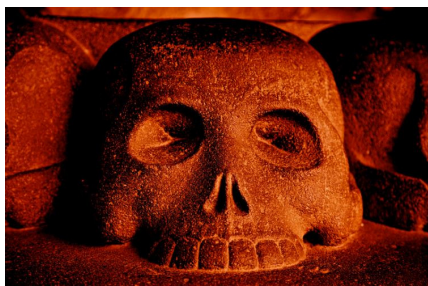




Are Curses Real? Curses Series (Part I)

Ephesians 4:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶*Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.*



The history and cultures of our world have brought us to where we are today. While various cultures have fueled wonderful traditions, solid communities and exemplary progress, many cultures have also brought us darkness, superstitions and a strong desire to harm those they see as enemies. Enter the worldwide phenomena of curses. To quote from Wikipedia, “A curse is any expressed wish that some form of adversity or misfortune will befall or attach to one or more persons, a place, or an object.” If we look, we find the existence of curses all through human history and across a multitude of cultures. Where do curses come from? Are they real? Should we be afraid of being cursed?

The word “curse” is one of the top words searched for at ChristianQuestions.com and we often receive mail from listeners asking about curses.



inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com

Here are a few examples:

Nalu said: I did something many years ago, now I feel may be the parents of my friend cursed me...I think I don't deserve the curse...if I prayed to God will He free me from the curse?

Jason said: I am working very hard to free myself from generational curses, word curses spoke over me by family members...I feel as I have been living under a curse my whole life... I am a committed Christian and want all the blessings that have been stolen from me back.

Sheila said: My son feels like he's cursed because lots of hurtful painful things have been happening to him this last year.



John messaged us through the CQ app: **How can I get rid of curses?**

The subject of curses is a massive subject. We will break it down into three primary parts. In this episode, we will examine the general phenomena of curses from a traditional, scientific and biblical perspective. In Part II, we will look at curses in the Old Testament to investigate what was said and done. In Part III, we will examine curses in the New Testament, observe the similarities and differences from Old Testament curses and see what our Christian responsibilities are.



We have a lot of ground to cover in this three-part series. Stay with us as we sort out the truth on the matter of curses.

Was God, the Creator of all things, responsible for bringing curses to humanity?

There are two important terms to help us understand. These terms appear in the definitions of the several biblical words translated as “curse”:

Execrate
/ˈɛkstrəˌkɑːt/
verb: feel or express great loathing for

Imprecate
/ˈɪmprəˌkɑːt/
verb: a spoken curse

There is a big difference between loathing someone and wishing evil upon someone. This will be an important aspect of our conversation.

There will be a few famous examples of curses interspersed throughout this episode.



It is said that misfortune follows those involved with Superman television shows and movies. It started when the original actor who starred in the television show "Adventures in Superman" in the 1950's shot himself at age 45. The curse is so well-known that according to Wikipedia, "...some talent agents cite the curse as the reason for the difficulty in casting actors in the role in live-action feature films."

We will discuss the legitimacy of such curses as we go.

God proclaimed the consequences of sin in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:14,16-17: (NASB) ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, *Because you have done this, **cursed <779>** are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life;*

Curse: Strongs #779 'arar; to execrate

God cursed Satan, who manifested himself in the form of a serpent. The consequences continue:

¹⁶To the woman He said, *I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.* ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, *because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat from it; **cursed <779>** is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.*

God also cursed the ground for Adam’s sake. This is evidence that God introduced the idea of curses in the very beginning. What do we do with this? We will look closer at these verses later to unfold the role God plays.



Have you ever said, “God bless you” after someone sneezes? There are a few origin stories for this. One is that back in the first century, a sneeze was the body’s way of getting rid of evil spirits. Countering with “God bless you” was thought to be a good luck charm, providing protection against their curses.

Are God's curses here in Genesis similar to the curses we see happening throughout the world? This is an important question with an important distinction.

(Source: Wikipedia) In particular, "curse" may refer to such a wish or pronouncement made effective by a supernatural or spiritual power, such as a god or gods, a spirit, or a natural force, or else as a kind of spell by magic or witchcraft; in the latter sense, a curse can also be called a hex or a jinx. In many belief systems, the curse itself (or accompanying ritual) is considered to have some causative force in the result.

This says a curse is wishing harm on someone using a supernatural power. In many belief systems, the curse itself has its own power to do harm. It goes beyond just a wish to harm.

Let's go to another famous curse example:

SPARKLY CURSE



The Hope Diamond is over 45 carats and estimated to be worth more than \$300 million. The diamond is said to have caused divorce, suicide, mysterious deaths, financial ruin and much more. Since it now resides in the United States at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, some believe it is still cursing the American people right now.

Over the course of this three-part series, we will look at what it means to curse someone. We will then come back to God's original curses and our Christian responsibilities. There are some very important differences, but we need to paint the picture of what curses look like within this world first.

(Source: Excerpt from theconversation.com, Why Do People Believe in Curses? August 30, 2019) The power of curses to influence people stems from belief in their veracity (truthfulness, accuracy). This often arises from an external locus of control, where people feel unable to influence events. In the absence of perceived control, people become more accepting of mysterious, external forces. Psychologists refer to this as magical thinking.

We are surrounded by the idea of curses. Whether we realize it or not, curses are so commonplace, and we are affected by them.

"CURSED" CHAIR



Busby's Stoop Chair, also called Dead Man's Chair, is said to have been cursed by murderer Thomas Busby before he was executed in 1702 in North Yorkshire, England. "Death shall come swiftly to anyone that dares to sit in my chair." Allegedly many have died who sat in it, so it is on display in the town's museum - hanging on the wall to prevent anyone from sitting in it.

(The chair has been dated to have been made 138 years *after* Busby's execution, yet the spooky legend lives on.)

Curses are in every part of our society. What does that mean, and how real are they?

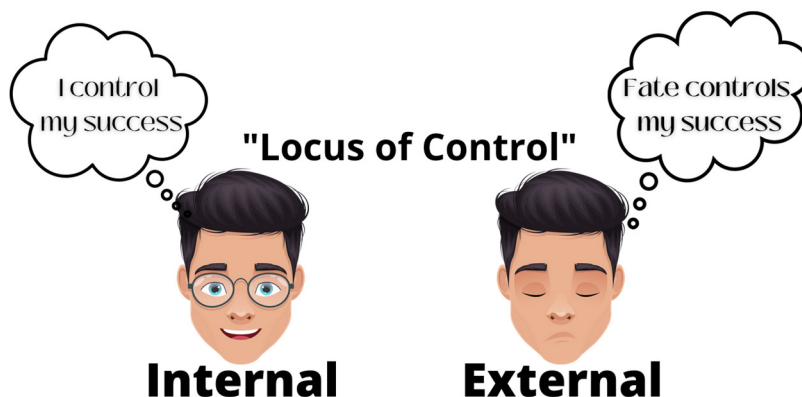
What is a "locus of control"?

(Source: Psychology Today, Locus of Control - How Do We Determine Our Successes and Failures? August 2, 2017) An individual's belief system regarding the causes of his or her experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure.

This is a psychological tendency toward "curses" having an effect on us versus the psychological tendency to not let have them an effect on us.

INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL - the person attributes their success to their own efforts and abilities. They tend to be more achievement-oriented and have a higher self-esteem.

An internal locus of control basically says we believe we are responsible for creating our destiny, our next steps, versus being a victim.



We should have an internal locus of control, but as Christians, we must strive for our internal locus of control to be our spiritual mind, NOT our earthly mind:

1 Corinthians 6:19: (Young's Literal Translation) *have ye not known that your body is a sanctuary of the holy spirit in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own,*

God's spirit is in us; therefore, we have an internal control from God. Rather than what we think or want, we should be looking for God's will to control us as we serve Him with the influence of His spirit.

EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL - the person attributes his or her success to luck or fate. They are more likely to experience anxiety because they feel they are not in control of their lives.

We become victims of our circumstances.

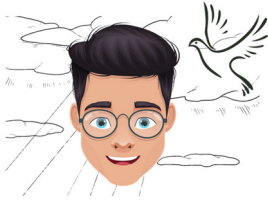
The locus is thought to be a trait we are born with but is also shaped by childhood experiences. The article quotes, "Children who were raised by parents who encouraged their independence and helped them learn the connection between actions and their consequences tended to have a more well-developed internal locus of control."

Researchers followed more than 7,500 British adults followed since birth. They determined, "Those who had shown an internal locus of control by age ten were less likely to be overweight at age 30, less likely to describe their health as poor, or show high levels of psychological stress."

(Source: Psychology Today, Locus of Control - how do we determine our successes and failures? August 2, 2017)



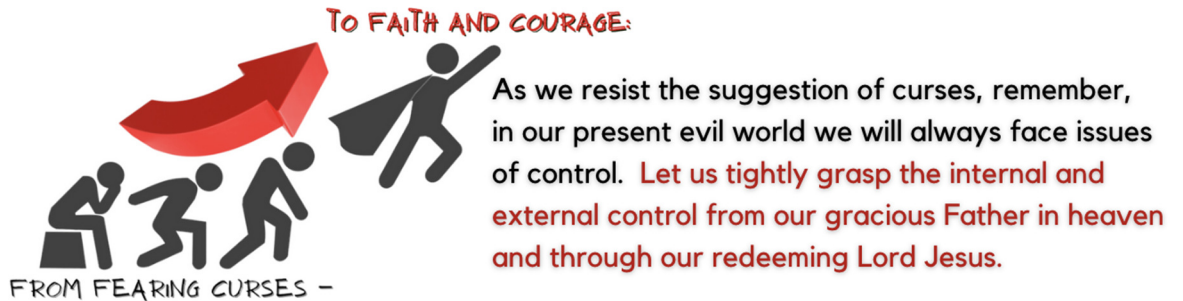
This can be a learned behavior. In relation to curses, do you feel like you or your family are being cursed or have been cursed? What is *your* locus of control?



As Christians, we must strive for our “external locus of control” to be driven by our faith in God’s providence, not through curses and other mystical things:

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

If we see the world around us and our experiences through God's providence, we do not have to worry about curses.



As we resist the suggestion of curses, remember, in our present evil world we will always face issues of control. **Let us tightly grasp the internal and external control from our gracious Father in heaven and through our redeeming Lord Jesus.**

The idea of cursing someone or being cursed can be scary. We need to know how all this works.

Besides this locus of control, what else do we need to understand to fight the feelings of being cursed?

We have just scratched the surface, as battling the very idea of curses and their suggested power over us is multifaceted. The key direction we want to focus on is the power of our minds for both good and evil, coupled with the power of our inborn or developed personality traits.



BUT ARE CURSES REAL? Is it all just superstition and the power of suggestion or should we be on guard against satanic influences?

Yes, there are real curses, but we firmly believe most are superstition or are created by our mind’s own power of suggestion. However, we still must be careful because Satan is wily and determined. He wishes bad things to happen to those who follow Christ.

COLD CURSE



The Iceman named Otzi is a well-preserved frozen mummy discovered by two German hikers on the border between Austria and Italy in 1991. It is said to have caused at least 7 deaths of people involved with the body, including the man who made the discovery and the man writing a book about the discovery. Otzi is currently in a museum in Bolzano, Italy.

Curses like this show up in every culture.



(Source: Excerpt from theconversation.com, Why Do People Believe in Curses? August 30, 2019) In addition, belief in curses is associated with certain personality characteristics, particularly, tolerance of ambiguity and neuroticism.

There are many articles about the tendency to believe in curses because of different external and internal influences. Are these some of the things we might be struggling with? We want to holistically look at the psychology of the matter, relevant scripture and then the reality.

The following is our summation of the above article (and other sources) focused on how certain personality traits increase our susceptibility to feeling cursed.

TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY - describes the degree to which an individual can cope with uncertainty. Those with a low tolerance of ambiguity look for closure, which manifests as the failure to critically consider evidence and to then jump to conclusions. This can lead to indiscriminate, premature acceptance of material.

Ambiguity
 /,am-bə-'gyü-ə-tē/
noun: uncertainty

We can be looking to find a logical answer to make things fit. For some, a curse seems logical because it makes the pieces fit together. We must be careful not to run down that road, because sometimes God's providence leaves things unanswered for quite some time in our lives.

Whatever our natural or learned tolerance of ambiguity is, as Christians, we need to challenge it with scriptural principle:

1 Peter 4:12: (NASB) *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;*

If our tolerance of ambiguity is low, we may create scenarios and say, "Wow, these strange things are happening to me; I must be cursed. God must not like me." The Apostle Peter is telling us, *do not be surprised* when things look strange in our life because it is God's providence working with us. We need to tame our lack of tolerance for ambiguity with faith.

NEUROTICISM -

Neuroticism *noun:*
 /nu-'rā-tə-si-zəm/
a tendency toward anxiety, depression, self-doubt and other negative feelings



Having this trait of neuroticism can facilitate worry, concern and rumination about curses. Let's be honest, most of us have issues along the lines of being able to cope and have anxiety or self-doubt. This is okay. The issue comes when we create answers for things that are not scriptural. Many of these superstitions and curses fill our anxiety and give us something to ruminate on. Then we start playing the tape repeatedly. Suddenly this curse idea becomes a driving force in our life.

Episodes 1124 and 1125: (Parts I and II)
Does My Anxiety or Depression Invalidate My Christianity?

Understanding how anxiety and depression affect my Christianity

Many of us have anxiety and self-doubt. The issue becomes when we create unscriptural answers for our concerns and curses can become a driving force in our lives.

Whatever our tendencies are towards anxiety or doubt, we need to continually engage in the internal battle of reminding ourselves to keep focused on what Jesus says regarding our experiences in this present day: Matthew 6:34: (NASB) *so do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

Be present in today. Deal with today's challenges with today's faith.

Being already prone to self-doubt and anxiety can certainly make us more susceptible to negative events when we do not know why they keep happening to us. Since we are so used to this idea of curses and being cursed, it becomes reasonable in our minds that we are indeed cursed.

CULTURAL BELIEFS - One other strong reason people believe in curses is their cultural beliefs. Cultural beliefs are culturally acceptable ideas such as the "evil eye" protecting against those wishing to undue our good fortune.

For more about the "evil eye":



**Episode 1149:
Ghosts, Reincarnation and
Humanity - What's Real? (Part II)**

Shining the light of Scripture on reincarnation and mystical practices

Cultural beliefs have a major effect on us. Much of our inborn or developed personality traits come from our culture.

Whatever our background, we need to remember that we have walked away from its thinking and experiences and given our lives into the hands of our loving God:

Philippians 3:7-8: (NASB) *⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,*

The Apostle Paul was an accomplished man. He had power, influence, stature and knowledge. He had a following he walked away from. We also need to do that, especially if our culture or the ambiguity we suffer from brings us to the idea that we are cursed.

In short, our personality characteristics can play a significant role in how we manage the *perceived* threat of curses.

TO FAITH AND COURAGE:

When facing the challenging uncertainty of feeling that curses can affect us, let us always remember we are called of God. **When God called us, He knew who we were and He knew we could be faithful to Him. Stand in the courage of our calling.**

FROM FEARING CURSES -



Does this mean Christians cannot be cursed by someone or something? We will be addressing this question over the course of this series.

(Source: Excerpt from theconversation.com, Why Do People Believe in Curses? August 30, 2019) In extreme cases, belief in curses can undermine confidence in oneself and one's future success. Psychologists refer to this as self-fulfilling prophecy. This is where belief in a curse produces the perception of inevitable misfortune. Indeed, the mere suggestion of bad luck can produce negative outcomes. Researchers call this the Nocebo Effect.

Let's compare a placebo and a nocebo. Nocebo is the opposite of a placebo.

(Source: Oxford English Dictionary) **PLACEBO** (noun): a harmless pill, medicine, or procedure prescribed more for the psychological benefit to the patient than for any physiological effect. A substance that has no therapeutic effect, used as a control in testing new drugs. A measure designed merely to calm or please someone.

(Source: Oxford English Dictionary) **NOCEBO** (noun): a detrimental effect on health produced by psychological or psychosomatic factors such as negative expectations of treatment or prognosis. Nocebo describes a case where putting someone in a negative frame of mind has an adverse effect on their health or well-being.

The Nocebo Effect:

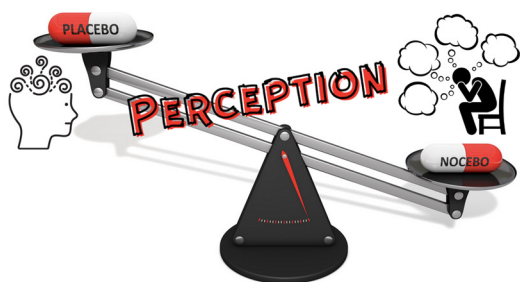


Something HARMLESS that causes us harm because we BELIEVE it to be harmful.

Some examples of nocebo:

- Telling someone a medical procedure will be extremely painful makes it more likely certain people will experience more pain.
- Telling someone about the side effects of a drug makes it more likely for some people to report experiencing those effects, even when they were given a harmless substance like a sugar pill.
- Some have been given a wrong medical diagnosis with a certain life expectancy. They die within the predicted time, only to find in autopsy the wrong diagnosis was given, and the person was perfectly healthy.
- Volunteers looking for a link between mobile phone usage and headaches reported severe headaches even though they did not realize the "phone" they were given was an empty shell.

Our minds are much more powerful than we think!



(Source: <https://brainlogger.com/2009/07/15/the-curse-of-the-nocebo-effect/>)

One explanation of the nocebo effect is a patient's anticipation of worsening pain causes an increase in anxiety which triggers the activation of cholecystokinin (a hormone) that, in turn, facilitates pain transmission. This response generates a vicious circle of anxiety and pain.

With both a placebo and a nocebo, the results are based on perception and not reality.

As Christians, we must be on our guard to see the reality of what ultimately brings hope and fulfillment to our lives:

1 Timothy 6:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.



Putting our *hope on the uncertainty of riches* - here is where we have the placebo and nocebo effect happening. With an uncertainty, our mind falls prey to that uncertainty and will interpret it one way or another. If we are thinking in terms of curses, our mind interprets it in a very negative way. We need to get away from that and place our hope in the providence of God which never has a negative end result.



TO FAITH AND COURAGE:

As the belief in curses is subtle and widespread, let us be sure to not model our thinking or actions after such fictitious thinking. **Instead, let us think and act based upon the facts of grace and hope from our Heavenly Father.**

Where do we put our greatest credibility in our lives? God and the Scriptures. Without such eternal credibility, our faith will be on shaky ground.

As we further examine curses, it is beginning to become obvious that the power of suggestion has quite an influence.

Is it possible that our fear of curses can be physiological causes and NOT spiritual causes?

As we dig more deeply into the suggestive power of curses, we inevitably need to spend some time on human physiology. We have already examined the power of internal versus external control, the power of our personality characteristics and the power of suggestion. Now, what about the power of biology *causing* the feeling of being cursed?



KING TUT

Allegedly in the Egyptian tomb of the boy king, Tutankhamen, a curse was found that said,

"Death comes on wings to he who enters the tomb of a pharaoh."

Many involved in the expedition have died mysteriously.

Let's take a look at "epigenetics" and see some amazing things that can relate to how we, as humans, *process* our reactions to the idea of curses.

Our amazement was shared by David long ago:

Psalms 139:13-14: (NASB) ¹³For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.

Here in the 21st century, we are just beginning to discover the depth of the wonder of how the human form is put together. David wrote those verses thousands of years ago, and we are now seeing the physical evidence of what he expressed, come to be right before our eyes.



We went to our resident expert, friend and Professor of Microbiology at Marshall University, Dr. Wendy Trzyna, to explain this relatively new study of epigenetics and how it might influence what people call “generational curses.” (We will talk further on this subject in Part II of this series). We first asked her to explain what this is all about:

What is epigenetics, Dr. Wendy

- *Every one of us is defined by our genomes, which is essentially the collection of genes we’ve inherited from our parents. However, our traits and characteristics are also influenced by the environment and our experiences, which is the component we typically refer to as “nurture.” It is generally accepted that nature and nurture both contribute to making us who we are. Although the human genome was sequenced nearly two decades ago, there is still much to be learned about exactly how much our genes are responsible for certain behaviors and characteristics and how much is determined by the environment, and also how these components work together. The exciting field of epigenetics investigates how the environment can influence or change patterns of gene expression in our cells. Epigenetic patterns can affect many things like our behaviors, responses and susceptibility to various diseases. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequences, but rather how and when a DNA sequence is read. Epigenetic changes are chemical markers that are added to specific sites along the genome, and what chemical is added and where determines the effect that occurs. Epigenetic changes have been linked to all sorts of issues like metabolic diseases, cancers, Alzheimer’s, schizophrenia and PTSD.*

These epigenetic modifications switch specific genes on and off according to environmental and other triggers - although the DNA sequence itself does not change, those changed markers that sit on top of the DNA can be passed down through generations.

There is a hidden world of biological information within each of us. This helps us understand the uniqueness we all have - and therefore the unique challenges we each face.

The Apostle Paul hinted at this uniqueness:

1 Corinthians 2:11-12: (Weymouth) ¹¹For, among human beings, who knows a man’s inner thoughts except the man’s own spirit within him? In the same way, also, only God’s spirit is acquainted with God’s inner thoughts. ¹²But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the spirit which comes forth from God, that we may know the blessings that have been so freely given to us by God.

When we read these verses in light of epigenetics, which says each of us has chemical markers on our DNA causing a physiological switch on or off, it seems as though the Apostle Paul had insight that each of us is entirely unique in our thinking. Paul says we cannot know another *man’s inner thoughts* because we are each wired to react differently. There is physiological proof of this! For someone afraid of generational curses, this information can help us hold on to hope.

We know parents pass on their DNA to their children, but can they also pass on these chemical markers that change how our DNA is read?



Are epigenetic changes heritable, Dr. Wendy

- *Now the interesting question is whether or not these epigenetic changes can be passed on to one's offspring. In other words, if you acquire a metabolic disease through environmental factors, will that tendency be passed on to your children or even your grandchildren? Until recently, we thought the answer was no. In fact, the data traditionally shows that in mammals the slate is essentially wiped clean of any epigenetic modifications, and the offspring begins anew. However, a small number of studies have shown that this reprogramming did not always occur completely, leaving a few modifications behind, and thus leaving open the possibility for transgenerational inheritance related especially to things like metabolic disorders such as diabetes and obesity. The studies also showed that when these environmentally-induced disorders were prevalent in fathers, the offspring had an increased risk, or tendency, for developing these conditions as well.*

Seeing these epigenetic markers pass from generation to generation is fascinating. This is not the gene itself; this is a chemical marker that turns the gene on and off. It was thought that children receiving their parents' genes would not inherit the markers, but new studies indicate this can happen.

Although he was not referring to epigenetics, the Apostle Paul showed us how to apply encouragement to the paradox of our fleshly being:

Romans 7:21-25: (NASB) ²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²²For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Paul acknowledged the weaknesses and inclinations he was wired for. They were always with him, but he did not have to follow these tendencies! He could choose not to. He had the inner struggle but could rise to the level of Christlikeness, even if his "wiring" was tugging him in the other direction.

As Christians, we can be encouraged when overcoming the irrational fears of many things, including curses, by accepting the duality of our *physical* being striving for a *spiritual* life.

MAYBE?

What if Satan, one of the highest of God's creations back in the beginning of time, knew about DNA and these epigenetic markers influenced by experiences? What if he knew he could push certain experiences that could place markers on person's DNA, bending them toward sin or towards feeling they were being cursed? Satan, a psychopath, wants to do harm to all of God's creation. He boasted he would be like the Most High in [Isaiah 14:14](#). In his sick way, he can manipulate, guide, direct and control people - even brainwash them. In revenge, he wants to destroy or pervert what God loves.


Mouse study, Dr. Wendy

- In a study carried out in mice, the mice were subjected to behavioral conditioning where they were exposed to a specific scent and then administered an electric shock. Over time the mice associated the scent with the trauma, and eventually just the scent alone would trigger the trauma response. Their offspring, as well as the next generation, also demonstrated a fear of the smell, even though they had never been exposed to the scent before or conditioned to react in that manner. This study suggests that the scent response was passed on to the next generation. Even physical changes in their brains were observed. Similar tendencies have been described in studies of children of Holocaust survivors and more recently, babies born to women who experienced trauma from the World Trade Center attacks of 9/11. In the latter case, lower levels of cortisol were observed in both the mothers and their offspring, attributed to PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) during gestation. This resulted in children who developed hypertension, insulin resistance and depression.*



Scientists found that all three generations of mice had a higher-than-average number of olfactory receptors to detect the odor. It appears the mice inherited the trauma of their ancestors! Human studies have suggested similar conclusions.

These generations of mice feared a scent they never smelled before. It was expected that only those who had been conditioned to fear the smell would react.

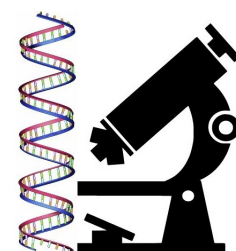
Even though our biology might be programmed this way, we are not required to give in to it. We are looking at the propensity to feel like we are cursed or our family is cursed and wanting to break the curse. We need to break the thinking that feeds the superstition. We want to examine the many aspects that can lead to this fear.

The Apostle Paul prepares us for such challenges by displaying his own clear spiritual focus:

Philippians 4:12-13: (NASB) ¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

The Apostle Paul tells us that whatever circumstance came his way, he could manage because he had Christ as his anchor. We can also tap into this spiritual focus no matter how our chemical wiring afflicts us. It may not be easy, but we have this same heavenly help available to us. As Christians, we are compelled to fulfill the calling of our discipleship and not give in to what we naturally crave.

Dr. Wendy shared an additional study looking at epigenetic markers in patients with military PTSD. The epigenetic modification actually changed as a result of successful treatment.





Quoting from its summary, “This study showed a clear link between a psychological or behavioral modification and a detectable biological change.” They were able to remove the epigenetic marker that triggered the PTSD symptoms. In other words, the chemical sitting on the person’s DNA could be removed or changed by therapy. What hope this gives for all of us in changing our reactions and fears to certain stressors!

Please see the Bonus Material for the professional references Dr. Wendy provides.



My wife, Tricia, went through PTSD. Her life fell apart before both our eyes. She received treatment, but it was difficult as I watched her struggle and recovery. Seeing her now versus then is like night and day. Something changed during that treatment. The description of epigenetic modifications really does fit her experience.

We know that if we are faithful in our Christian walk, we will be given the job of rehabilitating mankind in God’s kingdom. By realizing we all have these markers, we can help others by empathizing and showing how God helped us overcome our own tendencies.



Where are *you* finding strength?

All the epigenetics research is enlightening and helps us focus in on separating curse facts from curse fiction.

How far into Christianity has the mentality of generational or individual curses come? Should we be scared?

This is a big question, and unfortunately the answer can be depressing. As with any other aspect of life, there are those who claim the name of Christ and use it for personal gain. The superstition of curses is evident everywhere we look. Unfortunately, the business of removing these curses is also alive and well.

This is not limited to your local fake psychic on the corner, although they have scammed people out of millions of dollars promising to remove curses. If you do not fall for that, perhaps you will be taken in by popular churches who are happy to sell you books and courses on how to remove curses to give you all you want in life.



The BUSINESS of curse removal *outside* of Christianity:

(Source: westsidetoday.com, Breakfast Food to Remove Curses? March 10, 2020) According to the Los Angeles Police Department: “These types of scams are more common than one may think and target emotionally, physically and spiritually vulnerable victims. The scams often involve eggs and/or bananas to determine the extent of a curse, and a promise to return any money or valuables the victim may provide the suspect.

Victims are often reluctant to report these incidents out of embarrassment and fear of being ostracized and scorned by their friends and family.”

These scams work because people are too embarrassed to admit they were taken in by them. This is widespread. There are many reports detailing scams to get rid of curses. Most of the belief in curses is based on superstition.

The BUSINESS of curse removal *from within* Christianity:

Some “Prosperity Gospel” preachers say that while we know God as our Father, He is also the Judge in the Courts of Heaven, which coincidentally operates like our modern legal system. The theology is based on the idea that God gave Adam legal authority over earth. When Adam sinned, he lost that authority to Satan. They say God cannot legally take action unless we somehow take that authority from Satan and give it back to God. Supposedly, this is why so many prayers go unanswered because we first have to obtain “legal verdicts from heaven.” Basically, God is UNABLE to bless us unless we do something to take the authority from Satan.



(Source: <https://www.destinyimage.com/blog/2016/08/05/robert-henderson-breaking-curses-in-the-courts-of-heaven> blog by Robert Henderson) One of the functions of the heavenly Courts is to “unlock our destinies by dissolving curses against us that are denying and delaying our futures.” Another crucial issue to dissolving curses is to recognize they can operate among a New Testament people...

We have been saying all along that most of this is superstition. Here you have a Christian saying how we need to dissolve these generational curses and “they can operate among New Testament people...” We are a “New Testament people,” and he is saying these curses are alive and well today. This is a completely opposite viewpoint to ours. To continue...

When Jesus declared, “It is finished” on the cross, he was declaring that every legal requirement had been met for the reconciliation and reclaiming of all things back to God. The problem is that it is one thing for a legal verdict to be rendered and another for the execution of it to take place. When a judge sits on a bench and renders a verdict, he doesn’t then come down from that bench and enforce it. There are others who must take the legal rendering of the judge and execute it into place until it has practical and functional ramifications. The holy spirit came to empower us to be the officers of the court to execute into place that judgment.

He is taking the beauty of the ransom price of Jesus with its promise of reconciliation as a result of that ransom and trying to apply it to everyday life to remove curses! This is NOT what the ransom is about. The reconciliation Jesus will accomplish will bring the world of mankind back to God - not what some see in their minds now in relation to curses. He is completely upending the message, the main point of the gospel.



Clarifying the purpose of the ransom and the process of salvation

(Source: <https://dougaddison.com/2018/03/6-types-of-courts-in-the-courts-of-heaven>)
The Courts of Heaven operate similar to the legal system we see on earth. Because of all the injustices happening in the world, God is releasing new revelation about gaining justice through the Courts of Heaven. The Cross of Christ is our verdict but there are times we need to enforce this by entering into the justice system of God. We operate in the Courts of Heaven through prayer and an intimate relationship with the Lord.

In researching this topic, we saw scriptures being grossly misrepresented in order to support this “new revelation.”

Here is the first of just two examples:



Matthew 5:25: (KJV) *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

Jesus is talking here about agreeing with your adversary before going to court so that you will have an easier verdict. The Courts of Heaven teaching use this verse to say we need to agree with Satan about the sins we have committed. This is not even remotely close to what Jesus meant in this verse! We are NOT to have conversations with Satan.

Even worse is the perversion of the next text:

Psalms 40:7-8: (KJV) *⁷Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume (scroll) of the book it is written of me, ⁸I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.*



They interpret the scroll as a legal document requiring us to find legal representation. But these verses are about Jesus, not us! It is a complete misrepresentation of these beautiful scriptures.

We know this by seeing where it is quoted in Hebrews:

Hebrews 10:7,9,10,12: (KJV) *⁷Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. ⁹Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. ¹⁰By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹²But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

This theology misrepresents many scriptures, creating a scenario about a fictitious court in heaven. This court does not exist. They claim it will remove curses and give you all you want and deserve in this life, including justice when it is not found in earthly courts. Please do not go down this road!



We wanted to play a short audio clip to describe how this all works, but it is so complex with heavenly bailiffs of angels, defense attorneys, witnesses, default judgments, procedural issues and mental paperwork that has to be “filed” while praying and meditating that even the introduction video from Robert Henderson himself was nearly two hours long!



It reminded us of the Harry Potter books which we do not promote. An entirely new world must be created for the Courts of Heaven with characters, storyline, terms and definitions and how things work in a magical world.

One must invest a lot of time, money and energy into figuring out how all this would remove curses for us, which of course will not work. We are talking about witchcraft, not the Bible and Christianity!

All of this “new revelation” with NO scriptural basis? Let’s refocus.

What should we believe if we have a fear of curses?

1 Peter 5:6-8: (NASB) ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Satan is trying to devour us! We should NOT be talking or negotiating with Satan about our sins. Be careful, be on the alert. Stay away from him.



Check out our CQ Kids video:

WHO IS SATAN?

christianquestions.com/youtube

So, are curses real? We believe some are, and Satan is behind them.

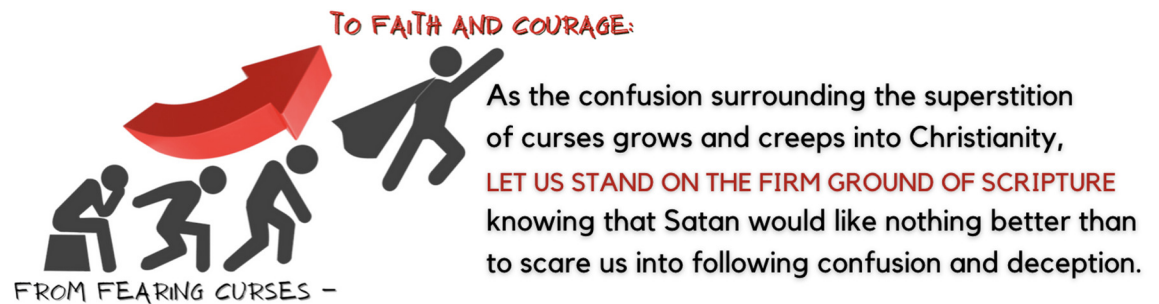
Did God curse people in the Bible? Yes, but we have to be careful with the word “curse,” as we will explain. There definitely are curses in the Bible, and we will focus on these in Parts II and III.



Episode 1196 **September 20, 2021**
Am I Living Under a Generational Curse? Curses Series (Part II)

COMING SOON

In this episode, we are looking at the superstitions which we have inside of us that may make us susceptible to these things.



TO FAITH AND COURAGE:
 As the confusion surrounding the superstition of curses grows and creeps into Christianity, **LET US STAND ON THE FIRM GROUND OF SCRIPTURE** knowing that Satan would like nothing better than to scare us into following confusion and deception.

FROM FEARING CURSES -

This is Satan’s game, and he plays it well!



Let's begin to put our biblical understanding of curses in order:

Genesis 3:14,16-17: (NASB) ¹⁴The LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, **cursed <779> are you** more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; ¹⁶to the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your

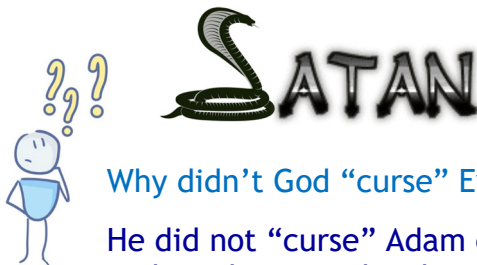
desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; **cursed <779> is the ground** because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Curse: Strongs #779 'arar; to execrate

Execrate

/'ekstrə,kāt/

verb: feel or express great loathing for



God cursed Satan (who was manifesting himself in the form of a serpent), and God also cursed the ground because of Adam's disobedience.

Why didn't God "curse" Eve?

He did not "curse" Adam either! Wait a minute...we often speak about Adam and Eve being under the curse of sin. However, in light of today's discussion and the world's definition of "curse" - meaning wishing harm to someone - we want to clarify:

For Adam and Eve, being under the curse of sin meant facing the *severe consequences of their sinful actions*. God did NOT want them to be harmed; He DID want them to learn! In today's definition, cursing someone means you wish harm on someone; God did not do that.

When God placed these curses, He was expressing "execration," a loathing for that which He cursed. For Satan, this meant he would be banished out of the light of God's power and presence but would be allowed to exist with the limited power God would allow him to wield.

In this great universe, any being existing outside of the light and influence of God is inherently evil, and therefore will act against God's will. God sees any being outside of His light as treasonous, and therefore He sees it with loathing.

God loathes Satan's ways because he is a treasonous being - a traitor, trying to undo the goodness, mercy, power and benevolence of God. This holds true for the fallen angels that followed Satan before the Flood as well.

When God cursed the ground for Adam's sake, He ceased to develop the earth's productivity to the level of the Garden of Eden. The ground was unfinished - it had not been brought to perfection like the Garden of Eden. It would grow things haphazardly, without the refinements from God's hand to maximize its efficiency. Adam's consequence was to manage the earth without the hand of





God. The ground was not finished; it was outside of God’s light. The ground was cursed so that man could learn. When God cursed the ground, it was not that He wished to cause evil, but that He planned consequences for the sake of learning.

The English word “curse” is very imprecise. In the rest of this three-part series, we are going to see that the Old Testament Hebrew language has 14 different words for our one English word “curse,” and the New Testament Greek has nine, all with slightly different shades of meaning.

This is like the word “love” in the New Testament. *Storge*, *philia* and *agape* all have different shades of meaning and come in different forms, but all are translated “love” in the Bible.

There are still a lot of questions we must answer.



- What curses did God proclaim in the Old Testament?
- Were there generational curses, and what does that even mean?
- What is the Old Testament definition of “curse”?
- Is this different from how we use the word today?
- Does God give permission for people to curse others?



- What role do curses play in the New Testament?
- How are curses defined in the New Testament in relation to those in the Old Testament and today?
- Are there real curses today? If so, what is their source of power?
- Is God cursing people today?
- Are we walking under a blessing or under a curse?



We have only scratched the surface. In Part I, we put curses on the table to define what we are talking about. We looked at them from a logical perspective by examining the way we think, the input we get that triggers our thinking, and the physiological makeup of the human form that can give us tendencies towards believing in curses and their ill effects, even down through generations.

We warn people to please be careful. Most of the time a fear of curses is because of our own internal fears, or of suggestion or suspicion. We believe sometimes Satan may pretend to be an *angel of light* to infiltrate our thinking.



In Part II, we will develop what God’s part is in all of this by reviewing curses in the Old Testament. In Part III, we will review curses in the New Testament and discuss what our part is and how we should handle the topic of curses. What if we are afraid or know people who are afraid? What do we say to them? How should we think about curses?

As Christians, we need to stand on the firm foundation of Scripture only. We are given much to stand on, realizing that our lives are within God’s hands.



*So, are curses real?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on September 20, 2021
Ep. 1196: Am I Living Under a Generational Curse?
Curses Series (Part II)

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

Bonus Material and Study Questions

References:

Illum LRH, Bak ST, Lund S, Nielsen AL. (2018) DNA methylation in epigenetic inheritance of metabolic diseases through the male germ line. *J Mol Endocrinol.* 60(2): R39-R56. doi: 10.1530/JME-17-0189

Jawaid A, Roszkowski M, Mansuy IM. (2018) Transgenerational Epigenetics of Traumatic Stress. *Prog Mol Biol Transl Sci.* 158:273-298. doi: 10.1016/bs.pmbts.2018.03.003

Kwapis JL, Wood MA. (2014) Epigenetic mechanisms in fear conditioning: implications for treating post-traumatic stress disorder. *Trends Neurosci.* 37(12):706-20. doi: 10.1016/j.tins.2014.08.005

Lacal, I., & Ventura, R. (2018). Epigenetic Inheritance: Concepts, Mechanisms and Perspectives. *Frontiers in molecular neuroscience*, 11, 292. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnmol.2018.00292>

Tammen, S.A., Friso, S., Choi, S.-W. (2013) Epigenetics: The link between nature and nurture, *Molecular Aspects of Medicine*, 34 (4) 753-764. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mam.2012.07.018>

Vinkers, C.H., Geuze, E., van Rooij, S.J.H. et al. (201) Successful treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder reverses DNA methylation marks. *Mol Psychiatry* 26, 1264-1271 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-019-0549-3>

Yehuda R, Engel SM, Brand SR, Seckl J, Marcus SM, Berkowitz GS. (2005) Transgenerational effects of posttraumatic stress disorder in babies of mothers exposed to the World Trade Center attacks during pregnancy. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 90(7):4115-8. doi: 10.1210/jc.2005-0550

<https://www.whatisepigenetics.com/scarred-for-life-the-epigenetics-of-fear/>

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1195: Are Curses Real? Curses Series (Part I)

<https://christianquestions.com/society/are-curses-real-curses-series-part-i/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. What do the words “execrate” and “imprecate” mean? How can they help us understand how the Bible uses the word “curse”? Which word is used in Genesis 3:14,16-17? Who or what is cursed in these verses?
2. What is a locus of control? As Christians, what should we strive for in our *internal* locus? What should drive our *external* locus? How will this help relieve our worries about curses?
(See Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 6:19)
3. What can we do to increase our tolerance of ambiguity? How can this help remove the trait of neuroticism? (See Matthew 6:34, Philippians 3:7-8, 1 Peter 4:12)
4. What is the “nocebo effect”? What are the results of this and the placebo effect based on? What can we do to limit its impact on our thoughts and actions? (See 1 Timothy 6:17-19)
5. What role can epigenetics play in the way we process the idea of curses? Is it *inevitable* that we react in certain ways due to our epigenetic markers? Do we have a choice?
(See Psalms 139:13-14, Romans 7:21-25, 1 Corinthians 2:11-12)
6. What can we do to counteract our personal susceptibility to the fear of curses? Is it possible to change an epigenetic marker through therapy? How might this help with our role in God’s kingdom?
(See Philippians 4:12-13)
7. Why should we be careful to steer clear of the curse removal business both within and outside of Christianity? (See Psalms 40:7-8, Matthew 5:25, Hebrews 10:7-12)
8. If we are afraid of curses, what should we believe? Would it help to negotiate with Satan over our sins? (See 1 Peter 5:6-8)
9. What was God’s curse because of Adam’s disobedience? How were Adam and Eve under the “curse of sin”? How did the Lord look at Lucifer when He cursed him? How was the ground cursed after Adam’s sin? Will you change your answer to question number 1? Who or what was cursed in these verses?
(See Genesis 3:14,16-17)
10. Are curses real? If so, are you afraid of them? What do/will you do to combat their effects on your life?