

Curses

At the end of the six days of creation God observed all that he had created and said that it was good. However, things did not remain in a state of 'good.' When sin entered the world through Eve and Adam, God cursed the earth.

Cursed is the ground because of you [Adam]; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you. (Genesis 3:17-18 NASB)

This curse was actually pronounced against Adam, but it affected the earth. So, apparently there were no thorns and thistles before the curse, otherwise it would not have been much of a curse. In addition, the curse did not apply to Adam *only* but to all of mankind after him, even today. In a very general sense, man still has to work in order to survive and his work involves many natural obstacles, such as weeds.

Perhaps more significant to us is the curse against Eve that affects both women and men.

I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. (Genesis 3:16 NASB)

Like the curse against the ground, this curse continues to the present. Even with advances in medicine, childbirth is still painful, still called 'labor.' Yet, what about the rest of the curse?

Is the desire of women really for their husband? And just how is it a curse that the husband rule over the wife?

Just as we can reason that the ground was not filled with thorns and thistles before the curse, the relationship between husband and wife was different before the curse than after the curse. As a part of the curse God changed the woman so that her attention would be toward her husband.*

The women's movement in America in the latter part of the 20th Century lends support to this truth. Women were encouraged to assert themselves against the norm. Why?

Is it perhaps because God made a change beginning with Eve so that a woman's interest was her man? Is it perhaps because God established a new ranking that was not a part of the original creation?

The text tells us that the curse involved a change within the woman and a change in the hierarchy in the marriage relationship. These changes did not affect the value of women, but her *role* and *rank*. In other words, God never made women less valuable than men. Yet he did establish different roles and a hierarchy in which man is to rule over the woman. The man is expected to be the head of the home.

It would follow that before the curse there was no hierarchy in the marriage relationship. There was true equality in marriage. With the introduction of sin, that all changed.

Just as women have struggled to throw off their curse, so also have men. In general, men hate the curse on the ground. Men have labored tirelessly to be more innovative in order to work less and play more. Others simply refuse to work. In addition, men generally are quite happy to shrug off their responsibility as head of the home in hopes that the woman will lead.

People may not like the results of the curses, but they are just as real as gravity. So, when husbands and wives accept their roles and the ranking that God established their marriage relationship is sure to thrive.

Mark Stinnett

*Some Bibles offer alternate translation choices in Genesis 3:16, however, they are more subjective.