

Curses and Being Cursed

Teach Me Words of Life: Part 4

Key Scripture:

*“But the human tongue can be tamed by no man.
It is a restless (undisciplined, irreconcilable) evil, full of deadly poison.
With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who were made in God's likeness!
Out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing.
These things, my brethren, ought not to be so.
Does a fountain send forth [simultaneously] from the same opening fresh water and bitter?”
James 3:8-11 (AMP)*

Portion for the Journey:

The LORD God, who is the judge of all the earth is the source of blessings and cursing. Blessing is equated with good, light and fruitfulness (life). Cursing is equated with evil, darkness and barrenness (death). We are given the choice to be blessed and be a blessing to others or to remain under the curse and by our words curse others. It is vital as we grow and mature in the LORD that we fully understand the power of our words to bless or to curse. It is always God's will for us to bless others.

The Origin of the Curse:

When God created the earth, He blessed the earth and He blessed Adam and Eve. He warned Adam, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat from it, you will surely die.” Adam and Eve did not know evil, death or darkness. God walked with Adam and Eve, they were innocent and pure and they knew no shame!

Satan deceived Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We often focus on the fact that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, but do not consider the significance of the fruit that she ate! It was the knowledge of good and evil. Through this fruit death and cursing entered the earth. Adam and Eve did not die on the day they ate of the fruit, but death entered their lives and through them the generations of their children were also under the curse. Gen. 22:24 demonstrates God's view of the significance that Adam and Eve now knew good and evil in that He drove man out of the garden and set angels to guard the tree of life, lest they eat of the tree and have eternal life. The only way that man can have eternal life now depends on Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life. All of mankind lies under the curse of sin and death from the time of Adam to the present day. Jesus' powerful victory at the cross triumphed over all curses and provides the means by which we can be freed from the power of the curse. This is the good news of the Gospel.

The power of the curse was initially released through a choice. The first use of the word “curse” came from Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God and eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan enticed Eve to eat with the promise that her eyes would be opened and she would be like God, knowing good and evil. We are given the same choice, what fruit will we choose to eat? Will we choose to believe God and His goodness and promises or will we choose to walk according to the flesh? The mind set on the flesh is death. By our words, thoughts and actions we choose whether to respond to life's

circumstances in faith or in unbelief. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it for life or death.” Prov. 18:21

THE SOURCE OF CURSES:

Blessings and curses come from God. God set before Israel blessings and cursing. Israel was given the choice to follow God and receive blessings or forsake His ways and be cursed. Obedience was key to receiving God’s blessing. In the Old Testament we see God making pronouncement of curses which were real and deserved. Many of these blessings or curses continue through the generations to this very day. Matt. 25:41-42; Ps. 37:22; Deut. 11:26; 27:1-26

- 1) The serpent; Gen. 3:14-15
- 2) Adam and Eve Gen. 3:15-19 Note even in the curse, is God’s plan for redemption
- 3) The ground because of the sin of Adam; Gen. 3:17-18
- 4) Upon specific people and places whose character or actions warranted it. For example, Cain was cursed by the LORD after he murdered Abel Gen. 4:11-16. Meroz: Jud. 5:23; Gehazi: 2 King 5:27;
- 5) Specific places. Jericho was city placed under a curse by the LORD even though it was spoken by Joshua. Josh. 6:26; 10:1, 10:28; 1 Kings. 16:34.
- 6) The OT listed many specific sins that would bring a curse upon an individual. For example, in the Old Testament, those who did not honor their father and mother were cursed. The commandment to honor our parents was the only one that included a blessing. If one does not honor one’s parents they are cursed. This continues to be listed as a curse in the New Testament. Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20; Prov. 30:11; Mark 7:10; Matt. 5:22; 15:4 (AMP)
- 7) Generational curses were pronounced for specific sins. For example, idol worshippers were cursed to the third and fourth generation, Ex. 20:3-5; Deut. 28:45-47

Curses were placed upon men and the generations after them by God’s servants: God blessed Noah and his sons when they left the ark to start a new world. Shortly after, Noah placed a curse on his son, Canaan, that extended not only to Canaan but through the generations of his sons. David frequently spoken words that placed curses upon the wicked. Gen. 9:24-27; Elijah 2 Ki. 1:10; Nehemiah Neh. 4:5; Jericho Josh. 6:26; 2 Sam. 1:21; 2 Ki. 5:27;

Curses were spoken by pagans against God’s people: Philistine 1 Sam. 17:43; Shimei 2 Sam. 16:5

In the New Testament, Jesus continued to demonstrate the authority to curse and its power:

- 1) Jesus cursed that which was unfruitful and said we would also have that power. Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:14; Heb. 6:8
- 2) Those who have forsaken God are cursed. 2 Peter 2:9-22
- 3) False prophets and teachers who lead God’s people astray are cursed.

Under the New Covenant, we have a superior covenant and are instructed not to curse others. Under the New Covenant, the Word makes it clear that while our words have the power to curse, as servants of the Lord, we are not to curse. The New Testament introduces the concept of grace and forgiveness at a level that was unknown in the Old Testament. We are expected to walk in His Spirit forgiveness and to respond to others with the grace God has given us to be forgiven. When we curse, we are pronouncing

a judgment upon that person and withhold forgiveness. We are called to intercede and pray for God to forgive their sin. Matt. 6:14-15; 11:25

Jesus disciples clearly did not understand this concept and Jesus instructed them. See Luke 9:52-56 (AMP) “And He sent messengers before Him; and they reached and entered a Samaritan village to make [things] ready for Him; But [the people] would not welcome or receive or accept Him, because His face was [set as if He was] going to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John observed this, they said, Lord, do You wish us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did? But He turned and rebuked and severely censured them. He said, You do not know of what sort of spirit you are, For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them [from the penalty of eternal death].”

Even as he was dying at the hands of the religious leaders, Stephen demonstrated God’s love and forgiveness by crying out to God that the sin of those who stoned him would not be held against them. Acts 7:54-60 Jesus provides us with the ultimate example of this walk of forgiveness, when He asked God to forgive the sin of those who crucified Him, saying, ‘Forgive them for they know not what they do.’ Luke 23:34

CAN A CHRISTIAN BE CURSED? When we become a Christian we are freed from “the curse” through Jesus Christ who makes us new creations and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. God refuses to allow any to curse those whom He had blessed. Balaam Num. 23:7 (Ch. 22-24) The Word assures us that a curse without cause cannot take root. Prov. 26:2 We do not need to fear curses the curses of evil people if we are walking close to the LORD, filled with His Spirit and put on the full armor of Jesus Christ.

Cursing takes place when we speak words against ourselves or others that fall short of God’s promises, intentions, plans or purposes for those He has created. Curses omit God’s powerful ability to intervene and change lives and circumstances, while blessings release God’s plans and intentions for this individual. We unintentionally place a curse on ourselves or others through careless words of unbelief, anger or bitterness. When we curse, we diagnose or reveal a diseased condition in our heart or others and pronounce a prognosis which is hopeless. The results of these words can reduce the person to despair rather than elevate their faith to believe in God’s plan of salvation. God takes our words very seriously. Demonic powers thrive in an atmosphere of cursing. Curses cause conditions or environments to stagnate and fail to produce fruitful growth in the LORD. If we learn to take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ, we can control the tongue, then we will have protection, but if we let our tongue get out of control and do not master of our words, then the end is ruin.

Curses are allowed to take root and affect the heart that has sin or offenses. A curse without cause cannot alight. It is a scriptural principle that we reap what we sow. If we sow words of negativity and cursing, we will find darkness and oppression in our lives. If we sow words of life and blessing from a pure heart, that is what we will reap. Since none of us are perfect, we do sin. But as we allow the Holy Spirit to guard our hearts, He will convict us of our sin. If we are free from sin and unforgiveness, a curse can find no landing strip in our hearts. We are freed from curses when we receive Jesus forgiveness and confess our sins, allowing His blood to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Blessings and cursing are an integral part of our covenant with God. We do have a choice in the matter. Jesus blood is sufficient to break every curse if we are faithful to His covenant and believe His promises. There

is always a simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus. Man makes things hard, while God shows us His way: trust and obey!

It is possible to open oneself to a curse. We can bring a curse upon ourselves by not forgiving others, by speaking evil or disrespecting our parents, or by turning away from the LORD. When we speak evil of or judge others, we open the door for that same curse to come upon us. Matt. 15:4; Matt. 26:74

1. **Occult practices:** The first thing many people think of when they consider “curses” would be those placed upon others by satanic or occultic practices, such as “voodoo.” We do not need to fear any form of darkness and can stand against these attacks through the power of the Name and blood of Jesus. The danger comes when we choose to believe in the power of the curse spoken against us over the power of God. If we reject God’s truth or cease to stop in His ways then He may remove His hand of protection. Hos. 4:6; Isa. 54:15-17; Num. 22:4,6; 1 Sam. 17:43; Deut. 18:10-11; Micah 5:12; Rev. 18:21-14; Matt. 24:24

2. **Cursed Objects:** As believers, we are called to be separate from those who follow the pagan practices of false gods. We are to be holy as God is holy. We are to love what God loves and hate what He hates. The religious artifacts of the pagan are detestable in His sight. The Word makes it clear that the objects have the power to transmit spiritual power. Acts 19:11-12 tells us “God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.” Yet with reference to those who walk in the darkness, Jude 23 warns us to “hate even the garment that is polluted by the flesh.”

In Joshua 6:17-18, the LORD instructed Israel that when they entered Jericho (a pagan city that was considered ‘under the ban’) they were to take none of the things in Jericho because they were under the ban. If they took any of their things the LORD warned that it would make the camp of Israel “accursed and bring trouble upon it.” In their next battle, Israel was defeated, and the LORD revealed He was holding this sin against Israel. “They have even taken some of the things under the ban and have stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own things.” (Josh. 7:11) For this reason they could not stand before their enemies.

When we take items into our homes or lives that have pagan associations, we invite the demonic into our lives. Even more importantly, we offend the Lord and risk losing His protection from our enemy. The Bible called these items “graven images” or “idols” and while we might not worship them, we must not be naïve to their potential to bring a curse into our lives. We do not want them because they are detestable to the LORD. These objects include occult objects and symbols (Ouija boards); pagan or occult artwork and symbols; symbols associated with false religions; such as masks, jewelry, clothes, literature, dream catchers, totems, Buddha, crystals, dragons, etc. In other words, anything that was clearly designed by those involved in a false religion or occult. Books or music that convey pagan or occult themes would also be considered under the ban.

We need to be careful not to become ‘superstitious’ or fearful of demonic power. There are those who would say to avoid anything in nature that has ever been worshipped by pagans or occult practitioners. Examples would be snakes, black cats, owls, pigs or frogs. These are all creatures created by God and in themselves are not evil. 1 Tim. 4:4 says that “everything created by God is good.” Rainbows are a sign of God’s love and covenant with His creation and if a certain group chooses to take it for its symbol, we must not view all rainbows as evil!

We must consider the source and understand that spiritual power can reside on objects for good or evil. Ask the LORD to show you any objects you may have ignorantly or innocently brought into your home that are offensive to the LORD. Deut. 7:25-26; 2 Cor. 6:17; Deut. 18:11-12; Deut. 28; Ps. 101:3; Prov. 4:23; Isa. 47:11-14; Eph. 4:27; Acts 19:18-19; John 17:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:8, Jude 23; Sin of Achan: Josh. 6-7)

3. Refusing to forgive others: Do we truly understand Jesus when He taught us that " If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained [they are not forgiven.]" John 20:23 (NASB77) The word says the wages of sin is death! But when we refuse to bless and instead ask God to judge, we will be judged in the same way and with our same measure. Matt. 18:21-34 warns us that if we refuse to forgive someone, we will be handed over to the tormentors.

4. Wrong use of our tongue: Prov. 15:4 "A wholesome tongue (the healing of the tongue) is a tree of life, but perverseness (the wrong use, distortion, viciousness, willful contrariness) therein is a breach in (breaks down, causes a leak) the spirit." Note the wrong use of the tongue causes a breach in the spirit, allowing a place for the enemy to enter our hearts and lives. He desires that we will curse because a curse gives him an opening into the person's life as well as the person who spoke the curse. A curse is a prophetic word spoken that results in evil because God's love and power are left out of the equation. These words are often judgmental in a way forbidden to God's children because they pronounce a punishment. God alone is judge.

5. Believing words spoken by those in authority over us: Parents, teachers, spouse, other adults

Most parents would never deliberately "curse" their children, but they do not realize that there is a power in their words to set on fire the course of their children's lives. James 3 tells us the tongue is full of deadly poison. Examples of Curses:

- "If you don't stop ...acting this way, you will end up ...in jail."
- "You are such a failure, you will never amount to anything."
- "You can't do anything right..."
- You are lazy, stupid, a total screw up, You are of no value... you are good for nothing..."
- "He is vicious and can't control his temper. Someday he's going to hurt or kill someone."
- "He's such a crazy driver, he's going to end up killing himself one of these days."

6. Generational curses: The Scriptures clearly present the existence of generational curses in which the curse is placed not only upon the person who sins but God "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children to the third or fourth generation." Ex. 20:3-6; Ex. 34:5-9; Num. 14:18 When sin enters a family, the consequences touch not only the sinner but their children for generations. God does not hold us accountable for the sins of another. In the beginning, God created man in His own image, but after Adam and Eve sinned, it is said their children were created in the image of their father, Adam. The Word says that God "visits the iniquities of the fathers on the children..." Iniquity is the sin nature into which we are all born. It is the tendency or "bent" toward sin and we tend to inherit certain dispositions that cause our sins to be like our parents. The word "iniquity" means "crooked direction, or warped deeds, moral illness, crookedness from the root to bend or distort, an evil bent, crooked direction of sinners." In David's classic prayer of repentance, he makes reference to sins, iniquities and transgressions. In Ps. 51:5 he refers to the fact that he was born in iniquity (bent toward the propensity

to sin). It is interesting to note that David's sin was to commit adultery and murder because of his desires for Bathsheba, another man's wife. David's sons committed the same sin, adding rape. Solomon desired many women and further disobeyed God's law by taking foreign wives, turning his heart away from the LORD. The Word contains a frequent pattern of sons walking in the same sins as their fathers.

The Spirit-Filled Life Bible comments of these verses related to the sins of the fathers being visited to the children in "Kingdom Dynamics" stating, "The text notes more than the obvious possibility of a great grandfather's living presence having an influence on his/her offspring. It is a warning that the spiritual impact decisions made or actions taken does transmit to successive generations. According to God's Word, there are spiritual genetics as well as physiological ones. Just as Adam's sin transmits to the present in a hereditary as well as legal way (we are born with a disposition to sin, not only with the fact that sin casts a shadow over human beings (Rom. 5:12-21) –so, while no child will be held accountable for the sins of his forebears, he or she may inherit a propensity to a bondage, the power of which perpetuates its evil impact on the offspring.... Apart from repentance and consequent deliverance through Jesus Christ, any believer may be a "carrier" as it were—transmitting to future generations "spiritual genetics" of the past. But the opposite effect in Christ: blessings to future generations are assured for those who love God and keep His commandments (Ex. 20:6); and no earlier generation's influence is ever a fatalistic pre-determinant of the present of the present, where God's power and grace are invoked. (See Mal. 4:6; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

- Children often learn to follow in the same sins as their parents by parental example. Parents hold an incredible influence over their children. We tend to use the same words they do, act in ways similar to our parents as well as hold their ideals, values and convictions. Thus, children often follow the same sinful lifestyles they see exhibited in their parents. 2 Kings 17:41
- There are also natural consequences a parent's sin might have on their children. A daughter whose father watches pornography may grow up with a warped sense of womanhood. The children of an alcoholic suffer the consequences of a parent who operates under the influence. Parents who abuse their children tend raise children who will also abuse their children.

Sin and its consequences do not "go away" unless one confesses the sin and repent for it, thus receiving God's forgiveness and cleansing through the blood of Jesus. Under the Eternal Covenant of Jesus Christ, we are not held accountable for anyone's sin but our own. Ezekiel 18 makes this extremely clear, especially in verse 20 "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

7. Self-Imposed Curses: We can bring curses upon ourselves through careless words, inner vows or oaths. Gen. 27:13; Matt. 27:24-25

- "I am never going to measure up to other believers...it's just the way I am, I have accepted it."
- "I can't change...."
- "I will never be like my dad..."
- "I can't (or won't) forgive someone who has done such terrible things."
- "This job is killing me..."
- "That drives me crazy..."
- "I just can't take it anymore"
- "I am so bored I could just die."

“He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity (curse).” Prov 21:23; James 3:9-10 Calamity is a very strong word. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines CALAMITY, n. Any great misfortune, or cause of misery; generally applied to events or disasters which produce extensive evils, as loss of crops, earthquakes, conflagrations, defeat of armies, and the like. But it is applied also to the misfortunes which bring great distress upon individuals. The Hebrew word used in Prov. 21:23 and translated “calamity” is considered one of the Hebrew words for “curse.” This word is “sara” in the Hebrew (Strong’s #6869). It means distress, trouble, affliction, adversity, anguish, tribulation, and adversary. It comes from a family of words “sarar” that refers to anything that is very narrow or confining, a place too small for people to inhabit, a blanket too narrow to wrap oneself in (Isa. 28:20). According to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament it carries the following connotations:

- To be restricted or hampered (Prov. 4:12)
- To bind up or tie
- It refers to the strong emotional response one experiences when pressed externally by enemies or internally by wrong decisions or passions. One can be so obsessed by a passion that he becomes ill (i.e. Amnon’s desire for his sister Tamara)
- Intense inner turmoil, anguish of a people besieged by an enemy (Ps. 25:17)
- A road so narrow that it only leads in one direction
- A nation that rejects God’s word will be full of distress, darkness, and gloom of anguish Isa. 8:22; 30:6
- Into such darkness Yahweh will bring the light of his salvation (Isaiah 9:1-2 [H 8:23-9:1]). God saves us from this anguish if we call out to Him. Ps. 50:15; Ps. 37:39
- God graciously promises to save Israel from the trouble of the Day of the Lord. (Jer. 30:7)

Freedom from the Curse:

Jesus is the only way to true freedom from the curse. . “Christ redeemed us from that self-defeating, cursed life by absorbing it completely into himself. Do you remember the Scripture that says, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”? That is what happened when Jesus was nailed to the Cross: He became a curse, and at the same time dissolved the curse.” When the final judgment is complete that there will be no more curse: Rev. 22:3; Matt. 25:41; Galatians 3:13 (MSG); Deut. 28:1 All who are born of the sin nature are under the curse. John 8:21; Gal 3:10

To be freed from the curse: As we have seen words are powerful, and to be freed from words spoken by us or toward us that released a curse in our lives, we may have to take a specific stand against those words. Ask the LORD to show you any words that have been spoken to you that you believed that were contrary to God’s plans and purposes for your life. For examples, words spoken by adults or those in authority over us can carry great weight. Gal. 6:7-9; 1 John 1:9

- Repent: When we repent we acknowledge our sin to the LORD, confess His truth about our sin and ask His forgiveness for our sin. We ask the LORD to forgive us for believing words about us that do not line up with His Word.
- Revoke (renounce our words, unsay them), renounce any words that were spoken that might have had the power to bind us in a curse. We ask God to forgive those who spoke the words against us.

- Replace (wrong words through confession of right words of blessing and thanksgiving.) We offer thanksgiving and release God's blessings and grace into the situation.

Jericho: A City Freed from a Curse

Jericho is a city that was thoroughly cursed and yet God removed the curse through the prophet Elijah. The details given in the word may help us to better understand the operation of cursing and blessings. Jericho represents a great stronghold of the enemy. The war God fought through Joshua was against Satanic hosts in Jericho. Witchcraft, sorcery, familiar spirits, all were adept at the black arts. The war was not with the Canaanites but with satanic powers of darkness to which the Canaanites bowed and worshipped.

Jericho was in the territory possessed by the Moabites. We are told that the outward appearance of the area was very beautiful. Deut. 34:3 referred to the city itself as “Jericho, the city of palm trees.” The name “Jericho means “a place of fragrance.” Jericho was in the “Promised Land” given to Israel as their inheritance. It was considered to be one of the most important and oldest cities in the Jordan Valley and possessed the strongest fortress walls in all the land of Canaan. It was a city tightly closed up and barred to the children of Israel. Under the leadership of Joshua (see chapter 6), the city was taken by God’s power. Because of the wickedness of the people God declared the city “accursed” and devoted everything in the city completely to destruction—all the people, animals and possessions. (v. 17-18) Rahab and her family were the only exception that was made. It was noted that if anyone took that which was “cursed” or “devoted to destruction, it would make “the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it.” 1 John 5:18 Achan sinned against the LORD by taking articles that had been under the ban, and it brought a curse upon Israel. They were badly defeated in their next battle because His Spirit did not protect them or fight for them because they had become accursed. (Josh. 7, see esp. 1, 12-13) God instructed Israel they could not stand before their enemies unless they removed the items that were under the ban. I believe the same is true today. We can have a curse upon us when we seek to possess that which God has devoted to destruction because it is evil—this can include occult items, idols, books on witchcraft and sorcery, etc. In this case, Achan took a beautiful mantle (a garment of Babylon, shekels of silver, and a bar of gold). Achan’s entire family became cursed and they were stoned with stones and all they had was burned. This took place in the Valley of Achor which means “trouble” to afflict, stir, be troubled, disturb”. In Hosea 2:14-15 we see the Valley of Achor described as the door of hope. Israel learned their lesson and it is said when they went back to Ai to retake the city, they did not withdraw their hands until everything was destroyed. When it comes to that which has been cursed, we need to be relentless to see none of it held back or kept for themselves. King Saul later committed the same sin, when he was told to destroy all of Amalek. He kept back for himself the best of the sheep, oxen, fatlings and lambs, “all the was [deemed] good,” but that which was despised and considered worthless, they destroyed.” 1 Sam. 15:1-9 It was for this reason that Saul was removed as king of Israel. See 1 Sam. 15:22-23. Jude speaks of the ungodly and those whose lives are filled with demonic enterprise. He admonishes us to, “[Strive to] save others, snatching [them] out of [the] fire; on others take pity [but] with fear, **loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality.** **Jude 1:23 (AMP); See Ezek. 44:19** “When they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments **so they shall not transmit holiness to the people with their garments.**” It makes sense to understand that evil can also reside on the garments/possessions of those who are evil. Ezek 44:23 calls the Levites to “teach the people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the clean and the unclean.”

After Jericho was destroyed, Joshua pronounced the curse against Jericho that it would never be rebuilt, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD that riseth up and buildeth this city, Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it. (Josh. 6:26) 1 Ki 16:34 tells of Hiel, who in defiance of God's command rebuilt Jericho. He lost both his oldest and youngest sons, "according to the Word of the LORD ... spoken through Joshua the Son of Nun."

Jericho was again visited in the time of Elisha. We are told that a group of prophets were living at Jericho. 2 Kings 2:15 Removing the curse from Jericho is the second miraculous act completed by Elisha after Elijah was taken to heaven. Elisha wore the mantle of the LORD that had been worn by Elijah. Elisha's ministry, as contrasted to Elijah's, which was primarily focused on judgment of evil, is one to show God's power to heal and restore. Elisha was called a "prophet of grace." His very name means "God is Savior." His ministry testified to God's readiness to relieve the distressed and bless those who were of repentant and contrite heart.

The prophets residing at Jericho described the city as being pleasant to the eye with an outward appearance that looked good. But they said the water was stagnant and the land was barren or unfruitful (characteristics of the curse). The word used for "bad" is "ra," a very strong word for "evil" or "wicked." It meant literally, "displeasing, injurious, evil, stale, sterile, stagnant water." The first place this word was used was in relation to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The land itself would hold the hope of productivity, showing early blossoms and signs fruit but it was barren, [to suffer abortion, causing to miscarry or to bereave of children, be or make childless, destroy.] Elisha's response represents God's provision to be freed from the power of a curse. Note Elisha the men of Jericho needed to ask and then to obey by providing him with exactly what he required of them.

1. **A New Bowl:** This is symbolic of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. Jesus defeated all of the powers of darkness at the Cross. His Covenant is superior to all previous covenants. Jesus referred to this when He taught that one cannot put new wine in old wineskin. The New Covenant of Jesus Christ defeated the curse because Jesus became the curse for all men and rose in victory on His day of resurrection. The New Covenant was sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ and is for all who will believe in Him and receive His cleansing. His blood has the power to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God does not take old things and just clean them up, He makes all things new!

2. **Salt:** Salt was an essential ingredient used in all of the sacrifices and rituals in ancient Israel. It is the symbol of divine holiness and grace which characterizes the everlasting covenant. Lev. 2:13. Num. 18:19, 2 Chr. 13:5. A covenant of salt is a covenant which can never be broken. It is symbolic of purity and peace. It was a preservative and purifying agent for meat, preventing it from putrefaction. Salt was rubbed into the backs of prisoners who were whipped to prevent blood poisoning. God's children are to be the salt of the earth, showing the way to righteousness and life. Col. 4:6

3. He put the salt in **the spring of water**, asking the LORD to bless the water, removing death and unfruitfulness from the water. Elisha made it clear that the salt itself did nothing, but the pronouncement of God accomplished the healing of the waters. 2 Chr. 2:21 He spoke life into the water, representing the Living Water of God's Word poured out by the Holy Spirit. See John 7:37,38; Ezek. 47:1-12; Ps. 1:1-3; Jer. 17:7-8; Rev. 22:18

We see the grace of God when Jesus ministered in Jericho. It is said that a multitude followed Him. He was welcomed in Jericho in a way that He was not in Jerusalem, "the Holy City."

DEFINITIONS OF CURSES

Each of the Hebrew and Greek words below are translated “curse” in the Word of God. The definitions for each word help us to understanding curses, but looking up the verses using these words is encouraged to find the correct contextual meaning of the word.

Original Language	Trans-literation	Strong's	Occurrences	Hebrew Definition
אָלָה	'ālā	<H422>	1	To curse. Adjure (in a bad sense), swear, to be cursed through taking an oath. To bring curse upon oneself through doing wrong. To bring a curse upon oneself through not keeping an oath. See 1 Sam. 14:24 ADJU'RE , v.t. [L. adjuro, to swear solemnly, or compel one to swear; from ad and juro, to swear.] [.] 1. To charge, bind or command on oath, or under the penalty of a curse. [.] Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, cursed be the man before the Lord, that ...
אָלָה	'ālā	<H423>	18	The oath, solemn statement, promise, or the curse that comes as a result of a broken oath.
אָרַר	'ārar	<H779>	62	To inflict with a curse, bitterly; to bind with a spell, to curse by laying 'anathema' to someone, to execrate, opposite of consecrate; to bind, cast a spell; to hem in with obstacles, to render powerless to resist; to immobilize, render powerless in order to be defeated; opposite of 'to bless.' 1) to declare punishments; 2) utter threats, 3) proclamation of laws
בָּרַךְ	bārak	<H1288>	4	See The Power of Blessing, used primarily with reference to blessing, four times related to a curse.
הֶרֶם	hērem	<H2764>	4	An accursed thing, A thing cursed, devoted to destruction, a dedicated thing doomed, to be exterminated, dedicated to absolute utter destruction. To set aside for destruction. Jericho—a city under a curse Josh. 6:17
מְאָרָה	me'ērā	<H3994>	4	To curse, execration, the act of cursing, pronounced imprecation of evil, utter detestation expressed, an appeal to inflict evil on a person, to feel or express great loathing. Malediction, mal (evil); and dico (to speak), to utter a curse or bring evil upon a person.
נָקַב	nāqab	<H5344>	6	Cursed, as in expressing the futility of work that fails to honor the LORD. To pierce or puncture with more or less violence, libel, curse, strike through. Making a false or malicious statement about a person, making a statement that is damaging to a person's reputation.
קָבַב	qābab	<H6895>	7	To curse, to scoop out with words, to malign, to execrate (i.e. to stab with words), the act of uttering a formula designed to undo its object. Used in an incident involving Balaam and Balak. Num. 23.
קָלַל	qālal	<H7043>	39	To curse by abusing or trifling, to belittle, make light of, to treat as trivial, to act or talk about with levity, without being serious or earnest, being of small value or importance, trivial.

Original Language	Transliteration	Strong's	Occurrences	Hebrew Definition
קָלַלָּהּ	qelālā	<H7045>	27	Accursed, vilification, to make vile, to debase, to degrade, to defame, traduce, to attempt to degrade by slander, to represent as blamable, to condemn, calumniate, willfully represent, to accuse or charge one falsely, and knowingly with some crime, offense, or something disreputable, to slander.
שֶׁבַע	shebû'â	<H7621>	1	Something sworn, an oath or a curse that has binding quality, to bind oneself by an oath, oaths were made by God to show the absolute certainty of His performance of promises and blessings.
תְּאֵלָה	ta'alâ	<H8381>	1	The curse of punishment for the enemies of God's people resulting in dullness of heart. Lam. 3:65

Original Language	Transliteration	Strong's	Used	Greek Definitions
ἀναθεματίζω	anathematizō	<G332>	1	To bind by a curse, or simply to curse. To bind under a curse. from <G331> (anathema); to declare or vow under penalty of execration :- (bind under a) curse, bind with an oath.
κακολογέω	kakologeō	<G2551>	2	Evil speaking, to speak evil of, or to curse; to speak in a way that dishonors the other, kakos is assume evil for that which is not viciously or deliberately evil. To attribute evil intentions or evil motives which may not be the actual truth.
κατανάθεμα	katanathema	<G2652>	1	A curse against someone, like anathema, but stronger. The opposite of speaking a blessing or speaking well of another. Kata-to speak words of a hostile intent, to lower or bring down another.
καταναθεματίζω	katanathematizō	<G2653>	1	To utter curses against, to bind with an oath. To wish evil against a person.
κατάρα	katara	<G2671>	3	A curse, malediction, opposite of a blessing. The rejection and curse by God as well as the resulting judgment and ruin inflicted. Christ became a curse for us. He was the curse and also suffered the results of the curse.
καταράομαι	kataraoimai	<G2672>	6	To pray or speak evil of a person, or to pray or wish evil upon them.

Consider yourselves whether you are in the faith:

1. Do we listen to news or read articles without questioning the words we hear? Do we accept what others tells us or do we hold their words up to the Light of His Word.
2. In your own life have you developed negative patterns of reporting information that may demoralize others? Note Joshua and Caleb shared the same report of the other spies but their

reported the same information from a godly perspective with faith that God would give them the ability to overcome all obstacles.

3. Do I speak negatively about others?
4. When I am hurt by another person's insensitivity, do I confront the person directly or do I share my frustrations about that person with others?
5. If Christ was sitting in on your conversations would they be the same or would you feel the need to be more circumspect in your words?
6. Do you ever use a request for prayer as a guise to share gossip?
7. Do I speak differently in a group of Christians than I would in a group of non-believers?
8. By my words would those around me know I am a Christian? If yes, do my words consistently represent Jesus and align with His character?
9. Do I use words that are specifically chosen to edify and build up others or do my words criticize or tear down?
10. Do my words express my faith in the LORD or do they come from despair over circumstances?