

From this Corner
Blessing or Curse

Larry Baird

It occurred to me after I answered my cell phone that technology is both a blessing and a curse. I was standing in the middle of the Upper Genesee River. I had just hooked a nice trout and was bringing it in for a quick release. This is my usual practice. This time, however, my phone rang. My choice reveals a reflexive act of stupidity. Since then I have added insurance to replace the phone should something happen to it. You should know I did land the fish. At least I have my priorities.

Having a cell phone with me is a blessing in that my wife Brenda likes to know I am “connected.” I could call for help if for some reason I found myself in trouble. When I arrive on stream she likes to know what section I am going to fish and for how long. The phone also has a global positioning feature which can identify my location to those trying to trace my call. It is also a blessing as there have been occasions while on lunch break I have been able to quickly and easily take care of business. That way work does not pile up for the next day or inconvenience someone needing information. For me, that really is a blessing and a way to deal with the scope of my present work. Indeed, a cell phone can be a blessing.

It can also be a curse. It is a curse when I have trouble disciplining myself not to feel I have to immediately answer every time it rings. Such compulsiveness can be costly. That kind of use of this technology is certainly a curse, just as thinking you have to immediately respond to every call while driving a car.

This is a small example of how choices and consequence affect our lives. Just as how we choose to use technology has consequences, other decisions have consequences that are often truly life-changing. Which will it be? A blessing or curse?

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 says “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn from the way that I am commanding you today, to follow other gods that you have not known.” (NRSV) I have noticed, being a person who likes to study people and their behavior (including my own), that we sometimes seem to have no clue that there are consequences to our choices. It is as if we

don't understand that trying to fly-fish while standing in four feet of water with a rod and reel in one hand and a cell phone in the other that there is a predictable outcome.

How much more so when we think we can take liberties and discount the commandments that God has given us. Experience universally shows that following them brings a challenging yet blessed life, ignoring them brings a frustrating and cursed life.

While it might seem to some that God is to blame for this situation, upon closer examination it is apparent the quality of life rests on our choices. I am smarter these days on cell phone use while fishing. May we all learn equally well in the bigger arenas of life.