

## “Curses”

### Stewardship of the Heart & Mind

- Barak- (Hebrew) *Barak* occurs 330 times in the Old Testament.
- The literal meaning of this word is to kneel.
- *And he made the camels kneel down (barak) outside the city... Genesis 24:11*
- It is rarely used in this literal manner, however. Instead, it usually means “to bless” someone. The idea is to give something of value to another. God blesses His people.  
*Ex. The Lord bless (barak) you and keep you; Numbers 6:24*
- *Blessed (barak) be the Lord forever! Psalm 89:52*
- When we barak God we offer ourselves to Him in humble submission. We kneel before Him.
- **Curse** – *Barak used to soften the meaning of kahal*
- **Kelalah**- (Hebrew) it means to curse, despise, or treat with contempt, literally implying making someone "light" (lowering their status) rather than heavy/honored. To despise, or diminish. Refers to a curse involving belittlement, contempt, or diminishing an object's value.

#### -A Few Biblical Examples of Various Forms of curses:

**Job 1:11** and he will **curse /barak** Thee to thy face.

**Job 2:5** and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will **curse /barak** Thee to thy face.

**Job 2:9** His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? **Curse /barak** God and die!”

**Exodus 21:17** “Anyone who **curse**s their father or mother is to be put to death.

**Genesis 3:14-19** “**Cursed are you** above all livestock... “**Cursed is the ground because of you;**

**Joshua 6:26** And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, **Cursed be the man before the Lord**, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho...

**Balaam's Attempted Curses Numbers 22-24** King Balak hired the prophet Balaam to curse the Israelites for financial gain. While God turned these into blessings, the intent was a malicious, ungodly curse for profit.

**Matt 21:18-20** Then He said to it, “**May you never bear fruit again!**” **Immediately the tree withered.**

**Matthew 26:69-75** Peter began to “**invoke a curse on himself and to swear**” that he did not know Jesus, exemplifying a self-curse.<sup>74</sup> **Then he began to call down curses**, and he swore to them, “I don't know the man!”

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

### The Dilemma: The Source of the Blessing and the Curse

#### James 3:3-11

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.<sup>4</sup> Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.<sup>5</sup> **Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.**<sup>6</sup> **The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.**<sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind,<sup>8</sup> **but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.**<sup>9</sup> **With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness.**<sup>10</sup> **Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.** My brothers and sisters, this should not be.<sup>11</sup> **Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?**<sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olive, or a grapevine bear figs? **Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

**Luke 6: 43-45** No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.<sup>44</sup> Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.<sup>45</sup> A good man brings good things out of the good stored up **in his heart**, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up **in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.**

**Matt 12:33-37** Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? **For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.** <sup>35</sup> A good man brings good things out of the good *stored up in him*, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil *stored up in him*. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> **For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.** (the "idle/empty word" means the word that is lazy, barren, thoughtless or profitless)

### **Matthew 15:17-20**

Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? **But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.** **For out of the heart** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.

## **The Heart**

The primary Hebrew words for "**heart**" in the Bible are lev and levav, appearing nearly 1,000 times in the Scriptures, *representing the inner person*. Encompassing the center of **thought (mind), emotion, desire, intellect, and willpower, rather than feelings.**

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** (*lev*) and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your **hearts.**

**Matt 22:37** <sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** (*karida*) and with all your soul and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.

**Greek word 'kardia'** -*the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors*

*-of the soul so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions*

## **The Fountain of the Heart: Back to James 3**

<sup>11</sup> *Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?*

<sup>12</sup> *My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olive, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.*

## **The Remedy:**

**James 3:13-17** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the **humility that comes from wisdom.** <sup>14</sup> But *if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts*, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is **earthly, unspiritual, demonic.** <sup>16</sup> **For where you have envy and selfish ambition (pride), there you find disorder and every evil practice.**

<sup>17</sup> But the **Wisdom that comes from heaven** is first of all **pure**; then **peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.**

## **Get Wisdom!** *(All of Proverbs 4!)*

**Proverbs 4:20-24** My son, pay attention to what I say;  
turn your ear to my words.

<sup>21</sup> Do not let them out of your sight,

**keep them within your heart;**

<sup>22</sup> for they are life to those who find them  
and health to one's whole body.

<sup>23</sup> **Above all else, guard your heart,**  
*for everything you do flows from it.*

<sup>24</sup> *Keep your mouth free of perversity;*  
*keep corrupt talk far from your lips.*

## **Who is Wisdom and The Source of Fresh Living Water?**

**John 7:37-39**

<sup>37</sup> On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, *rivers of living water will flow from within them.*" <sup>39</sup> By this he meant **the Spirit**, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

**Psalm 51:10** Create in me a **pure heart**, O God, and renew a **steadfast spirit** within me.

**Romans 12:2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind.**

**Luke 6:45a**

*"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!"*

*"A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart"*

**Bonus: Blessings as a Weapon of Warfare:1 Peter 3:8-9** <sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. <sup>9</sup> Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. *On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*

**Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; **ble**s and **do not curse.**

