



Attachment/
Blessing

THE BLESSING

JOHN TRENT

(Genesis 49)



he Hebrew word for *blessing* is one of the most important words in the Bible. It is used over 640 times in the Old Testament and is pictured in God's original plan for humankind: Genesis 1:27, 28 states that after God created a man and a woman in His own image, He blessed them. What an encouraging truth to know that we were created for blessing!

While unique spiritual and prophetic aspects of the blessing lay with the patriarchs alone (as seen in Gen. 49), the basic relational elements of the blessing provide powerful tools to communicate acceptance, protection, and affirmation that still apply today. The presence or absence of these elements can help us determine whether our home is, or our parents' home was, a place of blessing. A study of the blessing always begins in the context of parental acceptance. However, in studying the blessing in the Scriptures, we find that its principles can be used in any intimate relationship.

THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE BLESSING

There are five basic elements to blessing others, as described below.

Meaningful Touch

When Isaac blessed his son, he said: "Come near now and kiss me, my son" (Gen. 27:26). This was not an isolated incident. Each time the blessing was given in the Scriptures, meaningful touch provided a caring background to the words that would be spoken. Kissing, hugging, and laying on of hands were all a part of bestowing the blessing.

Meaningful touch has many beneficial effects. The act of touch is a key to communicating warmth, personal acceptance, and affirmation. For Isaac, as well as for any person who wishes to see the blessing grow

and develop in a child, spouse, or friend, touch is an integral part of the blessing.

A Spoken Message

Words have an immense power to build us up or tear us down emotionally. This is particularly true when it comes to giving or gaining family approval. Many people can clearly remember the words of praise that their parents spoke years ago. Others can remember just as clearly the negative words that they heard. Throughout Scripture, we find a keen recognition of the power and importance of spoken words. In the very beginning, God spoke and the world came into being (Gen. 1:3). When God sent His Son to communicate His love and complete His plan of salvation, it was His Word that "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). God has always communicated His blessings through spoken words.

Attaching "High Value"

To value something means to attach honor to it. In Hebrew, the verb "to bless" literally means, "to bow the knee." The words of blessing should carry with them the recognition that the person being blessed is valuable and has redeeming qualities. In Scripture, recognition is based on who a person is, not simply on his or her performance. In Genesis 27:27-29, Isaac used a word picture to describe how valuable his son was to him: "The smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed." Word pictures are a powerful way of communicating acceptance and high

value—the third element of the family blessing.

Picturing a Special Future

Isaac said to his son Jacob, “May God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth. . . . Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you” (Gen. 27:28, 29). Parents today cannot predict another person’s future with biblical accuracy. We can, however, encourage the person to set meaningful goals. We can also convey to them that the gifts and character traits they have right now are attributes that God can bless and use in the future. With this fourth element of the blessing, a child can gain a sense of security in the present and grow in confidence to serve God and others in the future.

An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing

The last element of the blessing pictures the responsibility that goes with giving the blessing. For the patriarchs, not only their words, but also God Himself stood behind the blessing that they bestowed on their children. Parents today need to rely on the Lord to give them the strength and staying power to confirm their children’s blessings. They too have God’s Word through Scripture as a guide, plus the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Why is an active commitment so important when it comes to bestowing the blessing? Words alone cannot communicate the blessing; they need to be backed with a commitment to doing everything possible to help the one being blessed to be successful. We can tell a child, “You have the talent to be a very good pianist,” but if we neglect to provide a way for the child to practice piano, our lack of commitment has undermined our message. The fifth element of the blessing, an active commitment, is crucial to seeing the blessing communicated in our homes.

The blessing provides five basic elements—meaningful touch, a spoken message, attaching high value to the one being blessed, picturing a special future, and confirming the blessing by active commitment—to communicate love and acceptance. These key ingredients have the power to bring warmth, healing, and hope to our intimate relationships. They are the very relational elements God uses in blessing His children!

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of attachment/blessing include:

- > Genesis 27:27–36; 35:9–15
- > Proverbs 31:28
- > Ezekiel 34:26
- > Galatians 4:6, 7
- > Ephesians 1:3–6; 6:4
- > 1 Peter 3:8, 9

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on attachment/blessing at Genesis 27:30–36 on page 43. See also the personality profile of Jacob on page 75.

- 11 Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
- 12 His eyes *are* darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.
- "Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea;
He *shall become* a haven for ships,
And his border shall adjoin Sidon.
- 14 "Issachar is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
He saw that rest *was* good,
And that the land *was* pleasant;
He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden,
And became a band of slaves.
- 16 "Dan shall judge his people
As one of the tribes of Israel.
- 17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
- 18 I have waited for your salvation,
O LORD!
- 19 "Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him,
But he shall triumph at last.
- 20 "Bread from Asher *shall be* rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.
- 21 "Naphtali *is* a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.
- 22 "Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,

PERSONALITY PROFILE

Attachment/
Blessing

JACOB AND THE ART OF BLESSING

(GENESIS 49)

One of the most sacred family events in ancient Middle Eastern cultures was the passing of the blessing from one generation to the next. As the last of the great Jewish patriarchs, Jacob's blessing marked the transition from family to nation. Jacob gathered his sons around his deathbed and spoke meaningful words to each. They were about to become the 12 tribes of Israel. God allowed Jacob to speak prophetically about his sons' futures.

Joseph received a double portion of the inheritance, although he was not the firstborn son. First Chronicles 5:1 explains that this was due to Reuben's forfeiting his birthright as the oldest by dishonoring his father. Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh each became a tribe. There was no tribe of Joseph, but Joseph's role in Egypt as the savior of the family placed him in the role of eldest and protector.

Jacob's words proved remarkably accurate for each of his sons. He described their character and foresaw those traits passed on to their descendants. He was both blunt and complimentary. His perspective allowed his sons the knowledge that their father had been thinking about them. He had been praying for them, too.

Each child wants to be known and loved by his or her parents. Blessings flow when children hear their mother or father express intimate and individualized thoughts about them. For Christian parents, the blessing involves sharing hopes and prayers for each of our children. If we question the importance of these gestures, we merely have to examine how we long to hear the same words from our own parents.

Effective parents find a way to include words of blessing in their relationship with their children. These are priceless gifts that can shape a child's life. The process begins when we look into our child's eyes and say, "I love you." After that, we fill in the details. Bless your children.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about attachment/blessing on pages 76, 77. See also the key passage note at Genesis 27:30-36 on page 43.

Be master over your brethren,
And let your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
And blessed *be* those who bless you!"

ESAU'S LOST HOPE

³⁰Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."

³²And his father Isaac said to him, "Who *are* you?"

So he said, "I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau."

³³Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed."

³⁴When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!"

³⁵But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

³⁶And *Esau* said, "Is he not rightly named Ja-

cob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

³⁷Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"

³⁸And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

³⁹Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,

And of the dew of heaven from above.

⁴⁰By your sword you shall live,

And you shall serve your brother;

And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,

That you shall break his yoke from your neck."

JACOB ESCAPES FROM ESAU

⁴¹So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning

KEY PASSAGE



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BLESSING OUR CHILDREN

(27:30-36)

Everyone needs a parent's blessing to be affirmed and assured that he or she is good and has a promising future. This ancient practice served as the last will and testament of one generation to the next. The Bible reveals that usually the father would give both the birthright and the blessing to his eldest son. This "birthright" conveyed to the eldest son the position of leadership in the family and generally provided him with a double portion of the family inheritance. Esau sold his birthright willingly (Gen. 25:29-34), but Jacob stole the blessing by deceiving his father (Gen. 27:1-36). Esau at last comprehended his great loss and the Bible tells us "he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry" (Gen. 27:34).

Although the times and culture are different, parents still need to bless their children. All children need from their parents positive words, meaningful touch, and active commitment in their lives.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about attachment/blessing on pages 76, 77. See also the personality profile of Jacob on page 75.

LORD he shall not go near a dead body. ⁷He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

⁹And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. ¹⁰Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; ¹¹and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. ¹²He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

¹³Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁴And he shall present his offer-

ing to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, ¹⁵a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings.

¹⁶Then the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt

offering; ¹⁷and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. ¹⁸Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

¹⁹And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put *them* upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated *hair*, ²⁰and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they *are* holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.

²¹"This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

"The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make His face shine upon
you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up His countenance
upon you, and give you peace."

NUMBERS 6:24-26

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

²²And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying; ²³"Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

- ²⁴ "The LORD bless you and keep you;
²⁵ The LORD make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
²⁶ The LORD lift up His countenance upon
you,
And give you peace." "

SOUL NOTE



Bless You (6:22-27) This beautiful blessing was a way of asking for God's divine favor upon the people. To have the Lord's "face shine upon" someone pictures that person experiencing pleasure in God's presence. To have the Lord "lift up His countenance upon" someone pictures God, in turn, experiencing pleasure in the presence of the person. While the ancient form of blessing may be unfamiliar, the words of this prayer seek God's-pleasure, protection, grace, favor, and peace on others. When we pray for others, we also can use these words as a blessing upon them.

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And render vengeance to His
adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land
and His people.”

⁴⁴So Moses came with Joshua^a the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. ⁴⁵Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, ⁴⁶and he said to them: “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. ⁴⁷For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”

MOSES TO DIE ON MOUNT NEBO

⁴⁸Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: ⁴⁹“Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; ⁵⁰and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; ⁵¹because you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. ⁵²Yet you shall see the land before you, though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel.”

MOSES' FINAL BLESSING ON ISRAEL

33 Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. ²And he said:

“The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from Seir;
He shone forth from Mount Paran,
And He came with ten thousands of
saints;
From His right hand
Came a fiery law for them.
Yes, He loves the people;
All His saints are in Your hand;
They sit down at Your feet;
Everyone receives Your words.
Moses commanded a law for us,
A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
And He was King in Jeshurun,
When the leaders of the people were
gathered,
All the tribes of Israel together.

⁶ “Let Reuben live, and not die,
Nor let his men be few.”

⁷And this he said of Judah:

“Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah.
And bring him to his people;
Let his hands be sufficient for him,
And may You be a help against his
enemies.”

⁸And of Levi he said:

“Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be
with Your holy one,
Whom You tested at Massah,
And with whom You contended at the
waters of Meribah,
Who says of his father and mother,
‘I have not seen them’;
Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,

32:44 ^aHebrew *Hoshea* (compare Numbers 13:8, 16)

SOUL NOTE



Faithful Generations (33:1) Chapter 33 contains a series of blessings that Moses pronounced on the tribes of Israel. These are similar to Jacob's blessings on his twelve sons, the ancestors to these tribes (Gen. 49). Jacob's blessings revealed each son's character and potential. A person's true character tends to be reflected in his or her children and grandchildren. What legacy will you leave?

Topic: Attachment/Blessing

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

REDEMPTION IN CHRIST

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself,

according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both^a which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. ¹¹In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹²that we who first

trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

¹³In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who^a is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL WISDOM

¹⁵Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the

eyes of your understanding^a being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according

to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

That you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.

EPHESIANS 1:18, 19

1:10 ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit both. 1:14 ^aNU-Text reads *which*. 1:18 ^aNU-Text and M-Text read *hearts*.

SOUL NOTE



Bless You (1:3) In words of lofty praise, Paul blessed God, who has blessed His people "with every spiritual blessing." Being blessed refers to receiving something good; blessing others means desiring the best for them. Believers bless God by attributing all power and glory to Him. He is the source of every spiritual

blessing—Christians could not know God or grow spiritually unless He had blessed them with that opportunity. The spiritual blessings God gives are far beyond anything humans could ask or imagine—yet He freely blesses His people. We should not cease blessing God for His great blessings toward us! **Topic: Attachment/Blessing**

²²And He gave Him a church, ²³in Him who

BY GRACE T

2 And you trespass walked according to the spirit

obedience. conducted fulfilling the mind, and

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