

UNDERSTANDING THE BLESSING

The power and importance of this gift is explained in the book titled *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D., where they further answer...

WHAT IS IT? The blessing is a powerful tool with which we communicate acceptance and genuine commitment to a child or loved one. The word comes from the ancient practice of weighing coins on a scale to determine value. Blessing others “adds value” to his or her life.

WHO NEEDS IT? Everyone needs to experience unconditional love and acceptance from his or her parents. When they don't, they can spend their entire life trying to fill the void missed at home.

WHO CAN GIVE IT? Anyone can give the blessing, but the most important and powerful comes from parents to their children. Those who don't receive it from mom and dad feel the loss deeply—even when they don't realize what they've missed. An example of this dynamic is recorded in Genesis chapter 28 in the story of Jacob's two sons.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GIVE IT? You can take advantage of special occasions and scheduled events to give the blessing in an intentional manner, as well as capture informal, more spontaneous moments.

GIVING THE BLESSING

There are five basic elements of the blessing that, combined, have tremendous impact.

B - BE COMMITTED

The blessing is not a fleeting moment or mere symbolic event. It includes an active, long-term commitment to the person's well-being and accepting responsibility to help them become all God intends them to be.

L - LOVINGLY TOUCH

The power of a hug or touching a hand to affirm someone creates important physical connection and communicates warmth, acceptance and relational health.

E - EXPRESS VALUE

Just like we add value to someone's pocket by handing them a coin, we add to their life when we use words that attach high value to them as a person.

S - SEE POTENTIAL

Parents and other family members best see a person's natural strengths and foresee possibilities for their future. Giving the blessing includes picturing a special future and cheering them toward achieving their potential.

S - SAY IT

An effective blessing must be put into words, whether spoken, written or both. Simply being present is not enough to communicate the blessing. Words of affirmation are necessary to know we are appreciated and accepted.

Simple Ways to Give the Blessing

BLESSING A SPOUSE

Special Moment Blessings: Speak words of blessing to your spouse while on a date, in a hand-written note, or by sharing something positive about him/her in front of other people. Finish one or more of the following statements to your spouse while holding his/her hand...

- » I am so thankful for you because...
- » You are an amazing wife/husband because...
- » You are a terrific mom/dad because...
- » If I had it to do over again, I would choose you again because...
- » “God has gifted you to (describe his/her strengths) and I love how He uses you in the lives of others by (describe) and in my life by (describe).”

BLESSING A YOUNG CHILD

On-The-Go Blessings: Speak words of blessing to your child while driving to school, tucking into bed, celebrating an accomplishment or good effort, or write them a note to place in their lunch. Finish one or more of the following statements...

- » I was so proud of you when I saw you...
- » I think God is going to use you in the future to...
- » God has gifted you with a unique ability to...

Bedtime Blessing Prayer: Select a special scripture to pray over your child each evening such as “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Numbers 6:24-26) Lay your hand gently on your child's arm or shoulder while praying to reassure him/her with loving touch.

BLESSING A TEEN

Mealtime Blessing: If you use the mealtime “High Low” routine where each person shares the high point and low point of his/her day, when it is your turn put a hand on your teen's shoulder and affirm the strengths you see that could be used in the future by saying something like this: “The high part of my day was when I caught a glimpse of how God may use (teen's name) in the future while he/she (describe activity revealing a strength).”

Blessing Trip: Schedule a day-trip with your teen that includes driving to a fun destination such as an amusement park, wilderness hike, sporting event, shopping spree, etc. During the drive, intentionally bless your son or daughter by describing several moments in his or her life that revealed a strength, talent, passion or personality bent that you think God will use in the future. You can also ask questions that will open a dialogue about the child's dreams and aspirations providing an opportunity to affirm his or her potential.

BLESSING A CHILD OF ANY AGE

Blessing Surprise: Everyone loves surprises. Imagine the impact of sending a special package to a child, grandchild, niece or nephew that contains a gift tied to the child's unique interests or abilities along with a note that says “This made me think of you. I bet God will use your (describe the interest or strength) to impact others in the future!” Examples...

Interest/Strength

Music
Fashion
Athletics
Writing
Sense of Humor

Potential Gift

An iTunes Gift Card
Sewing Lessons with Grandma
Jersey of favorite team
Leather-bound journal
Clean joke book

BLESSING AN ADULT

Blessing Note: Drop a card in the mail in which you tell your adult child or someone you know who never received the Blessing that you are proud of them for what they've accomplished, who they have become, the fact they are striving to turn things around or whatever their situation warrants. Even as adults we yearn to hear that mom, dad and others who have had an influence in our lives are proud of us.

BLESSING A PARENT

Blessing Card: On the extra space provided in your annual Mother's Day, Father's Day or Birthday card, add a note to your parent that shares specific ways you value the investment he/she made in your life. You may want to share how you are a different person today because of the ways they invested in your life—perhaps listing several positive character traits that you fostered thanks to their example. Examples...

“Mom, when I was a child you created a wonderful environment that made it a joy to walk into our home and gave me a sense of security to this day. Thank you for that!”

“Dad, when I was a kid I complained about your strict rules, but I am so grateful you cared enough to protect me from my own immaturity and to help me learn discipline.”

BLESSING A SIBLING OR RELATIVE

Blessing Request: A great way to affirm your brother, sister or other relative is to ask them to help you in an area in which he or she is particularly gifted—such as a specific homework subject, improving your golf stroke, cooking a special meal or fixing a broken fence. Nothing feels better than knowing others respect your opinion, knowledge, abilities or strengths—especially if that person is younger or someone with whom you have experienced some rivalry.