

CONQUERING CURSES

When you are constantly being pestered by life in general; when the harder you try, the behinder you get, suspect the working of curses!

Our first line of action when hard times hit should be to pray and seek God. If He reveals any sin in our life or if we've left a door open to the enemy, then we must quickly repent. When we feel the pressure to sin or beat on ourselves, we must go into action against the evil principalities mentioned in Ephesians 6:12. But, what if you do all these things and everything still goes wrong? Suspect curses at work!

There are three categories that curses fall into:

LEGAL CURSES

TRADITIONAL CURSES

HAND-ME-DOWN CURSES

SOME CURSES WORK ON A LEGAL BASIS

The first curse in recorded history was the one God placed on whomever would eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Don't eat the fruit and everything will be OK; eat the fruit and die! A person always knew where they stood – they were either guilty or innocent. The curse had a legal right to destroy the transgressor, yet it was powerless against the law-abiding citizen.

Several thousand years after the Garden of Eden incident, the Lord listed pages of curses that would come on those who broke His laws. God let Moses know that the curses for disobedience were aggressive; they would “come upon you” (Deuteronomy 4:30; 28:15) if you sinned. The picture is the curse tracking down the transgressor like a bloodhound!

When we do certain “illegal” things, like getting into pride or harboring lust thoughts, we actually give the enemy a legal right to take us to the cleaners. Scripture warns us not to give him an opportunity (Ephesians 4:27). Satan is the one who gets to test believers to determine their quality, and he loves his work:

*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded
permission to sift you like wheat; Luke 22:31*

I believe that when this kind of curse is acting against us, if we diligently seek the Lord, He will reveal to us where we sinned. He may use a preacher, a TV program, a friend, an article we read, a dream, or any other of a thousand things to show the tender heart what door of opportunity was left open to the enemy.

*Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in
its flying, so a curse without cause does not
alight. Proverbs 26:2*

A curse without cause won't alight or work because there is no legal basis for it to work. As a policeman can't give a speeding ticket to someone driving at the speed limit, so a curse for breaking a law or a covenant can't come on someone who is a law keeper or faithful to a covenant.

What is the agent that carries out the dirty work of enforcing a curse? Is it demons? Probably. It might be something inside of us, like our subconscious mind, but regardless of who or what carries out the destructive work of a curse, it can't be stopped by binding or loosing.

Knowing what you do about our aggressive foe, do you think he will back off when he doesn't have to? When our opponent has the upper hand legally, don't expect any mercy! We can pray and plead, but the only way to close the door of opportunity that we opened by our disobedience is through repen-

tance, confession, and receiving the cleansing grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7-2:2; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11). You may say, “Well, I’ll just bind the devil!” But the problem is binding with dirty hands won't work!

Someone might say, “But didn't Jesus take the curse of the Law on Himself to free us from the curse?”

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:13,14

Yes, Jesus took the legal curses of the Law upon Himself, so that we might escape the death and destruction that sin produces. Notice, however, that this only works for the one operating by faith. The whole universe was created by God's faith, and it must also work by faith! The laws concerning curses and blessings also work by faith!

...and whatever is not from faith is sin. Romans 14:23b

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. James 4:17

When we try to see how much we can get away with, we actually slip into sin and out of faith. If this were not true, a believer could live any way they wanted and suffer no ill effects. We know that's not the case!

The picture I see is that we Christians are like a person living in a submarine, passing through the sea, the sea being the destructive, aggressive forces of the world. When the saint acts in disobedience or unbelief, he punctures the wall of the sub. How much water rushes in depends on the size of the puncture. Some sin can kill us (1 John 5:16,17), some weakens us (1 Corinthians 11:29,30), but all sin hinders our prayers (Psalm 66:18).

A PATCH KIT

We've been talking about curses that come from walking in disobedience. When we walk in love (1 Corinthians 13), and obedient fellowship with our Lord (1 John 1:5-7), the door is tightly closed on our enemy and, harassing spirits MUST obey our faith commands! Flowing in love and mercy acts like a patch kit when we unintentionally sin (puncture our sub) – see 1 Peter 4:8 and James 2:13. Living the Spirit-filled life takes care of legal curses, but, there are other types of curses that can work on sincere, obedient believers.

BROKEN COVENANT CURSES

When someone in authority over us or in our lineage establishes a curse, it can affect us, even if we are ignorant of it! For example, Joshua uttered a curse against anyone who would try to rebuild the city of Jericho.

Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates." Joshua 6:26

Though hundreds of years passed by, this curse was still able to carry out its destruction! It didn't matter if the person rebuilding Jericho was ignorant of the curse – it still worked!

In his days Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundations with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the loss of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun. 1 Kings 16:34

Jacob inadvertently released a curse against his own beloved wife, to her destruction. Jacob rounded up his entire family, possessions and work-force and snuck away from his father-in-law's compound. He did this because he did not trust his father-in-law (Laban) and feared that he would trick him into

staying when God told him to return to the land of promise. Jacob and his crew had only gotten a few days out when Laban overtook him. Not only did Laban feel that Jacob's secret departure was rude, he, in anger, reported that someone had stolen his idols. Jacob's hasty reply proved his sincerity and innocence, yet it doomed the culprit – his wife!

“The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. Genesis 31:32

Unknowingly, Jacob cursed his wife with death. Before his trip home ended, his favorite spouse died in the throws of childbirth!

And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. Genesis 35:18

King David found things going roughly and suspected something amiss. As he sought the Lord, it was revealed that his predecessor, King Saul had afflicted the Gibeonites, in violation of a treaty made centuries earlier. This story shows us that there is a way out of traditional curses, but it requires hearing from God and negotiating!

Thus David said to the Gibeonites, “What should I do for you? And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?” Then the Gibeonites said to him, “We have no concern of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel.” And he said, “I will do for you whatever you say.” So they said to the king, “The man who consumed us, and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the Lord.” And the king said, “I will give them.” Then he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the Lord, so that the seven of them fell

together; and they were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest. 2 Samuel 21:3-6,9

If we enter into a covenant or vow, and the vow is broken, the consequences of the covenant are activated – unless a new covenant is negotiated! Basically, God had David renegotiate a covenant with the Gibeonites. Seeking the Lord will usually result in finding a solution that will negate a traditional curse.

If you suspect a curse is working in your life, check first through your memory banks. Did you ever make a “foxhole” vow to God? Did you make a promise to the Lord when you were young, and you failed to keep your word? What about religious relatives that may have dedicated you to God like Hannah did with her son in 1 Samuel 1:11? If a parent set you aside for special service before the Lord, you may have to do some readjusting of your vocation or do some serious renegotiating with the Master!

A twist of “traditional curses” is seen when Jesus said that man's traditions can make the Word of God of no effect (Mark 7:9-13). Silly doctrines concocted by our forefathers, can make it very difficult for us to flow in spiritual freedom, and in effect, can leave us high and dry when we're supposed to be walking in God's abundant promises! This is why some folks have such a hard time with healing and the full gospel message! It will require time with the Master and His Word to break such stifling curses!

HAND-ME-DOWN CURSES

Some of the most powerful curses are passed on to us by those who love us the most– our parents. Some parents may not act too fond of their kids, but most love their offspring in spite of what they convey or what is misconstrued (with you-know-who's help). Out of frustration or ignorance, some parents say things that become haunting curses. They probably hoped their words would chide their children into compliance or prompt maturity; however, too frequently their slogans became a sentence or irritant that produced the wrong fruit.

When someone says...

“You're just like your father”

“You're stupid”

“You're lazy”
“Can't you do anything right?”
“Boy, you're sure clumsy”
“You'll never make it!”
“Cancer runs in our family”
“You're a pain in the neck!”
“I never wanted you”
“Why can't you do as good as your...”

...they have sown weed-seed that can grow into a nasty curse. There may be some truth to what the curse giver sees in the victim, or they may be parroting phrases passed down from their parents! Siblings pick up digs from other kids and throw them at their brothers or sisters. These put-downs don't need to be true in order to work because they're weed-seed and if told enough, they will start to work by the mere power of repetition. Somewhere along the line, the lies (curses) are assumed to be true! This negative use of faith takes great work and understanding to break.

I feel that curses associated with Voodoo and Witchcraft fall into this category of “Hand-me-down” curses because they depend upon the person being aware of the curse and believing it. The subject of such a curse may say they do not receive it, but if they are double-minded, or slip into one of the following improper responses, they can empower the curse to destroy.

THE DEADLINESS OF FALSE CURSES

Most of us know innately that a curse without a cause will not alight (Proverbs 26:2); therefore, our typical response is to refute baseless curses. When a bratty brother says, “You're dumb,” the standard response is “am not”!

Frequently, the temptation is to “prove” the curse-sayer wrong. If the unfounded curses thrown at us were ignored, I think they would quickly die. But, here is the dig, because we know the curse is false, we tend to resist the curse and can slip into one of two dangerous positions:

PRIDE & JUDGING

If the “am not” is shot back in self-defensive pride, we're in big trouble. “I'll show you” can trigger the negative power of pride!

When pride comes, then comes dishonor... Proverbs 11:2

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. Proverbs 16:18

Look at Matthew 16:25, and notice how dangerous it is to get into self-defense:

For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.

Fighting to save our pride (self-defense) is not the right response to baseless curses. Feeling superior to a cult member or a witch that cursed us can trip us up with fleshly pride. We stand humbly, because of the grace of Jesus, not because we are in anyway superior to anyone else.

JUDGE NOT

Most people know the gist of Matthew 7:1,2 – *if we judge others, we'll be judged!* If I say that the person who put a hand-me-down curse on me is cruel, then every one of my acts will be judged for its cruel-ness. That's not something frail humans needs to contend with. Whatever I sow, I will reap, even if I do it out of self-defense! That's why Jesus told us to return good for evil! Giving people “a piece of my mind” or setting them straight, sows weed-seed, and goodness knows we don't need a field of weeds in our own backyard!

When I return a curse of anger to someone for cursing me, I plant anger seed. The law of sowing and reaping insures an ugly crop is “in the mail” for little old me, the hapless victim! Our enemy loves this law of sowing and reaping, and he legally uses it to bury believers! God designed the law of sowing and reaping to be an easy way to bless us.

REPETITION AS A NOOSE

The power of repetition is a frequent tool the devil uses to curse us. Remember when Jesus turned toward Peter and said “Get behind Me Satan!”? Some of the things people say to us are straight from the pit of hell! Suppose an authority figure in our life repeatedly speaks a curse over us, and we agree with them. Our agreement taps into part of the law of faith: faith comes by hearing. According to Romans 10:9,10 saving faith works by speaking out of our mouth what we believe in our heart. This process can also work in the negative. If I’m told I’m stupid long enough, I will likely start repeating it in my heart. If I begin believing it and start speaking it, a curse begins working, and I had a part in producing it!

This kind of weed-seed produces a crop without a legal basis, yet it's licensed by our faith! These curses, I believe, make way for some very big demons. This is what I feel is going on with people who have a terrible self-image, or suffer from strong mental disorders.

Tell someone they're fat (to keep them thin), and if it backfires, they will become anorexic. They can look into a mirror, and instead of seeing the actual emaciated reflection, they only see ugly fat. I feel that this is the process that produces many of the personality quirks that sideline God's people. “Reverse psychology” is used to make a kid try harder, stay thin, be humble, etc., and because it's not God's method for child rearing, it produces death! The Lord wants parents to sow life-giving seeds in the garden of their child's mind! Planting weeds with good intentions still grows weeds!

A BETTER WAY

If we resist curse input, we chance becoming judgmental or prideful (defensive); agree with it and you've licensed the destroyer to bruise you badly! Help! What are we to do? Look at these two verses:

Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. Luke 6:28

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Romans 12:14

The Word of God is asking us to go exactly opposite of our natural tendency! What kind of logic do you think the enemy will pump into our minds to keep us from obeying these verses? “I can't let them get away with this!” A very noble hook the adversary uses to draw us into fighting curses is, “If I let them get away with this, they'll do it to someone else.” What the foe doesn't tell us is that as long as we return evil for evil, we spread the disease of the curse! If we want to stop the plague, we must return good for evil! We must overcome evil with good!

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
Romans 12:21*

One day Jesus passed a fig tree and because it did not have any fruit on it He cursed it. The next day the disciples noticed that it was dead. In the simple dialogue, Jesus fills us in on a few details concerning curses:

And being reminded, Peter said to Him, “Rabbi, behold, the fig tree which You cursed has withered.” And Jesus answered saying to them, “Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” Mark 11:21-26

The first thing we see is that a curse has to work by faith. The victim of a curse has to believe that it's true. Our legal-minded enemy is more than com-
modious when it comes to presenting partial, distorted evidence. In this story, we learn that it wasn't even the season for figs (Mark 11:13), which means that a curse **doesn't** require **all** the facts; merely a sliver of truth. You can't

expect a fig tree to bear figs out of season, but you have to admit that it was a fig tree! That's all it takes!

This is not a story to present values of morality or fairness; Jesus is teaching Peter things concerning faith. The bottom line, in the flow of the context of the story, is that a curse operates in the faith realm. We know that faith comes from hearing (Romans 10:17), and Ecclesiastes tells us that unless we hear the curse, it won't hurt us:

Do not pay attention to every word people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you! Ecclesiastes 7:21 niv

People can say all kinds of things about us and it won't hurt us unless we hear it and respond improperly. The enemy tries his best to get someone to “enlighten” us on how others have cursed us. Then, our foe uses the law of repetition, pumping our head full of the curse, as though it were a broken record! If we're in the habit of taking every thought captive to Christ, this trick won't bear fruit against us.

FORGIVENESS AND CURSES

What does a curse have to do with forgiveness? Jesus ends this teaching vignette by admonishing the disciples to always flow in forgiveness:

Whenever you stand praying, forgive.

There is an old saying that the remedy is not far from the malady. I believe that the truth concerning forgiveness is Jesus' hidden cure for a curse! If we are to overcome evil with good and return a blessing for a curse, then we need something to empower us to be able to muster up a blessing. The only way I know to cut the tug-o-war rope of curses is with forgiveness. When we forgive, we're freed from getting involved with the curse: either resisting or receiving the curse.

When we return a blessing for a curse, we tap the power of the law of sowing and reaping, and we get our socks blessed off! Plant a good seed with each curse, and you'll harvest a great blessing in return. See the curse as

fertilizer for the good seed you plant! Fertilizer is nasty, but it does promote growth!

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Galatians 6:7

The law of harvest is that you plant a little, and get a bunch back. Plant one grain of corn and you get a stock with perhaps two ears of corn, each containing hundreds of new seeds! When I sow love instead of hate, I will harvest a hundredfold of love! When I return evil for evil, I will get a hundredfold return on the evil I give. This law works either for us or against us, and it works for everyone regardless of who they are!

The law of sowing and reaping doesn't give discounts for those who are "getting even" because we are forbidden to touch revenge:

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19

Let me share a little insight that I believe the Lord gave me that can help us return good for evil.

IT'S OK TO BLESS

1. When we return blessing for cursing, we tap the law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12,13).
2. When we bless, we use Romans 8:6 for our good!
3. If, perchance, we've misunderstood the person who cursed us, our blessing will provide mercy for us. Misjudging others heaps misjudging on ourselves!
4. Mercy will keep us teachable and produce growth in our life.

5. We avoid the emotional drain of trying to prove that we're right (tug-of-wars are work!).
6. It's easy to slip into praise from giving a blessing. Can you imagine how hard it would be to return a curse to someone and then switch immediately into praise for our Lord?
7. Don't worry; if the person who cursed you is unworthy of your blessing, it won't stick! Check out Matthew 10:13!

CURSE-BLASTER PLAN

This plan of attack is so slick. When a curse bounces around in your head (either from childhood or of recent), quickly go into action:

1. Forgive the person. Add, “for they know not what they do” because little do they realize that they are going to receive a hundredfold return on the weed-seed they're sowing!
2. Speak a blessing to them, regardless if they are present or not. We're returning a blessing for the evil, and if the whole scenario takes place in our mind, then that's where the blessing takes place.
3. Make the blessing something that you would like to have come back on you a hundredfold.
4. Slip into praise. Get your eyes back on the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Don't forget that if we've knowingly or unknowingly opened the door to the enemy by disobedience, we must go through the steps of repentance and obedience. Legal curses do not respond to the same treatment as do hand-me-down curses, and traditional curses will require special advice from the Lord!

Spend some time reflecting on your life to see if any curses have been put on you. If you spot any, try this four step anti-curse plan.

ONE LAST SHOT

Galatians 3:13,14 tells us that Jesus became a curse for us so that the blessings of Abraham would come on us. One of the first things God blessed Abraham with was: *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee... Genesis 12:3 kjv*). Don't worry about getting even, settling the score or anyone getting what they deserve! Just go deeper into the love of Jesus and God will do all the blessing and cursing that needs to be done!

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