a person's life:

1. Death instead of life
2. Opposition instead of favor
3. Hindrance instead of help
4. Destruction instead of protection

Under a curse, instead of God causing you to prosper, He may actually be working against you: "...they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them" (Isaiah 63:10). The Law of Moses described the curses that would come upon the people if they disobeyed the Lord (see Deuteronomy 27-28). It's sobering to think that God might be opposing us!

Please exercise extreme caution when talking about these things, especially when you're ministering to people.

### **3. How is a blessing released?**

#### 3.1. A blessing may be spoken by God.

God wants us to enjoy Him and enjoy life: "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2).

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We often see God Himself speaking blessing directly over people: “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Notice what came with God’s blessing:

- Fertility
- Ability
- Productivity
- Leadership

There may be different results from a blessing, but they all flow from being in relationship with God, and from having Him release **His** life into **your** life!

### 3.2. A blessing may also be spoken over us by another person, as God leads.

One example would be the Aaronic Blessing:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: ‘The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.’ “So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them.” (Numbers 6:22-27)

The patriarchs blessed their children, and prophesied over them. Moses did the same to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

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### 3.3. Blessing may be spoken by one person over another under the power of their soul.

Words of affirmation and encouragement may not come directly from God, but even so they seem to be a powerful means of lifting us above discouragement.

God places us in families and in other relationships; He also places us under other people's authority, and we can receive blessing or cursing through authority figures.

The Bible says that "...the inferior is blessed by the superior" (Heb. 7:7, ESV).

Three P's: parents; pastors (or spiritual leaders); and professors (or teachers).

God intended this authority for good, but we often misuse it. It's so important to speak life to those who are under our authority. Speak kindly, speak encouragingly. Speak God's Word. Speak words of grace!

### 3.4. You can also receive blessing by positioning yourself for blessing.

God encourages us to take godly action that will bring blessing into our lives!

- God says, "...those who honor Me I will honor" (1 Samuel 2:30).
- "Honor your father and your mother... that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you..." (Deuteronomy 5:16).
- In Malachi 3, God promises to open the windows of heaven to those who tithe.
- "Give, and it will be given to you..." (Luke 6:38).

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In some contexts, we can experience either blessing or cursing depending upon how we choose to act. It can go either way: “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you...” (Genesis 12:3a).

#### 4. What are the signs of a curse?

Again, a curse releases the opposite of what a blessing produces. However, we need discernment (and sometimes discussion) before we know what we’re dealing with.

People suffering from a curse will be unable to prosper, and will experience frustration. “In the morning you shall say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and at evening you shall say, ‘If only it were morning!’ because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see” (Deuteronomy 28:67 ESV).

Derek Prince found seven common markers that **could** indicate a curse:

1. Mental or emotional breakdown;
2. Repeated or chronic sickness;
3. Barrenness and related problems;
4. Breakdown in marriage and family relationships;
5. Continuing financial insufficiency;
6. Being “accident-prone”;
7. A history of suicide, unnatural deaths, or untimely deaths.

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## 5. Causes of curses.

More helpful thoughts from Derek Prince on how curses can come about:

The operation of blessings and curses in our lives is not haphazard or unpredictable. On the contrary, both of them operate according to eternal, unchanging laws. It is to the Bible, once again, that we must look for a correct understanding of these laws. In Proverbs 26:2 Solomon establishes this principle with respect to curses: “A curse without cause shall not [land].” Behind every curse that comes upon us, there is a cause. If it seems that we are under a curse, we should seek to determine its cause. Then we shall be in a position to take appropriate action against it. This will also silence that nagging question, “Why do things like this always happen to me?”

### 5.1. Idolatry.

“I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6).

### 5.2. Is there such a thing as a generational curse?

Repentance deals with our sin and guilt, but iniquity can be a different matter. People with patterns of iniquity in their lives often pass down their sinful behaviors, regardless of whether they’ve been born again. They need sanctification, which takes time. Think of the patterns of iniquity we see in the lives of the Patriarchs, or in King David’s life.

Thank God that His generational blessings go for a thousand generations!

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### 5.3. Carnal sins and other sins.

There are other sins that will subject people to God's disfavor, for example:

- Dishonoring our parents
- Bloodshed
- Various sexual sins
- Injustice, bribery, and theft
- We see numerous other examples in the Law of Moses, in Deuteronomy 27-28.
- Remember how Balaam could not curse Israel— and yet Israel tore down its own protection through sin.
- Antisemitism will release a curse upon people.
- Scripture also suggests that selling hard liquor will bring a curse upon you.
- Sin has brought cursing and judgment on humanity and Creation in general.

### 5.4. Witchcraft and word curses.

More often than demons, we see people dealing with what we commonly call a **word curse**. We can think of this as being the opposite of encouragement. In this sense, a curse is speaking something to a person that contradicts God's Word. It can release demonic power to make that thing happen, especially if the person takes it to heart.

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 18:8).

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## 6. Freedom From Curses

We want to help people do three things: **repent**, **renounce**, and **resist**.

### 6.1. The first is repentance.

When the gateway for a problem is a sin, we need to be able to lead the person in repentance. This is the place to begin because repentance is an acknowledgment that we've deviated from God's ways. You may need to lead people in an appropriate prayer, repenting and asking God's forgiveness for a particular sin. Example:

*Dear God, I recognize that what I've done is wrong, and it's against your will. I ask you to forgive me, and to give me your grace to resist temptation in this area in the future.*

### 6.2. The second R is renouncing.

Speaking something out loud tends to reinforce it in our own souls. It also serves as a declaration to everyone listening, including spiritual powers. If someone has been victimized by words, it's good to help them declare God's Word over their life.

### 6.3. The third R is resisting or refusing.

We've seen how the Word says to submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7). Deliverance is not magical protection – the person's battle may continue at the same level for a time; it may even intensify! People **must** learn to resist the Devil for themselves. Be sober about the fact that we are stuck with temptation until God gives us immortality. However, your battles **can** get easier over time.

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## To end our course... some quick thoughts about a passive spirit!

When it comes to spiritual warfare and the situations we're going to face in the last days, there may be one fleshly tendency that is especially dangerous: **passivity**.

"When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, 'Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation'" (Luke 22:45-46).

"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, **fervent in spirit**, serving the Lord..." (Romans 12:10-11).

"[Jesus] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, **zealous** for good works" (Titus 2:14).

Let's reflect on a story from 2 Kings 13:

Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot.

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And he said, “The arrow of the LORD’s deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.”

Then he said, “Take the arrows”; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground”; so he struck three times, and stopped. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.” (2 Kings 13:14-19)

This was a prophetic act that revealed the heart of King Joash. It showed that his spirit wasn’t fervent, determined, or aggressive. Instead of being like Joash, let’s be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

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