

Blessings Above & Beyond

By Linda A. Ratcliff, Th.D., Ed.D.

Salvation is the greatest blessing God has ever given to us. He loved us so much that He sent His one and only Son into the world, to die on the cross so that we might have eternal life through Him (1 John 4:9). If that were the only blessing we ever received from God, it would be much more than we deserve. But after we are saved by grace through faith, we become the adopted children of God. And the Lord loves to shower His children with "Blessings Above and Beyond" salvation.

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BLESSING #1

Abilities

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 4:10

"As every man hath received the gift (our personal abilities), even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"

The Motivation:

In Exodus 3, when God spoke to Moses at the burning bush and told him to go on back to Egypt and lead the people out to the Promised Land, Moses said, "You've got to be kidding, I couldn't possibly handle a job like that." Even though God assured Moses He would help him, and give him everything he needed to succeed, Moses had a hard time believing he was up to the task. He begged God to let him off the hook saying, "I can't speak well, I don't have a college degree, I'm an ex-convict. Please, send anyone else!"



God has blessed you with many unique gifts, talents, and abilities. When God gives us an assignment, He not only provides the finances needed, He supplies all the abilities you need to finish the job. Don't balk like Moses did when you hear your personal call!

Video: [Develop Your Gifts & Talents to Glorify God](#)

What have you done with the gifts and abilities God has given you? Have you invested the time to develop them to their fullest?

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the talents and abilities you have given me. If there are any gifts I have overlooked, point them out to me, Lord. I ask You to give me the wisdom and opportunities to use my abilities in a way that will bring honor and glory to You.

Questions:

Rick Warren says that the bundle of abilities God has given each of us is the thing that makes us who we are and sets us apart from other people. If you think your talents are simply for you to make a lot of money, retire, and die, you've missed the point of your life. God has given you specific abilities for the benefit of others, not yourself.

See how some of the Old Testament men of God used their gifts for the glory of God.

1. When the Lord filled Bezaleel with the Spirit, what four gifts was he given? (Exodus 31:3 and 35:31)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
2. Notice the progression of gifts from the general to the specific. The Hebrew word for "wisdom" means to have insight or perspective into the overall plan, to see how everything fits together. What project did the Lord give Bezaleel that required wisdom? (vs 36:1-2) _____

3. The Lord gave Bezaleel the creative abilities required to do this job. In addition, the Lord put in his heart the desire to teach these skills to others. Whom did Bezaleel teach? (35:34)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
4. Name some abilities that Bezaleel was able to teach and nurture in others.
 - a) _____ (vs 35:32)
 - b) _____ (vs 35:33)
 - c) _____ (vs 35:36b)
 - d) _____ (vs 35:35c)
 - e) _____ (vs 35:35d)

5. In what way are the different gifts spread out among the members of the church?

_____ (Romans 12:6a)

6. List the different gifts mentioned in Romans 12:6-8, and give a brief explanation of each.

a) _____

The phrase "*according to the proportion of faith*" means that Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of Scripture and in accordance with Scripture. The infallible rule of prophecy or the interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself. Any prophecy or interpretation must line up with the overall teaching of the Bible and it cannot contradict what the Bible clearly teaches elsewhere.

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

e) _____

f) _____

g) _____

7. Read Matthew 25:15-30. What criteria did the man use to determine the appropriate number of talents to be given to each servant? (v. 15) _____

8. Read Deuteronomy 8:18. Who is the source of all our abilities? _____

9. If God wants us to be totally dependent on Him, why does He give us gifts, talents, and abilities? (Thought question - answers will vary.) _____

10. Is there a calling on your life that requires God-given creativity? Are you making the time to develop the skills required for this calling? (Answer optional) _____

BLESSING #2

Abundance

Memory Verse: John 10:10

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

The Motivation:

My husband and I like to say we are "living large." We enjoy life to the fullest. The Bible says we are living life more abundantly.

You might imagine we have a lot of money in the bank, brand-new cars, and a fancy home on the water, full of nice things. Nope. We don't own a house, but live in our paid-in-full RV full time, we both drive 2008 vehicles, we only own what we can carry along with us going down the road - and we couldn't be happier.



So what makes us believe we are enjoying the abundant life? First, our marriage is blessed. We live in peace together, even in such a small space. We are semi-retired, but still enjoy good health and are able to travel. All of our needs are met; we never miss a meal and we always have enough for diesel and campsite fees. We laugh every day, finding joy in small things. And we travel thousands of miles a year safely. His protection follows us wherever we go.

God is so good, and we can't thank Him enough for all the ways He fills our lives with love, joy, and peace. Wouldn't you like the blessing of abundance in your life too?

Video: [The Paradox of Our Time](#)

In this fast-paced world, we seem to have more and bigger things, but less of what it takes to live an abundant life. That's the paradox and this video helps us refocus on what matters.

Prayer:

Lord, I know abundant living begins by enjoying intimate fellowship with You. Remind me to slow down and spend more quality time with You. Thank you for being right in the middle of our activities, and for blessing them richly.

Questions:

Unfortunately, many believers live only an adequate life, rather than an abundant life. Though they go through the motions of being “good Christians,” they don't enjoy the love, peace, joy, and prosperity God intends believers to experience. Let's see what God has promised for all believers, and how to receive it.

1. Define abundance in your own words. _____

2. Read Psalm 92:12-14. What good things will happen for those who are righteous?
 - a) _____ (vs. 12a)
 - b) _____ (vs. 12b)
 - c) _____ (vs. 13b)
 - d) _____ (vs. 14a)
 - e) _____ (vs. 14b)
3. Read Malachi 3:10-12. What good things will happen for those who tithe?
 - a) _____ (vs. 10)
 - b) _____ (vs. 11)
 - c) _____ (vs. 12)
4. Read Deuteronomy 28, and note all the blessings of abundance the Lord has promised to give us. What is the key to receiving these blessings? _____
_____ (vs. 1)
5. Were these blessings only promised to the people who lived in Old Testament times? _____ Yes _____ No Explain your answer using John 10:10. _____

6. What should we be expecting to happen in our lives this year? _____
_____ (Psalm 37:11)

7. If a person is not experiencing the abundant life, what are some changes he/she could make to get back on the right track? (Answers will vary.)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

BLESSING #3

Angels

Memory Verse: Psalm 34:7

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

The Motivation: (True Story)

It was Christmas break, 1983, and college students Don and Tim took off in a snow storm to go home for the holidays. They had traveled toward Fort Wayne, IN, for about 30 minutes when the car began to sputter and lose power. There were no houses for miles, and they saw no other cars traveling that night, so they figured other travelers had paid attention to the weather report and decided not to travel on such a dangerous night.

They pressed on toward home, but Tim's car continued to lose more and more power until finally, with one last sputter and moan, the engine completely stopped. They were stuck in the middle of nowhere on the frozen road.

Soon the inside of the car became freezing cold. No other cars passed by. They realized if they tried to walk somewhere it would probably mean death because of the record cold temperatures. Their feet were beyond cold and their bodies were becoming numb. It was getting dark and the snow continued to fall.

They didn't know what to do so, in desperation, Tim began to pray. "Lord, You are the only one who can help us now. Please help us, dear God, please help us!"

Within moments, from out of nowhere, lights appeared shining brightly through their windows. They hadn't seen anyone coming and they had been watching closely for any sign of life at all. A big, strong-looking man approached their car and knocked on the window. "Need a tow, fellas?" he asked.



Gratefully the boys climbed into the warm cab of the tow truck. From the cab the boys used the driver's truck phone (no cell phones yet!) and called Don's house to let them they were on the way and needed money to pay the driver who had rescued them. Don's parents said they would be happy to pay.

The tow-truck driver drove through Fort Wayne and into the neighborhood where Don lived. They thanked the driver for rescuing them and asked him to wait while they ran inside to get some money. They grabbed the cash, and hurried back out - but the tow

truck was gone! Don's parents followed them out, also wanting to thank the driver. The boy's car was there, but there was no sign of the tow truck or its driver.

Don's family had not heard a sound when they arrived, even though they had been listening anxiously for them. And there were no tire tracks anywhere on the snow-covered road.

There was no tow bill, no tow truck driver, no good-byes, and no taillights off in the distance. There was no evidence anywhere that there had even been a truck down the road! The boys had no explanation other than that the tow truck driver was an angel sent by God to answer their prayer and rescue them.

Video: [Perfect Protection](#)

Keith Moore has recorded a series on God's protection. This video is about the protection God provides through His angels. You can view or download the series through links on our church's website. Or, you can call the church and ask them to ship it to you, and they will send [the ENTIRE series](#) at NO charge. I would encourage you to take advantage of this offer.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for creating the angels. As dedicated and faithful servants, I know they instantly act upon Your commands. I ask that You direct Your angels to protect and assist me, so I will be sure to complete the assignments You have for me to do.

Questions:

Throughout the Scriptures, we find angels are busily engaged in carrying out their assigned missions.

1. What are some of the things angels have been assigned to do?

- a) _____ (Luke 15:10)
- b) _____ (Psalm 91:11)
- c) _____ (Matthew 24:31)
- d) _____ (Luke 2:13-14)
- e) _____ (Luke 16:22)
- f) _____ (John 20:12)
- g) _____ (Psalm 103:20)

2. Name the person(s) whose life was impacted by an angel's assignment, and explain what the angel did.

a) Matthew 1:20: _____

b) Mark 1:13: _____

c) Acts 5:19-20: _____

d) Matthew 28:2-7: _____

e) Daniel 6:22: _____

3. What is the special work angels do in the lives of believers? (Hebrews 1:14) _____

Generally, we don't know what angels are doing or when they do it. They are like the Special Forces, U.S. military units trained to perform unconventional missions. God gives angels a mission, they go in, they complete their assignment, they get out, and we are seldom aware of what just happened behind the scenes.

"As Billy Graham put it, angels are God's secret agents. They are His ministering servants, protecting, delivering, and sometimes guiding. You don't know it is them. You don't need to engage them. You don't need to try and communicate with them. They are simply doing the work that God has called them to do." (Taken from God's Ministering Spirits by Greg Laurie, Harvest Ministries, Feb. 2010)

BLESSING #4

Assurance

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:23

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith); for He is faithful that promised."

The Motivation:

I can't tell you how long, or how often, I planted and watered into my dad's salvation. The last time I talked to him about it, he was standing on a ladder fixing a ceiling fan. I figured he couldn't get away from me, so I laid it all out for him one more time. He said, "Honey, that's really a nice story, but it's just too good to be true. I don't believe it."



I wasn't there when he was finally led to salvation while camping out with some friends. They must have been sitting around the campfire, and the conversation turned to the Lord. I wasn't there when he was baptized either, because his friends took care of that right then and there - in the river by the campground where they were staying.

This happened one year before he died, and over that last year of his life, he always wanted to talk to me about the things of the Lord. What a joy that was.

I always think of my dad when I hear the hymn "Blessed Assurance," and I played that hymn at his funeral. I wanted to share a hymn that expressed his absolute confidence in his salvation, even coming so late in life.

Video: [Blessed Assurance](#)

The lyrics to Blessed Assurance were written in 1873 by blind hymn writer Fanny J. Crosby to the music written in 1873 by Phoebe P. Knapp. Here it is performed by the Elevation Worship team at Elevation Church.

Prayer: If you are struggling with feelings of doubt, I encourage you to ask the Lord for blessed assurance with a prayer like this.

Lord, I'm not sure if I am Your child. I believe that you sent Your Son Jesus to earth to die for my sins. I believe that He rose from the death and is offering me eternal life. I

accept Him as my Savior. Thank You for forgiving me and giving me life with You eternally. Help me to have that solid assurance that You have answered my prayer.

Questions:

The Scriptures teach that we can know with absolute certainty that we have the life of God within us. This confidence is not based on inner feelings or outward signs. Rather, this “blessed assurance” is founded upon the promises of a faithful God and this inspired Word. It depends not on the amount of our faith but on the object of our faith – Jesus Christ Himself!

1. Read Romans 8:16 and 1 John 4:13. How do we receive assurance of our salvation?

2. Read 1 John 5:13. Why did John write these words? _____

3. Read 2 Timothy 1:12. How could Paul be so bold in his work, and how could he feel honored by circumstances that might make others feel ashamed? _____

4. Read Isaiah 32:17 (KJV).

- a) What is the work of righteousness? _____

- b) What is the effect of righteousness? _____

- c) How do we become righteous? (2 Corinthians 5:21) _____

5. Paul was absolutely convinced - in other words, he had total confidence and assurance that nothing in this universe can separate us from the love of God. List the things which he stated will not threaten our relationship with the Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

- a) _____ e) _____

- b) _____ f) _____

- c) _____ g) _____
d) _____ h) _____

6. Read Psalm 23:4. The blessing of assurance applies to more than the assurance of our salvation. About what did David feel assured? _____

7. Define faith. (Hebrews 11:1) _____

Many struggle with feelings of doubt from time to time. These suggestions may help.

- Ask the Lord to reveal unconfessed sin. Then follow through by repenting. Check for habitual sin, and change your ways.
- Read your Bible daily. Study specific verses about salvation.
- Pray regularly. Be open with Him about your struggle with assurance. Ask for confidence in your salvation.
- Trust the Lord. Remember He loves you greatly.
- Rebuke doubt. You know who that is planting doubt into your mind. Don't give the devil a foothold.
- Praise and thank God for your salvation EVERY day.
- Don't depend on feelings for your assurance, and don't let feelings rob you of your joy.

BLESSING #5

Church

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:25

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

The Motivation:

Have you ever driven by a marina and noticed all the boats tied down in their slips, not being used? I have always wondered what reasons the owners would give to explain why their boats sit idle so much of the time.

- * I'm just too busy with the kids.
- * I'm working overtime these days.
- * My family doesn't want to go with me.
- * I end up spending too much money.
- * It's raining - it's too cold - it's too hot.
- * The marina employees aren't friendly.
- * I rode in boats all the time as a child.

All these explanations actually sound quite similar to some of the reasons people give to rationalize their reasons for not going to church any more. For sure, there isn't an excuse that God hasn't already heard.



My husband and I like to say, *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"* (Psalm 122:1).

Videos: [Reasons People Don't Go to Church](#)

People have a lot of excuses (reasons) for not going to church. Watch this short video and see if you have ever heard any of them before.

[Mac V. PC: Why Go to Church](#)

Now take a humorous look at why some people DO go to church. Do you know people like these two guys?

Prayer for Your Church: Lord, I pray that we may all be one. Just as You are in me and I am in You ... may we all work together as one, so that the world will believe that You sent us to share Your Gospel message (John 17:21).

Questions:

I've often visited with Christians who have become disillusioned with going to church. Bad experiences have left a bitter taste in their mouths and too many have given up completely on attending any church at all.

But this is a dangerous attitude to have. When you become disconnected from the body of Christ, you put at risk the unity of the church body, your own spiritual growth, protection, and blessings.

1. According to Acts 2:42, what did the early church do when they met together?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
2. We will discover a satisfying sense of fulfillment when we begin to carry out our purpose in the body of Christ. What are some things we can do in His service within the church?
 - a) 1 Peter 4:10: _____

 - b) 1 Thessalonians 5:11: _____

 - c) James 5:16: _____

3. The body of Christ is there for our own protection. Hebrews 13:17 says we are to ____

4. God has placed us into the body of Christ for accountability. What four steps did Jesus command us to take when a brother falls into sin? (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____

5. There are going to be times when our faith is tested, when our endurance is pushed to the limit. What are some things that happen at church that could help us through difficult times? (Thought question - answers will vary.)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

6. Unfortunately many people see their faith as a very private matter, something to be kept between themselves and the Lord. But that isn't what Jesus taught. He said ...

_____ (Matthew 10:32)

A blessing of regular church attendance is that it gives us the opportunity to publicly testify about our faith in Christ. This is good practice, and we will become more comfortable telling about Jesus outside church.

7. God intended the Sabbath to not only be a day of worship, but also a day of _____ . (Leviticus 23:3) This is another precious blessing.

8. According to Luke 4:16, Jesus went to the synagogue ...

a) _____ rarely.

b) _____ when it was convenient.

c) _____ regularly, as He was taught to do growing up.

If you have become disillusioned with church attendance, don't give up. Widen your search and look for a Christ-centered, biblically-balanced church. But remember, there is no perfect church. There are flawed members in every church. Don't let other people's mistakes keep you from all of the blessings He has planned for us in the church.

BLESSING #6

Confidence

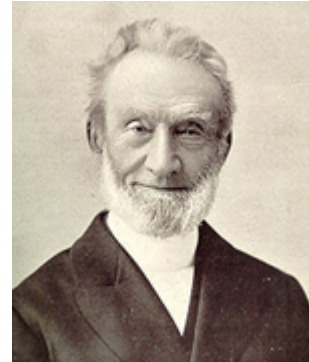
Memory Verse: 1 John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

The Motivation:

George Muller was born in Prussia on September 27, 1805. His father was a tax collector and George inherited his father's ability with figures.

When Muller became a believer, he was impressed by how many times Jesus said for us "to ask." So he and his wife decided to launch a daring experiment. They gave away all of their household goods and refused all regular salary from the small mission George had been serving. He then set out to establish an orphanage to care for the homeless children of England.



The first orphanage was dedicated in a rented building on April 21, 1836. Within a matter of days, 43 orphans were being cared for. Muller and his co-workers decided that no funds would ever be solicited and no debts were ever to be incurred. The success of their work would be measured by God's blessing on the work, which Muller expected to be in direct proportion to the time spent they spent in prayer.

For over 60 years George Muller recorded every specific prayer request and the results, and every contribution. Over his lifetime, Muller was responsible for the care of 10,024 orphans. These children never missed a meal. He established 117 schools which offered Christian education to over 120,000 children, many of them orphans. Muller never asked for help from anyone but God. \$7,500,000 came to him over the course of his life and he vows it was all because he prayed with **confidence** and faith.

Video: [How to Have Great Faith](#)

This is 20 minute video, but well worth your time, as it shares how George Muller handled the daily challenges of a growing ministry with confidence.

Prayer: Lord, I do believe that You answer the prayers of Your people. Help me overcome my unbelief (Mark 9:24)

Questions:

Confidence is a popular subject today. We are told to think confidently, to be self-assured, to trust in ourselves. In a myriad of ways, the theme of modern society is to be self-confident. However, there is only ONE way for God's people to face life - with complete confidence in Him.

- We can be confident in God's strength. He is pouring His strength into us so we can overcome our daily obstacles and difficulties (Phil. 4:13).
- We can be confident that God is always faithful to keep His promises. If He promised something in His Word, we can count on it. All we have to do is wait on His perfect timing with confidence (Isaiah 30:18).
- We can be confident that He will answer our prayers. He is just waiting for us to ask, according to His will, and He will hear us (1 John 5:14).
- We can be confident that He will provide for all our needs. He has told us not to be afraid or worry about things, because He's standing by to help (Philippians 4:6).

The apostle Paul lived through horrible circumstances - rejected by his Jewish peers, stoned, abandoned for dead, ridiculed, ignored, and often beaten and imprisoned for his devotion to Christ. But Paul continued to maintain a confident hope, right up to the very end. How did he manage this?

1. In Philippians 4:13, Paul told the believers he could handle anything that came his way through _____. Who _____.
2. Instead of focusing on his problems, Paul followed the advice of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 and _____

3. We can find our reason for hope and unwavering confidence in God in Hebrews 13:8, where Paul told the people _____

The Lord's unchanging nature teaches us that even when we feel unlovely, we remain beautiful to Him. We can do nothing to change His love for us — it is unconditional and flows freely from His throne of grace. He never changes, and He is faithful to keep all of His promises. (The Charles Stanley's Life Principles Bible.)

4. In Romans 10:11, Paul told us that those who put their confidence in God will never be _____

5. If we're going to be confident in something, Psalm 118:8-9 tells us it is better to _____ than to _____

6. Psalm 16 is psalm of positive confidence in God. David took no credit for his own goodness (vs. 2). And he didn't brag about his own abilities. Instead, he gave credit for every good thing that happened in his life to _____
7. Confidence in our salvation is rooted in our relationship with _____.
He is our High Priest and, through His intercession, we can "approach the throne of grace with confidence and _____. (Hebrews 4:16)
8. What is one more thing in which we can have total confidence? (Philippians 1:6) _____

When we put our trust in God and His revealed Word, our lives take on a new stability and we walk in peace. A proper self-confidence is really a confidence in God's Word and character. We put no confidence in our flesh, but we have every confidence in the God who made us, called us, saved us and keeps us.

BLESSING #7

Eternal Life

Memory Verse: 1 John 5:13

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

The Motivation:

We saw this sign at the Cherry Republic in Glen Arbor, Michigan. Each arrow pointed to a different path, but all ended up at the same business. It reminded me of the popular view that all roads lead to heaven. From the rich and famous to the average person on the street, most will tell you all religions lead to eternal life in heaven. But Proverbs 14:12 warns us, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

The truth is — not all roads, i.e., religions, will lead to eternal life. And there's no church or denomination that can guarantee a person will enter heaven. The Bible tells us only God can do this, based on our faith in the saving work of His only Son, Jesus Christ. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

We're all invited to enjoy everlasting life in paradise, but we don't get to choose which road we'll take to get there. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"* (John 14:6). Jesus is the only way.

Video: [The Parachute](#)



If you were told that you had to jump out of a plane and were handed a parachute, would you take the parachute? This thought-provoking video makes the jump between our lives here on earth, the afterlife and the purpose of salvation.

Prayer: Lord, I cannot thank you enough for the blessing of eternal life. I ask that You open doors and people's hearts, so I am able to share this blessing with others.

Questions:

Jesus Christ had us personally in mind when He went to the Cross. Every sin that we have ever committed - past, present, or future - was imputed to Him and judged so that at this very moment we can have eternal life. Our attitude toward Christ determines our eternal future. If we believe in Him - we have eternal life. If we reject Him - we will suffer eternal condemnation.

1. John 3:16 says that whoever believes in Him will not _____ , but have eternal life.

2. According to John 10:28, what have believers been given that cannot be snatched away? _____

3. All roads actually lead to God. Whether you're a believer, an agnostic or an atheist - no matter what road you're on, you will get to God one day and you will stand before Him for His righteous judgment.

But according to John 14:6, only one road leads to eternal life in heaven, and that's the road through Jesus Christ. _____True _____False

4. According to Matthew 7:13-14, it's easy to enter through the wide gate that leads to eternal life. _____True _____False

5. Romans 8:38-39 says that, after we are reconciled with God the Father through the saving work of His Son Jesus Christ, His promise of eternal life with Him in heaven is _____Permanent , unchanging, and forever

_____Temporary or changeable, depending on our circumstances at time of death

6. What will happen to a person who is on the wrong road and does not trust Jesus for salvation?

a) _____ (John 3:36)

b) _____ (Rev. 20:15)

7. We know we can have eternal life, because our Savior, Jesus Christ, was resurrected from the dead and lives today. Even before this happened, Job demonstrated the he was completely assured of his own eternal life, because he said in Job 19:24, "I know that my _____ lives."

Years later, Samuel Medley used Job's words when he wrote the text for the hymn I Know That My Redeemer Lives. Samuel was born in Cheshunt, England, in 1738. He lived a life of sin and selfish pursuits, until his leg was wounded in a naval battle which led him to pray. When the Lord graciously answered his prayer, Samuel repented and lived for the Lord from that time forward.

BLESSING #8

Faithfulness of God

Memory Verse: Hebrews 13:5

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

The Motivation:

Our dog does not like to be left alone. She goes crazy if she thinks we're about to go somewhere without her. Similarly, we may get stressed out when trials arise, feeling we are going to be facing a difficult situation all alone. But Jesus assured us we will never be alone when He said, "... and, lo, I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).



An awareness of the faithful, continual presence of God can be a great comfort in times of trouble. In the Psalms, many times David wrote passionately about God's faithful presence during his trying circumstances. He always gave God the praise and glory for victories saying, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*" (Psalm 46:1).

When Gideon asked God about his suitability for leading Israel against the Midianites, the Lord said, "... *Surely I will be with thee*" (Judges 6:16). God was assuring Gideon He would be there constantly, without interruption, on hand to help him deal with the Midianites,

Be sure, a believer is never alone. The Lord is always faithful to be with us.

Video: [Hebrews 13:5](#)

We can have confidence in the promises of God. He has never failed to keep His commitments to us. In this verse, He has promised to NEVER leave us and NEVER forsake us.

Prayer: Lord, teach me how to abide in You and Your Word continually, so that I will always be attuned to Your perfect will. Help me to make my prayers promise-centered instead of problem-centered. Thank You that as I claim Your promises in faith, I will live the abundant life that belongs to me in Christ.

Questions:

God has made many promises to us. According to Dr. Reginald Dunlap, there are approximately 30,000 promises in the Bible. He promises to be with us...He promises to strengthen us...He promises to pour out His spirit on us....He promises to come again ... He promises to help us in times of trouble.

In 2 Peter 1:4, Peter calls these "precious promises." There are numerous Scriptures that declare God is faithful to keep ALL His promises. Let's explore these.

1. Numbers 23:19 tells us that because God is not a man, when He makes a promise, He doesn't _____ and He doesn't change His mind about it.
2. The Lord kept every one of the promises that he had made to _____ (Joshua 21:45).
3. Not one thing _____ of all the good things the Lord promised. (Joshua 23:14)
4. 1 Kings 8:56:says, "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given _____ unto his people Israel, according to all that He _____; there hath not failed one _____ of all His promises, which He promised by the hand of _____ His servant."
5. Psalm 37:7 tells us that if it seems the Lord is slow in keeping His promise, we should _____
6. The Lord is not _____ concerning His promise. (2 Peter 3:9)
7. Hebrews 10:23 says we should hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering because _____

8. God is faithful to keep His promises. But He requires something of us first. What is one key to receiving all the things God has promised? (Hebrews 10:36) _____

9. By _____, we trust in the invisible God, our loving Father, and we stand on His promises until they come to pass. (Heb. 11:1 and 6; 2 Cor. 5:7)

10. What is the promise you need to claim? Select a Scripture and type it here. (Answer optional) _____

BLESSING #9

The Family of God

Memory Verse: 1 John 3:1

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

The Motivation:

My family is such a blessing, and what a great time we had in Texas last year visiting them. But the visit didn't happen without effort. We had to make the time and travel many miles.



There is another family with whom we should make the effort to connect — the family of God in our local church. In the apostles' days, some had stopped doing this. *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:25).

There is still that trend today. But we should not only be attending church services, we should be participating in other functions as well. This is because, as we gather together, we don't just share our casseroles. We share our lives, our joys, our pain, our struggles, our triumphs. We cry together, laugh together, and we often pray for one another.

I have a challenge for you. At the next church function, look for people who are not connecting, perhaps because of shyness. Strike up a conversation. Pray with them. Make them feel welcome.

Video: [The Family of God](#)

This music video features Bill Gaither and his "Homecoming" group of Christian musicians performing "The Family of God." I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God.

Prayer:

Lord, bless our family with Your love. Guard us from danger and harm. Deliver us from any anger that might lead to division. Empower us to forgive as we have been forgiven. And send us into the world to be a witness of your love and grace.

Questions:

As you can see from the picture of our family, we always try to shoot a family portrait during those blessed times when we get to visit them. In Ephesians 6:1-4, Paul painted a portrait of the Christian family with his words, and the ideal for the roles of each member.

1. With regard to the relationship of a husband and wife, what instruction did the Apostle Paul give the wife? (Eph. 5:22-24) _____

2. Do you think this instruction is observed in modern society today? (Opinion ... answers will vary.) _____

3. What instruction did Paul give to husbands in Ephesians 5:25? _____

4. In what way is the husband/wife relationship like the relationship of Christ to the church? _____

5. What responsibilities do children have toward their parents? (Eph. 6:1-2) _____

6. What promise comes with the commandment to honor one's parents? _____
_____ (Eph. 6:3)
7. What responsibilities does a father have toward his children? _____
_____ (Eph. 6:4)
8. According to Romans 8:14-17, our friends at church are much more than friends. They are _____

9. When a person accepts Christ as their Lord and Savior, he or she becomes _____
_____ (2 Cor. 6:18)

10. In our memory verse, 1 John 3:1, John spoke in amazement about the depth of ____
_____ that makes us children of God, and members of His family.

He wanted us to "behold" it - in other words, look at it and study it intently.

BLESSING #10

Favor

Memory Verse: Psalm 5:11-12

"But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield."

The Motivation:

Life can be hard. But those of us who love the Lord can look back over our lives and see the hand of God at work, turning what seemed at first to be a bad situation around to our favor, working all things together for good (Rom. 8:28). This is the favor that we receive from the Lord. He treats us so much better than we could ever expect or deserve.



Don't just look for God's favor in material or worldly "things." God's favor can also be found in intangible things, such as a peaceful home and a loving marriage. What a gracious God we serve.

Video: [The Favor of God](#)

In this short video, Pastor John Hagee tells us what to expect in life when we are walking in the favor of God.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for surrounding me with Your favor. Thank You for opening doors for me, for fighting my battles, for Your amazing timing, and for the people You have brought into my life to pray, help, and encourage me in my walk with You.

Questions:

Grace is God's unmerited favor - His goodness toward those who have no claim on, nor reason to expect, divine favor. We are saved by grace, through faith, and not by any effort on our own parts (Ephesians 2:8-9). Anyone who is saved is already walking in God's favor.

But God wants to go beyond that, as amazing as it is, and bless each of us personally with His favor in our daily lives. Let us begin to train ourselves in the principles of God's favor so we can put them into practice.

1. What are some of the things we must do to walk in the favor of God?

- a) Job 33:26: _____
- b) Proverbs 3:1-4: _____
- c) Proverbs 8:34-35: _____
- d) Proverbs 11:27: _____
- e) Proverbs 14:9: _____

2. Is it possible to grow in favor - both with God and man? (1 Samuel 2:26)

_____ Yes _____ No

3. List some others in the Bible who found favor with God, man, or both God and man. Identify the person(s) with whom each one found favor.

- a) Genesis 39:21: _____ found favor with _____
- b) Exodus 11:3: _____ found favor with _____
- c) Ruth 2:8-11: _____ found favor with _____
- d) 1 Samuel 16:21-22: _____ found favor with _____
- e) Luke 1:30: _____ found favor with _____
- f) Luke 2:52: _____ found favor with _____
- g) Acts 2:47: _____ found favor with _____
- h) Acts 13:22: _____ found favor with _____

4. What will happen in your life, when you are walking in the favor of God?

- a) Psalm 1:3: _____
- b) Psalm 5:12: _____
- c) Psalm 30:5: _____
- d) Psalm 41:11: _____
- e) Psalm 44:3: _____

f) Psalm 119:58: _____

BLESSING #11

Fellowship with God

Memory Verse: John 14:23

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him"

The Motivation:

We live full time in an RV, and sometimes we have trouble on the road with our internet connection. We have a "Hot Spot" for the computer, and in the city our connection is perfect. But when we're camping deep in the woods, the connection is either weak or sporadic.



God probably views His relationship with us in the same way. When we're going through a difficult time, we stay in fellowship with Him, praying about our situation day and night. But afterwards, when life is going along smoothly again, our connection becomes sporadic. We go for hours, sometimes days, without thinking about Him or talking with Him.

Jesus set an example by taking time to connect with His Father regularly, often early in the morning. The night before He died, Jesus spent His last hours in fellowship with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36).

Keep the lines of communication open so your fellowship with the Lord won't become "disconnected", no matter how hard the enemy tries.

Video: [Coffee with Jesus](#)

What I wouldn't give to have a cup of coffee with Jesus! I would pound Him with questions, pay close attention to His responses, record the session on my iPhone, and take notes. How could this man waste such a precious opportunity?

Prayer

Lord, I desire a more intimate, personal relationship with You. Help me experience the joy of true Christian fellowship with You and my fellow believers.

Questions:

God has put a desire for fellowship into every one of us, a desire He intended to be satisfied in relationships with other people, but most of all, to be satisfied by a close fellowship with Him.

The word fellowship comes from the ancient Greek word *koinonia*, which speaks of a sharing, a communion, a common bond and common life. It speaks of a living, breathing, sharing, loving relationship with another person. It is possible to have such a relationship with God, and 1 John 1 explains this very clearly.

1. The Greek mind-set highly prized the idea of fellowship, but believed it was restricted to men among men. The idea of an intimate relationship with God would have been revolutionary. In 1 John 1:3, with whom did John say it was possible to have fellowship?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
2. In 1 John 1:7, what is the condition for fellowship with God and one another? _____

3. What is the result of fellowship with God? _____
_____ (1 John 1:4)
4. Some to claim a relationship with God that they do not have. Others think they have a relationship with God that they do not have. According to 1 John 1:6, they are not in fellowship with God if they _____
5. Sin, especially habitual sin, is a hindrance to fellowship with God. If we say we have no sin, we _____ (1 John 1:8)
6. What will God do if we confess our sins? (1 John 1:9)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
7. If you had the chance to sit down and have coffee with Jesus, what would you do differently? _____

BLESSING #12

Forgiveness

Memory Verse: Isaiah 43:25

"I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

The Motivation:

She was crazy. Everyone knew it because she had the habit of talking to herself in public and it was known that she believed she even talked to Jesus – and was spoken back to. A new preacher came to town and hearing of the crazy woman, thought that he might be able to make her face reality.

One day, as he saw her walking down the street he spoke to her and eventually got around to asking, "I hear you talk to Jesus."

"Yes," she replied. "Jesus and I talk for just hours and hours."

"Would you do me a favor?" The minister asked. "Could you ask Him something for me?"

"Why of course," the old woman responded.

"Would you ask Jesus what the last sin was that I confessed to Him?"

"Certainly," she replied.

The next day, the preacher saw the crazy woman just down the street and so he approached her and asked, "Well, did you talk to Jesus last night?"

"Why, I surely did," she squealed.

"What did He say was the last sin was that I confessed to Him?" the preacher coyly asked.

"Why, He said He didn't remember." Hebrews 10:17 says, *"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."* What a gift. You and I tend to forgive but not forget. Jesus not only forgives our sins, He completely puts them out of His mind.



Video: [Forgiveness](#)

Chris Williams demonstrated complete forgiveness in a very practical way by his actions after the tragic death of most of his family. Forgiveness and the power of Jesus Christ enabled this man to survive losing his wife and several children in a car accident - and allowed the offending driver to begin rebuilding his own life.

Prayer:

Lord, I thank you for the blessing of forgiveness, and I humbly ask you for the strength to forgive _____. Help me to see the goodness in this person, to relinquish the anger that I'm experiencing so that I can walk in the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Help me to heal from this incident and to release any bitterness that I may be harboring.

Questions:

Because we have received the blessing of forgiveness, through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross, now it is now our turn to "pay it forward" and forgive others. But that is easier said than done and time does not heal all wounds. We must make a conscious effort to do this, and here are the key steps.

1. STEP ONE: Realize that we have received undeserved forgiveness. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

a) Upon what basis have we been saved and forgiven? _____

b) Upon what basis have we NOT been saved and forgiven? _____

2. STEP TWO: Understand that critical to receiving His forgiveness is our willingness to forgive others. Read Mark 11:25-26.

a) In verse 25, what did Jesus encourage us to do when we are praying? _____

b) What is the consequence of unforgiveness? _____
_____ (vs. 26)

- c) According to Psalms 66:18, what happens to our prayers when we harbor sin (unforgiveness) in our lives? _____

3. STEP THREE: Reconcile with anyone who has offended you, in person if possible - but definitely in your heart.
- a) If we do this, what did the Lord promise in Matthew 5:7? _____

- b) What will be the physical results of unforgiveness? _____
_____ (Proverbs 11:17)
- c) What sort of things did the Apostle Paul tell us to put away? _____
_____ (Ephesians 4:31)
- d) What sort of things should we be doing instead? _____
_____ (Ephesians 4:32)
4. STEP FOUR: Develop a lifestyle of forgiveness. Read Matthew 18:21-22.
- a) How many times did Peter suggest that a brother should be forgiven? _____
(vs. 21)
- b) How many times did Jesus say we should forgive our brother? _____
(vs. 22)
5. THOUGHT QUESTION: Name a person from the Old Testament and the New Testament who forgave in a difficult situation, and the circumstances in which forgiveness was given.
- a) Old Testament: _____

- b) New Testament: _____

BLESSING #13

Freedom from Fear

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 1:7

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The Motivation:

This blessing is special to me because, with the help of God and my family, I have overcome a severe case of ongoing fear and dread.

In my battle, I began collecting "fear not" verses from the Bible, writing them in my journal, memorizing and meditating on them. The only rule was that I couldn't locate a "fear not" verse by using a Concordance. I had to find them by searching the Word. As time went by, there began to be a gradual but very definite and noticeable decrease in the amount of time I spent in fear.

FEAR NOT,
FOR I HAVE
REDEEMED YOU;
I HAVE CALLED
YOU BY NAME,
YOU ARE
MINE • ISAIAH 43:1

Then our children got involved in the project. We still had three at home, and I would find scripture verses on smudged, wrinkled pieces of paper in childish handwriting - stuck in the middle of my desk or on my chair. And my husband searched for "fear not" verses as well. Oh, how I treasured those "found" verses.

One day I woke up and realized the fear was all gone. The situation we had been in for years didn't seem so threatening any more. I was able to relax and just wait on the Lord, to see what He was going to do about it. Within a short time, God responded by eliminating the problem completely. Was He waiting on me to learn my lesson?

Video: [Fear vs. Love](#)

Did you know, our brains express only two basic emotions: fear and love? And it is our decision to choose one or the other. Christ says that, "Perfect love casts out all fear." Which will you choose?

Prayer: Help me, dear Lord, to stop focusing on my fears and start dwelling on Who You really are. You are the Almighty God. Everything is under Your control. You are the all-knowing God, You know exactly what's going on. You are the ever present One. I know I'm not facing this alone. You are the God of love, and because You love me so much, I know You're looking out for me. I thank You that there is no need at all to be afraid.

Questions:

We're all on a journey that we're called to walk in faith. If we're walking in fear, we're NOT walking in faith. Some have said that the letters in the word "fear" define what it is: "False Evidence Appearing Real." Instead of letting our imagination run away with us, picturing scenarios with the worst possible ending, learn to focus on the One Who has told us over and over in His Word, "Fear not, for I am with you."

1. Isaiah 41:10 is my "go to" verse, whenever fear starts to creep back in. Read Isaiah 41:8-13.
 - a) To whom was God speaking, when He told them to "fear not" in verse 10? _____

 - b) Who or what was causing the fear? _____

 - c) What did God promise He would do for them in verses 10 and 13? _____

 - d) Will He still do these things for us today? _____ Yes _____ No
2. Read Deuteronomy 31:1-6
 - a) Who was God's messenger? _____
 - b) To whom was God speaking through His messenger in verse 6? _____

 - c) Who or what was causing the fear? _____

 - d) What did God promise He would do for them in verses 5 and 6? _____

 - e) Will He still do these things for us today? _____ Yes _____ No
3. Read Judges 6:11-16
 - a) To whom was God speaking in these verses? _____
 - b) Who or what was causing the fear? _____

- c) What did God promise He would do to help in verse 16? _____

- d) What did God say would be the end result of the battle? _____
_____ (vs. 16)
- e) Read Judges 7. Did everything come to pass, exactly as the Lord had promised? _____ Yes _____ No
4. Read Isaiah 35:4. When we face serious problems, a vague feeling of optimism does not comfort our fearful hearts. They are calmed by the assured confidence that _____

5. Read 1 John 4:18.
- a) What will cast out fear? _____
- b) In other words, if our relationship with God is marked by tormenting fear, it shows that we have not been made _____ that is, complete, and mature - in His love.
6. Read Psalm 46:1-2. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though
- a) _____, and though
- b) _____
7. Do you think God was waiting on me to learn His lesson about fear (see personal testimony), before He eliminated the situation? _____ Yes _____ No
- a) Explain your answer. (Answers will vary.) _____

BLESSING #14

Freedom from Worry

Memory Verse: John 14:27

"Jesus said, 'Peace is what I leave with you; it is my own peace that I give you. I do not give it as the world does. Do not be worried and upset; do not be afraid.'" (GNB)

The Motivation:

The English word for "worry" comes from an old German word meaning to strangle, or choke. That is exactly the way worry works. It actually brings about mental and emotional strangulation.

Mark 4:19 says, ". . . *and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*" Jesus knows that worry is natural to us, but He also can see the long-range effects of it.

In St. Thomas, there is a parasite called "golden thread" that grows on trees and bushes. It looks like spaghetti and spreads out and around, eventually choking the tree or bush to death. The only way to get rid of it is to completely remove it. When we lived there, my husband would chop all the affected branches off, carefully gather every piece that fell to the ground, and remove them immediately. In addition, this parasite is carried from one tree to the next in the air. If there was golden thread growing on our trees and we didn't chop it off right away, the neighbors around us would not be able prevent the parasite from spreading to their own trees and plants.



This is the way worry works. It will slowly choke our joy in life, choke our ability to serve the Lord, and may eventually paralyze our ability to function properly in life. In addition, if you hang out with worriers - people who complain, worry, and always predict the worst, negative thinking will creep into your thinking as well.

Starting today, yank that worry right out of your mind. Be consistent and persistent in carefully removing every trace of it. Then, replace worry with something better - trust in God. Worry replaced by prayer equals trust.

Video: [Don't Worry](#)

Rev. Susan Sparks reveals how not to worry about things that may never happen.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that because of Jesus I can come to You in confidence. You accept me as I am, - worries and all. I am giving ALL my worries to You right now. Thank you for taking care of things for me.

Questions:

Worry is very serious, and it is very common. The Bible teaches the cure for worry and anxiety. Doctors, psychologists, and psychiatrists will go broke if the word gets out! Following are 10 cures from the Bible for the person who worries.

1. Philippians 4:6 says that we shouldn't be worried or anxious about anything. God wants to help us, and He will do this if we will _____

2. After we have brought a problem to the Lord in prayer, the _____ which passes all understanding, will guard our minds and hearts through Jesus Christ. (Phil. 4:7)
3. Instead of staying focused on the problem, and turning it over and over in our minds, we should think (meditate) on things that are ... (Phil. 4:8)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____
 - g) _____
 - h) _____
4. We will have perfect peace, if our _____ is stayed on God. (Isaiah 26:3)
5. We should make use of the _____ of warfare, which are not carnal, but mighty in God, for pulling down strongholds. (2 Cor. 10:4)
6. Every day, we should put on the whole _____, that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph. 6:11)
7. Instead of worrying, we should seek first ...
 - a) _____ and
 - b) _____
and all these things that are needed will be given to you as well. (Matt. 6:33)

8. We should live and walk in the _____. (Gal. 5:25)
9. To what two things should we hold fast firmly to the end? (Heb. 3:6)
 - a) _____ and
 - b) _____
10. Cast all your _____ upon God, for He cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:7)

BLESSING #15

Friendship

Memory Verse: Proverbs 17:17

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

The Motivation:

We have a friend who has always reminded me of the saying, *"A friend in need is a friend indeed."* I think it makes his day when we get in trouble and need his help again. He is a true *brother born for adversity* (Prov. 17:17). If we called for help at midnight, he wouldn't say, "Do you know what time it is?" And if he says he'll be there, you can count on it.

My husband and I were traveling in our RV, when he cut a corner short and ran over a big rock. The next day going down the highway, Mike made his routine "walk around" at a rest stop, and discovered one of our tires was running hot and close to catching on fire.

We called an RV service technician, and he determined we had bent both axles when we ran over the rock, throwing the tires out of alignment. He hammered enough to get us back on the road, and we called the factory to order new axles.

When we called our friend to share our troubles, he said, "Where do you want to meet?" He was willing to travel any distance to lend a hand, and we managed to travel fairly close to his home. He changed out both axles and all four tires, saving us hundreds of dollars in repair bills.



Is there anyone you know who needs a friend? Let them know someone is there for them. It can make all the difference.

Video: [Teaching on Friendship](#)

In one minute, Charles Stanley sums up the one thing he considers to be the most important element of true friendship.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you for the blessing of friends who love us, who share our sorrows, who laugh with us in good times and help us when we need it, and who allow us to just be ourselves. Bless our friends with all the blessings You have for us.

Questions:

Never in history can I think of a friendship that was purer, nobler, more self-denying, and more encouraging than the friendship of this man for David. Read I Samuel 23:15-18.

1. Who befriended David at this dark moment? _____ (vs. 16)
2. What kind of help did David receive from him? _____
_____ (vs. 16)
3. What encouragement did Jonathan provide David? (v. 17)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
4. What indicates that David was helped by his friend? _____
_____ (vs. 18)
5. If you want to make new friends, what must you do? _____
_____ (Proverbs 18:24)
6. What is the highest action you can take to demonstrate friendship? (John 15:13)

Who has done this for us? _____
7. Why does the Lord say friends are so important? (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
8. What has the Lord told us is another benefit of having a good friend? (Proverbs 27:17) _____

BLESSING #16

Fruitfulness

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law."

The Motivation:

In this lovely shot, look at how beautifully the trees are reflected in the water. In fact, I could almost turn our photo upside-down without your being able to tell the difference. This is exactly the way believers are to reflect the glory of God — as a mirror image.

Jesus told us how to do this in John 15:8. *"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."* Jesus is the vine. Those of us who have joined Him as His followers are grafted in and become branches of that same vine. What follows then is that we will reflect God's glory by bearing the same kind of fruit that Jesus did on earth.

If we aren't bearing fruit that reflects God's glory, our Father, the Vine Grower, will prune us. He'll cut away the parts of us that are either unfruitful or bearing bad fruit. In addition, God prunes parts that are actually bearing good fruit — to make them even more fruitful.



Check over your own vines carefully. Does the fruit you are bearing reflect the glory of God?

Video: [The Marshmallow Test](#)

It is fun watching these children trying to resist a single marshmallow. Some had the self-control to succeed ... and others didn't. Self-control (temperance) is one of the keys to a productive life. Too many believers have damaged their testimony because of an area of their lives where they could not seem to exercise self-control.

Prayer: Lord, my goal is to conduct myself in such a way that, when people look at me, they will see You. Help me exemplify the fruit of the Spirit in everything I say and everything I do.

Questions:

In John 15:16, Jesus said: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."

Here Jesus is telling His disciples that He chose them specifically, and that He chose them for a purpose - to bear fruit. What a joy it is to experience the blessing of fruitfulness in our lives. But with the blessing comes responsibility. In Ephesians 4:1, Paul said, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." I can't think of a better way to walk worthy of our calling than to demonstrate fruitfulness in our walk.

1. List the nine characteristics that Paul labeled as "fruit" in Galatians 5:22-23.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a) _____ | e) _____ |
| b) _____ | f) _____ |
| c) _____ | g) _____ |
| d) _____ | h) _____ |
| e) _____ | |

2. I think it is totally appropriate that the first fruit listed in this verse is _____. This fruit encompasses all of the fruit named that follow. It might even be said that the eight terms that follow are just describing what the first fruit looks like in action.

Consider how fruitfulness will look in the life of someone who is walking worthy of the calling.

3. Patience (or longsuffering) is calm endurance, especially when a problem is caused by another person, based on the certain knowledge that God is in control. How can we demonstrate patience?

- a) Proverbs 14:29: _____
- b) Proverbs 15:18: _____

4. Faith is the act of believing in and trusting God, without wavering - even in the night season when we can't see the light at the end of the tunnel.

- a) We can stir up our faith, by reminding ourselves of times in the past when God helped us through a sticky situation. How did David do this in 1 Samuel 17:34-37? _____

- b) The faith of the Apostle Paul comforted him in times of tribulation, because he knew _____
_____ (Rom. 8:28)
5. A good biblical definition of meekness is strength under control. Many associate meekness with an attitude of allowing everyone to run over you because you are afraid of them. But some of the strongest men in the world have been meek.
- a) This man was a great leader. He stood up to the most powerful leader in the world, Pharaoh Ramses. Who was he? _____ (Numbers 12:3)
- b) Jesus could stand up to the winds and the waves. He also chased the moneychangers out of the temple twice with a whip. And yet in Matthew 11:29, He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am _____
and _____, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."
6. When we see people who are caught in sin - like the woman at the well, like the woman caught in the act of adultery, or like Zacchaeus - how are we to respond?

_____ (Galatians 6:1)

BLESSING #17

Guidance

Memory Verse: Psalm 32:8

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

The Motivation:

Have you ever wished you could have a burning bush experience? Sometimes when I'm sitting on the fence, trying to decide whether I'm supposed to go this way or that, I wish God would just speak up in an audible voice, and tell me what His perfect will is for my life.



Moses heard from God audibly at the Burning Bush Conference. At this life-changing seminar, Moses learned more in a matter of minutes than he had in all the years of his life before. God even let Moses debate with Him about the wisdom of assigning such a herculean task to himself, since it was so far out of his comfort zone.

The truth is, God is still speaking to us today. He whispers His advice, counsel, and guidance directly into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The key to hearing from Him is to get quiet and just listen.

Video: [Direction Without Doubt](#)

When you have to make a very difficult decision in your life, do you face it with confidence or find yourself feeling a little intimidated? In this message, Dr. Stanley shares how we can find God's clear guidance.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, we pray that You would guide our actions and decisions, indicate the path we should follow, and highlight our assignments, so that, with Your help, our work will be wholly pleasing to You.

Questions:

The Lord is very well able to guide us with nonverbal communication. Just a whisper in our hearts, and we know where we can and where we can't go. God will let us get off the path of righteousness if we choose that direction, but He will make His objections known

in our hearts. God doesn't guide us by force, but by voluntary submission. "Take my heart and let it be wholly open to Your guidance, Lord," needs to be our daily prayer.

1. We are so blessed! What are the three ways the Lord promises to help us in Psalm 32:8?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

2. According to David in Psalm 32:8, what does God use to guide us? _____

3. Read Psalm 25:9. Whom is God able to guide and teach? _____

4. Read Isaiah 30:20-21. When Judah was prosperous and comfortable, they wouldn't listen to God. But when they faced adversity and affliction, they were able to hear God and be guided by Him again.

The term "word" in verse 21 could also be translated "conscience." What will your conscience tell you, if you are open to guidance from the Holy Spirit? _____

5. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. What must we be willing to do, to receive guidance from the Lord?

- a) _____
- b) _____

6. Read John 16:23. If you are in the process of making a difficult decision and need input from the Lord, what should we do? _____

7. If we ask the Lord for guidance, how will He respond? (John 14:26)

- a) _____
- b) _____

BLESSING #18

Healing

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 2:24

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

The Motivation:

If you live a long, full life, even to 100 or more, you're going to get sick from time to time because your body is mortal.

Even if you never have a physical problem, someone you know will eventually get sick. Somebody is going to need a healing. So it is important that this teaching get on the inside of you.

It's not imaginary or fantasy. This is Biblical reality. It will work for you. You can be healed. Your family can be healed. Your friends can be healed.

People who don't even believe in healing will see what the Lord is doing in your life and start believing in healing themselves. When they ask you questions about it, you will say, "Yes, I believe in healing. I've experienced it and I've seen it happen to others."

PDF: [God's Will to Heal](#)

How do we know whether it's God's will to heal us or not? It makes little difference what others say about it. We need to find out what HE said about it.

"God's Will to Heal" is a list of 101 statements about healing, assembled by my former pastor, Keith Moore. They are taken directly from the Bible with little or no variation. The verbs and construction have been changed to apply to you personally and to sum up the thoughts in some instances.



If you would like to read Keith's book, "God's Will to Heal", click [here](#).

If you would like to listen to Keith's sermon series on "God's Will to Heal", click [here](#).

Or you can call (417) 334-9233 and order the complete CD series from Faith Life Church in Branson, MO. They will ship the CDs to you at NO charge.

Prayer:

Lord, I am sick in my body, but I know You are the One Who heals and You are the One Who keeps me in good health. I praise and thank You for my healing, Lord, and I will testify of Your faithfulness and how You have healed me of this illness to everyone who will listen.

Questions:

Have you ever heard the doctor say, "There's nothing that can be done..." or "There's nothing more we can do." When man doesn't know what to do, there is another, more qualified Doctor, and we should get a second opinion. We should get another diagnosis from The Physician.

Ask Him if you can be healed. Ask Him if there's anything that can be done, and do you know what He'll say? He'll say the same thing He was saying centuries ago. He will say, "I Am. (Ex. 3:14) I Am and will always be the Lord Who heals you, Who mends you, Who restores you to normal. Who makes you whole." (Ex. 15:26) Glory to God!

1. Read Exodus 23:25. What two promises did the Lord make in this verse?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
2. What was the only condition for receiving these blessings? _____

3. This was a really big promise. God was making this promise to the entire nation, millions of people. Could God keep a promise of such magnitude? Read Psalm 105:37 to discover the two blessings the Lord gave the Israelite nation as they left Egypt.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

God has promised that believers can experience the blessing of healing through His covenant of healing. A covenant is a bond, a formal, solemn, and binding agreement. It's similar to our contracts today, and there are two parts to the covenant or contract - our part and God's part.

In the first part of Deuteronomy, we read that God's always keeps His covenants. Even when people are not faithful, He is always faithful to keep His promises.

4. Read Deuteronomy 7:9 and 11. What is OUR part of the covenant for health and healing? _____

5. If we keep our part of the deal, what has God promised to do in Deuteronomy 7:15?

6. There is one more key to receiving our healing. Read Mark 11:24 to find out what that is. _____

When Hudson Taylor first went to China, he made the voyage on a sailing ship. As it neared the channel between the southern Malay Peninsula and the island of Sumatra, the missionary heard an urgent knock on his stateroom door. He opened it, and there stood the captain of the ship.

“Mr. Taylor,” he said, “We have no wind. We are drifting toward an island where the people are heathen, and I fear they are cannibals.”

“What can I do?” asked Taylor.

“I understand that you believe in God. I want you to pray for wind.”

Taylor responded, “All right, Captain, I will, but you must set the sail.”

The captain was agitated and said, “Why, that’s ridiculous! There’s not even the slightest breeze. Besides, the sailors will think I’m crazy.” Nevertheless, the captain finally agreed. Forty-five minutes later he returned and found the missionary still on his knees.

“You can stop praying now,” said the captain. “We’ve got more wind than we know what to do with!”

God is willing to answer our prayers for healing when we pray with faith. Let’s pray with confidence and set the sails!

BLESSING #19

Hope

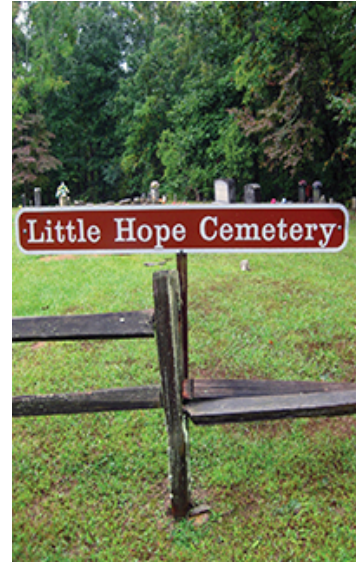
Memory Verse: Romans 8:24-25

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

The Motivation:

Don't bury me in this cemetery! The name seems to imply there is little to no hope for all the dead people who were buried there. But I know that's just not true.

People use the word "hope" rather loosely these days. If they say, "I hope my car starts," or "I hope the check comes in the mail today," they mean that the thing they are hoping for might happen or it might not. It's not a sure thing either way. But the Christian's way of thinking is one of radical hope. A believer's hope is not hope that rests on what man might or might not do. It is based on a solid conviction about what God, and God alone, can and will do.



Because I know the resurrection of Jesus Christ is real, I also know that my future is not in the hands of fate or destiny, or in the hands of a man. It is in God's hands. I may face sickness, problems on the job, or financial problems — but I know for sure that God is looking out for me. I have a radical "living hope," because I have a living Savior.

My living hope for eternal salvation is fixed on Jesus Christ. I know that, although my body will end up buried in a cemetery somewhere one day, I won't really be there. I'll be busy singing praises to my Lord and Savior, up in heaven.

Video: [Biblical Hope](#)

Listen to the difference between what the world knows as "hope" and what the Bible tells us about "hope".

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I believe in my heart that You were raised from the dead, and that this guarantees that Your death was sufficient to pay for all my sins. Therefore I know that God is for me and not against me, and that You yourself are alive today and with me to help forever. I pray that You will help me now to hope fully in Your promises, so that I am freed from any lingering doubts or fear.

Questions:

The Christian life is essentially a life of hope. The word "hope" occurs 52 times in the New Testament alone. And if you look up those 52 passages, you will find that it is always connected in some way to God. God is the author of hope.

1. According to Romans 15:13, the God of hope will fill us with _____
so we will abound in _____ through the power of the Holy Ghost.
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:16 tells us that we can be recipients of good hope through _____

3. According to Titus 3:7, what is the basis for our hope of eternal life? _____

4. According to 1 Peter 1:3, what is the basis for our living hope? _____

5. Because we know that our Hope is real we are willing to wait _____
for it to come to pass (Romans 8:24-25). We count it as certain and real, as something valuable.
6. Romans 12:12 tells us we are to ...
 - a) rejoice in _____
 - b) be patient in _____
 - c) continue in _____
7. The blessing of hope not only refers to our sure hope of salvation. It is also a blessing that we hope for and expect to have a good life. Read Jeremiah 29:11.
 - a) What are the thoughts God has for His children? _____

 - b) What is the expected end? _____

8. What did the following Bible heroes do when things got bad and it seemed like their hope was in vain?

a) David: _____
_____ (Psalm 42:5)

b) Job: _____
_____ (Job 1:21)

c) Paul & Silas: _____
_____ (Acts 16:25)

9. In the end, what happened to them?

a) David: _____
_____ (2 Samuel 5:3-4)

b) Job: _____
_____ (Job 42:10)

c) Paul & Silas: _____
_____ (Acts 16:25)

BLESSING #20

Joy

Memory Verse: Psalm 28:7

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him."

The Motivation:

Few conditions are more unique to a believer's experience and peculiar to the world than a joy that defies our pain (Beth Moore).

James 1:2 says, **"Whenever** 'you face trials, count it all joy' - not **"if** you face trials..." Troubles don't come to us by choice, but are just a part of life. And when troubles show up - we have two choices: live joyously, or whine and complain to anyone who will listen.



I believe it is impossible for the devil to defeat a joyful believer. My husband and I have made the decision to enjoy the abundant life (John 10:10) and live a lifestyle of joy, to be happy and not worry, and to look for the treasures of darkness (Isaiah 45:3). You can make that choice too.

Video: [Count It All Joy](#)

James 1:2 tells us to count it all joy when we face trials. This video explains why God expects us to do that.

Prayer:

I pray that God, who gives hope, will bless you with complete joy and peace because of your faith. And may the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope (Rom. 15:13).

Questions:

It's genuinely hard for me to understand how someone who claims to be walking with God can be grumpy or depressed most of the time. Joy is an inward attitude that has God as its object and its source. It goes much deeper than happiness, and can be present even in the midst of pain.

1. Read Nehemiah 8:9-10.

a) Why were the people mourning and weeping? _____

b) What did the leaders tell the people to do instead of grieving? _____

c) How could they possibly do this? _____

2. In Psalm 51, David said he had lost his joy. Tell what event(s) led to David's writing this psalm by reading 2 Samuel 11 through 2 Samuel 12:14. _____

3. What are the things David requested of God in Psalm 51 to help him get his joy back?

a) _____ (vs. 7)

b) _____ (vs. 8)

c) _____ (vs. 9)

d) _____ (vs. 10)

e) _____ (vs. 11)

f) _____ (vs. 12)

4. What will be the result if we confess our sins as David did? _____

_____ (1 John 1:9)

Will the Lord then restore the joy of our salvation? _____ Yes _____ No

5. In Romans 12:12, Paul says we serve God by rejoicing in _____, not by rejoicing in results. Difficult times are not an excuse to lose our joy.

6. According to James 1:2, problems or tribulations are an occasion for _____, not discouraged resignation.
7. When we find ourselves in a difficult situation, the fruit of the flesh might be despair, anger, depression, disappointment, disillusionment, and fear or maybe panic. But Galatians 5:22 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit, even in stressful times, is _____
- _____
8. What is the source of our joy? _____
- _____ (Philippians 4:4)

BLESSING #21

Longevity

Memory Verse: Psalm 91:16

"With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

The Motivation:

God's original plan for man was life, not death; health, not sickness; and energy, not exhaustion. God's wants us to live a long and healthy life, because He has work for us to do - even as we age.

In Psalm 71:9, David prayed, *"Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth."* David was an old man when he spoke these words and his strength was starting to fail him, but he still wanted to stay active and continue to serve the Lord.

God has appointed our days, and has a plan for our golden years. As we grow older, we should be asking ourselves, "Am I using the time He has given me wisely?" We will never grow too old to receive assignments from Him, and we should never retire from His service.



Video: [About to Be Mugged](#)

What an example for us! A 92-year-old woman from Dyersburg, TN, recently turned an attempted robbery into an opportunity to minister to the would-be robber.

Prayer:

Almighty Father, my life and times are in Your hands (Psalm 31:15). Thank you for giving me this day to serve You. I pray that You grant me a long life, filled with opportunities to declare the works of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior (Psalm 118:17).

Questions:

In His infinite wisdom, the Lord has laid out some principles that can lengthen the days of our lives and give us more time to serve Him on earth. Consider these passages that we are given in God's Word, which speak of extending our life span.

1. In each of these Scriptures, what is the key to living a long life?
 - a) Deuteronomy 4:40: _____
 - b) Proverbs 3:1-2: _____
 - c) Proverbs 9:10-11: _____
 - d) Proverbs 10:27: _____
 - e) Ezekiel 18:21: _____
 - f) Ephesians 6:2-3: _____
2. According to Ecclesiastes 7:17 and Psalms 55:23, is it possible to die before your time? ____ Yes ____ No Explain your answer using these verses. _____

Name someone in the Bible who died prematurely because of disobedience, and tell how that person died. _____

3. According to John 10:10, another source of a premature death is _____ who comes to _____
4. Read Deuteronomy 28:21, 61-62. What happened to the people who would not obey the voice of God? _____

5. Read Proverbs 3:13-16. What will be the result in the life of a person who finds wisdom? _____

One area of our lives in which we should seek wisdom concerns the way to take

proper care of our bodies. Eating habits and exercise will definitely affect our body's ability to live a long and healthy life.

6. Psalm 34:12-14 asks the question, "Who wants to live a good long life?" What guidelines has the author given us in these verses?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

7. The man in Psalm 91:16 will fill out the measure of his days, and he will be fully satisfied with his life, content to go on to his heavenly home when the time comes. According to verse 14, why will the Lord give this man such a nice long, satisfying life? _____

In addition, what other blessing has the Lord promised such a man? _____

_____ (vs. 16)

BLESSING #22

Love

Memory Verse: Romans 8:38-39

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Motivation:

Did you ever play the game "He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not" as a child? I did, and 50% of the time, the answer was **not** what I wanted to hear.



We don't have to pluck petals off a daisy to see if God really loves us. The Bible, our love letter from God, says that He loved the world so much that He gave His only Son for us (John 3:16), that we might live and have life more abundantly (John 10:10). It tells us that He has our names graven on the palm of His hand (Isaiah 49:16), and that we are the apple of His eye, protected under the shadow of His wings (Psalm 17:8).

Max Lucado once said, *"God saved you because He likes you. He likes having you around. He thinks you are the best thing to come down the pike in quite a while. If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He'll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart. And the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem? Face it, friend. He's crazy about you!"*

Video: [Check the Box](#)

Do you remember passing notes in school, with the words, "Do you like me? Check 'Yes' or 'No'." Sometimes, our insecurities cause us to question if God really loves us. This video will set any such doubts or fears to rest.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, because You love me, You sent Your Son to die on the cross for my sins. Let my heart rejoice in the sure knowledge of Your love and let that love overflow from my heart to those You have called me to love.

Questions:

The topic of God's love is truly an overwhelming subject to try and tackle in only one lesson. But we will begin by focusing on just one verse, John 3:16, and look at the seven qualities of God's love found there.

1. God's love is UNCONDITIONAL. Read the first 6 words of John 3:16 KJV (For God so loved the world).

a) Whom did God love so much that He was willing to sacrifice His only begotten Son?

i) ____ All the Jews

ii) ____ All the good people

iii) ____ All the world

b) God's love is based on our behavior or our attitude toward Him.

____ True ____ False

c) Christianity uniquely claims God's love comes free of charge, no strings attached. ____ True ____ False

d) Is there any way to make God love us more or make God love us less?

____ Yes ____ No

Explain your answer by referring to another scripture. (Answers will vary.) ____

2. God's love is SACRIFICIAL. Read the next 3 words of John 3:16 (that He gave).

a) Here we learn something important about the nature of true love. Sometimes people think they love someone because of how that person makes them feel, or what that person has done for them. God demonstrates that true love has nothing to do with what you can do for me. But it has everything to do with what?

b) What was the end result of God's sacrificial love? _____

3. God's love is VALUABLE. Read the next 2 words of John 3:16 (*His only*).

How many times have you heard or even said yourself: "I can't give you that because it's the ONLY one I've got." Not only was God willing to give, but here we see that He was willing to give the only _____ that He had.

4. God's love is PERSONAL. Read the next word of John 3:16 (*Son*).

a) God's love isn't just some abstract philosophy or theological doctrine. God's love was made manifest in this world through the Person of _____, the only Son of the Father.

b) God's love is personal because

i) ____ It was manifest through a Person – Jesus Christ.

ii) ____ The sacrifice was made to cover the sins of each individual person.

iii) ____ Both

5. God's love is ACCESSIBLE. Read the next 5 words of John 3:16 (*that whosoever believeth in Him*).

The really good news about God's love is that it is not limited to a select few. It isn't just available to someone who was born with right color of skin or on the correct continent. What is the only criteria for accessing the love of God? _____

6. God's love is NONJUDGMENTAL. Read the next 3 words of John 3:16 (should not perish).

a) Being judgmental means that one has a critical spirit that only looks for the bad in people and then is quick to condemn them when it is found. God on the other hand will judge us for our sins ONLY if we refuse to accept _____

b) Jesus didn't come into the world to ... you. _____ rebuke _____ rescue

He came to ... you. _____ rebuke _____ rescue

c) Jesus didn't come into the world to ... you. _____ cleanse _____ criticize

He came to ... you. _____ cleanse _____ criticize

d) Jesus didn't come into the world to ... you. _____ pardon _____ punish

He came to ... you. _____ pardon _____ punish

e) Jesus didn't come into the world to ... you. ____ destroy ____ deliver

He came to ... you. ____ destroy ____ deliver

7. God's love is BENEFICIAL. Read the final words of John 3:16 (but have everlasting life). Because of God's love, each and every one of us can have ...

BLESSING #23

Mercy

Memory Verse: Psalm 103:17

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

The Motivation:

My husband and I love to travel, and we have visited several amazing waterfalls. When we see that heavy rush of water flowing across the top of the rocks, we wonder how gallons and gallons of water can continuously drop over the edge, day after day, week after week, year after year, without ever running out. Where does all that water come



from? The flow seems to be constant, never drying up.

This reminds me of God's mercy. In Psalm 103:17, God made a covenant of mercy with His people years ago, and the promise still holds true today. There's enough mercy for everyone, and there's no way it will ever run out.

How can we access this constant flow of God's gracious mercy? The apostle Paul tells us, *"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved"* (Romans 10:9). It's as simple as that!

Video: [Grace](#)

In this conversation between Jesus and Peter, grace and mercy are illustrated when Jesus forgives the unforgivable.

Prayer

Lord, I have sinned and strayed from Your ways. How I thank You for Your gracious, compassionate, and merciful forgiveness. As I meditate on Your mercy, and as I grow in Your likeness, let mercy become an increasingly significant part of my daily walk.

Questions:

Because God has shown mercy to us, we are to show mercy to others. Nowhere is the essence of mercy unveiled for us more clearly than in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. The victim in that story was miserable. He had been beaten, robbed, and left for dead. Read Luke 10:30-37 to see mercy in action.

1. Name the people who saw the man who was hurt by the thieves.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
2. What was different about the Samaritan? _____

3. Mercy does not stop with sympathy for a person in their bad situation. It acts to relieve the misery. List the things which the Samaritan did to help the victim.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____
 - g) _____
4. The Samaritan's compassionate feelings led him to a practical demonstration of kindness, concrete actions, and mercy. Because God is full of mercy, He also acts to relieve our distress. Psalm 136 is a good place to see some of the merciful things He has done.

What is the one phrase that is repeated over and over in this beautiful psalm? _____

5. God remembered the Israelites in their low estate, in their miserable and humiliating condition. What are just a few of the things He did to relieve their suffering?
 - a) _____

- b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____
 - g) _____
6. The sins that make us guilty actually cause us most of our misery. God must deal with our sin problem before He can relieve our distress. That is why we find both His grace and His mercy involved in providing our salvation.
- a) According to Ephesians 2:4-5, God is rich in _____,
 - b) and because of his _____,
 - c) even when we were dead in _____,
 - d) He was willing to _____.
7. In Romans 9:23, we learn that we are vessels of _____, containers into which God has poured His mercy. And now that God has saved us, He continues to extend to us His mercy. Jeremiah said His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23).

BLESSING #24

Peace

Memory Verse: Philippians 4:7

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The Motivation:



Sometimes it seems like trials and difficulties are pounding into our lives, one after another, without stopping or even slowing down — much like these waves we saw on Lake Michigan at Petoskey State Park. But when we fully trust the Lord, even in the middle of unrelenting and seemingly unsolvable problems, we can have a level of peace that is almost beyond words, nearly impossible to explain to someone who has never experienced it.

You might compare this type of peace with a smooth ride in a submarine. During normal weather conditions, a submerged submarine doesn't rock back and forth with the motion of the waves on the surface. Even during a storm, a submarine will stay completely level at its submerged depth while the waves crash above. When the submarine gets far enough down, it reaches an area sailors refer to as "the cushion of the sea." At this depth, even during a severe storm, the waters remain calm.

This is a picture of the Christian at peace with God and in God. In this zone, believers will find that perfect tranquility and peace during a storm that only Christ can provide. I pray that you have experienced this level of peace.

Video: [Focus on God](#)

In this video Charles Stanley shares secrets for experiencing peace, confidence, and even joy in the middle of a situation.

Prayer: Lord, I am so grateful to be Your child and I thank You for Your wonderful blessing of peace. Help me to focus on You when I am tempted to worry about my problems at night. Thank you for the gift of being able to lie down and have a peaceful night's sleep.

Questions:

"When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day (Job 7:4). Have you ever had a night like Job's? Too often, no matter how tired people may feel, when their head hits the pillow, the eyeballs pop wide open. They just can't sleep.

The medical community has experts who devote all their time to the study of sleep. They have come up with all kinds of tricks designed to help people get a good night's rest – medications, mental thought games, stress relieving activities. People spend millions of dollars every year on sleep aides and stress relievers, both over the counter and prescription.

But then there is the sleep that God grants - peaceful sleep. An amazing story of someone who was able to sleep peacefully in a time of trouble is found in Acts 12:1-11.

1. Who was tormenting selected people in the church? _____ (vs. 1)
2. Who had already been put to death? _____ (vs. 2)
3. What three things happened to the Apostle Peter in verse 4?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
4. What did the church begin to do, immediately after Peter's arrest? _____
_____ (vs. 5)
5. While the church was praying, what was Peter doing? _____
_____ (vs. 6b)
6. This was not only a dangerous and stressful situation for Peter, but I think it would have also been very uncomfortable for falling asleep. What might have caused discomfort? (vs. 6b-c-d)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
7. Not only was Peter asleep, he was truly sound asleep. We can see this because, when the angel of the Lord came to rescue him, Peter was hard to wake up. The

angel had to poke him in the side (vs. 7). What two things did the angel tell him to do next? (vs. 8)

a) _____

b) _____

This reminds me of the way children are hard to wake up, sometimes, in the morning. They sleep in peace, and they sleep hard, getting the rest they need to grow. When you try to wake them up, they are groggy. You have to tell them to get dressed, brush their teeth, put on their shoes - sometimes more than once.

8. Like Daniel in the den of lions, Peter was completely at peace, sleeping between two guards and in jail for his faith. His heart was right with the Lord and he was confident of eternal security, should he should die the next day. However, he did not die.

What was Peter's testimony in verse 11? _____

BLESSING #25

Promotion

Memory Verse: James 4:10

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

The Motivation:

My husband is reinventing himself. At age 72, he decided to become an RV Inspector and repairman. He has been attending classes - online, in the classroom, and hands-on in the field, and has finally passed all the tests and graduated.



My husband is very humble about that piece of paper in his hands. But since he is now certified to repair RVs, perfect strangers have been coming up to him to ask for advice and help with issues in their RVs.

Here is what he does. First he listens carefully to the problem. Then he inquires of the Lord and considers various solutions. When he thinks he has the answer, he gets to work. After the issue is corrected, and the RV owner is thanking him, he never fails to give credit to the Lord for His help.

If it weren't for the Lord's provision, Mike couldn't have attended the classes. If it weren't for the input of the Holy Spirit, he knows he might not be able to pinpoint the root of the problem and discover the solution.

I believe the Lord is going to prosper Mike in his new career, because he isn't looking to man for the promotion of his new business, but rather God. As we will discover in our Biblical examples, the Lord promotes those who work for man as if serving the Lord. (Col. 3:23)

Video: [Wash My Feet](#)

Is self-promotion the right way to get ahead? Watch these 3 acquaintances from church in their one-upmanship attempts, and how the Lord shows them where their priorities should be.

Prayer: Lord, I know You have a plan and purpose for my life. I believe I am ready for whatever You have next for me. Expand my territory. I ask that You promote me to the

next level of responsibility. Guide my steps and priorities. Increase my faith as I wait on you to move any obstacles to this promotion away from my path.

Questions:

Do you feel like you're sitting on the sidelines as others receive bigger titles, more money, and increased visibility? Vast numbers of people forget the fact that God is the Master Promoter. David wrote, *"For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."* (Psalm 75:6-7)

1. Read Chapter 2 of the book of Daniel.
 - a) What did King Nebuchadnezzar ask the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to do? _____
_____ (vs. 2)
 - b) How did Daniel deal with Nebuchadnezzar's unreasonable demand? _____
_____ (vs. 14-23)
 - c) After Daniel's prayer was answered, what did he do? _____
_____ (vs. 23)
 - d) What did King Nebuchadnezzar do after Daniel interpreted the dream? _____
_____ (vs. 48-49)
2. Several bad things happened to Joseph in the early years of his life. But he never turned against the Lord, and as he proved himself faithful, the Lord promoted him to higher positions.
 - a) What happened to Joseph as a very young man? _____
_____ (Genesis 37:23-28)
 - b) How did Joseph end up in prison? _____
_____ (Genesis 39:1-20)
 - c) How was Joseph promoted while still in prison? _____
_____ (Genesis 39:21-23)

- d) After Joseph correctly interpreted Pharaoh's dream, what happened next? _____
_____ (Genesis 41:39-41)
3. In Genesis 12, God told Abraham to leave his family and country and go to a land He would show him. In return for his obedience, how did the Lord promise to promote Abraham and his family? (Genesis 12:1-3)
- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____
- g) _____
4. Identify the person(s) in the Bible whom God promoted from lowly positions to leadership positions, and name the job they held before they were promoted.
- a) _____ (Psalm 78:70)
- b) _____ (Judges 6:11-16)
- c) _____ (Exodus 3:1-11)
- d) _____ (Matthew 4:18-20)
- e) _____ (Acts 8:1-3)
5. Read Acts 5:1-11.
- a) Name the two people who tried to promote themselves by lying. _____

- b) What was the lie? _____

- c) What happened to them? _____

6. Who is ultimately responsible when you receive a promotion on the job? (Psalm 75:7)
- a) _____ the boss, because he sees your diligence and hard work
 - b) _____ yourself, because of your diligence and hard work
 - c) _____ the Lord, because He has a plan for your life

BLESSING #26

Prosperity

Memory Verse: 3 John 1:2

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

The Motivation:

Could prosperity be tied to our giving? One evening after dinner, we went out for ice cream cones. Everyone ordered something different, and our grandson, Matthew, ordered a "SUPERScoop."

His cone was amazing. The employee must have packed the ice cream down inside the cone first, tamping and pressing it in as tightly as possible. Then he added more ice cream to the top, stacking scoops as high as he could — until it almost fell over.



His cone reminded me of Matthew 6:38. *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."* In those days, a salesman showed gratitude for a sale by pressing down, shaking, and piling up as much grain as possible into a customer's basket.

Most people today try to have more by hoarding, but God says the way to have more is through giving. Give generously and God will see to it that others give generously back to you.

Video: [God's Purpose for Prosperity](#)

Pastor Gary A. Hyman, pastor of Mount Gideon Faith Fellowship Church in New Haven, CT, teaches that God wants believers to prosper so they can be a blessing to others.

Prayer

Lord, I praise You and thank You for all the ways You meet my needs. But I am asking that You provide more than enough, so there will always be plenty to give. Bless the work of my hands (Deut. 28:8) and allow prosperity not only in my finances, but in every aspect of my life.

Questions:

1. In 3 John 1:2, what are the 3 blessings that were God's will for Gaius?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
2. Psalm 1:3 promises prosperity, and verses 1 & 2 provide the conditions for enjoying prosperity. What are they?
3.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
4. In Proverbs 28:13, we learn additional conditions for prosperity.
 - a) He that _____ shall not prosper.
 - b) But whoso _____ and _____ shall have mercy.
5. How does Deuteronomy 15:10 explain God's condition for prosperity? _____

6. Read Proverbs 11:24-26.
 - a) What will happen to the person who is stingy? _____

 - b) What will happen to the person who is generous? _____

 - c) Galatians 6:7 supports this teaching by saying, "... *whatsoever a man sows*, _____

BLESSING #27

Protection

Memory Verse: Isaiah 41:10

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The Motivation:

We live in an age dominated by fear. Some people install elaborate and expensive security systems to guard their home, their office, and their cars – because of fear of an intruder. Other people fear, sickness, abandonment, failure, death, financial disaster, or the problems that come with aging.



Fears that are not addressed with God's Word can turn into phobias, interfering with a person's everyday life or daily routine. But this is NOT the time to fear, like the rest of the world fears. This is the time to have great faith, hope, and trust in God's promises of protection that He has made to us - over and over in His Word.

Deut. 32:11, Ps. 17:8, Ps. 57:1, Ps. 91:4

Just as baby birds draw close to their mother for protection, let us draw nearer to the Lord every day.

Video: [A Hedge of Protection](#)

Harold Herring shares an encouraging word on the promises of God's protection found in Psalm 91.

Prayer:

Lord, I run to you for protection. Don't disappoint me. You do what is right, so come to my rescue. Listen to my prayer and keep me safe. Be my mighty rock, the place where I can always run for protection. Save me by your command. You are my mighty rock and my fortress. (Psalm 71:1-3 CEV)

Questions:

1. We have the assurance that we can trust that God will take care of us because He has said _____

_____ (Isaiah 49:2)

2. There are many who have entered God's Witness Protection Plan, gone into hiding and been protected from their enemies by the Lord until the situation changed. Name the person(s) who were hidden for a period of time, and the person or nation who sought to harm them.

Who Was Hidden

Who Sought to Harm Him

a) Exodus 1:22 - 2:10: _____

b) 1 Kings 17:1-7: _____

c) 1 Kings 18:4: _____

d) Matthew 2:13-14: _____

e) John 5:10-13: _____

3. In the verse for this lesson, Isaiah 49:2, God promises to hide us in the shadow of His hand. Where else does the Bible tell us He will hide us until danger passes?

a) Psalm 17:8: _____

b) Psalm 27:5: _____

c) Psalm 31:20: _____

d) Psalm 91:4a: _____

4. Psalm 91 is all about God's umbrella of protection over those who love and serve Him. Name some of the perils listed in this psalm from which that He has promised to protect us.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

5. What should we do in the time of trouble? _____

_____ (Psalm 143:9)

Keep me hidden in You, precious Lord. Guard me from presumptuous confidence that would tempt me to leave the safety of your chosen place for me. I love You and thank You, my King and my God!

6. What do these verses require of the believer as a “condition” for God’s protection?

a) 2 Samuel 22:31: _____

b) Proverbs 2:7-8: _____

BLESSING #28

Rest

Memory Verse: Matthew 11:28-29

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The Motivation:



In this photo, my dog is so completely relaxed, she fell asleep in the car sitting UP in my lap. That's the way we should rest in the Lord — no matter what position we're in, no matter what situation we're going through, no matter how much pressure we're under, no matter how stressed out we feel.

We're all in the middle of a rat race. But when it seems like life is about to overtake you, just sit back and let Him handle things.

Notice, Jesus said, *"Come unto ME ... and I will give you rest."* He didn't say go to a friend's house, go to the bar, or even go to church. When we need a break, Jesus wants us to come to Him.

Are you worn out from too much stress? Just go to Him. He'll take it from there.

Video:

[My Yoke is Easy & My Burden is Light](#)

While we will have many challenges in life, we are not meant to do it alone. Jesus is waiting to lighten our load and give us rest. All we need to do is ask Him into our lives.

Prayer:

Lord, sometimes I get worn out and feel like giving up. Help me remember You are always there for me - to lighten my load and give me rest.

Questions:

It seems there is always somewhere to be and something to do. Making time for rest seems next to impossible at times. An extra hour of sleep may be helpful for our physical bodies, but what we need even more than that is what Jesus offers. Let's examine Matthew 11:28-30 more closely.

1. Christ gave a simple command in verse 28a. What was it? _____

2. To whom did He give this command? _____ (vs. 28b)
3. What are some of the burdens people are carrying by themselves?
 - a) _____ (Isaiah 59:2)
 - b) _____ (Matthew 6:25)
 - c) _____ (John 14:1)
4. What are some of the things people do on their own, to try and find peace and rest from their problems? (Thought question, answers will vary.)
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
5. How did Jesus describe His nature in verse 29? _____

6. What will be the result if we take Jesus up on His offer to help? _____
_____ (vs. 28c, 29d)
7. Why did Jesus say this was the best way to handle things? _____
_____ (vs. 30)
8. The first thing Jesus did to give us rest was to die on the cross for forgiveness of all our sins. We no longer have to live with guilt because there is now no more _____ (Romans 8:1)
9. In the middle of difficulties, we can experience peace because Jesus has _____
_____ (John 16:33)

10. What are some practical things believers can do to find rest in the Lord?

a) Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 3:16: _____

b) Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 6:33: _____

c) Exodus 20:8-10, Mark 2:27, Mark 6:31: _____

d) Philippians 4:6-7: _____

BLESSING #29

Restoration

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."



The Motivation:

When my husband and I had a restaurant, there was an employee whom we really loved - but we had to keep firing him for missing work or showing up totally drunk. When we fired him for the 5th time, Mike sat down on the front steps of the restaurant with him and shared Jesus (again). He told Billy how much we love him and how much Jesus loves him. But we couldn't have him around other employees or the customers in that condition. Mike's heart broke as he watched Billy leave - walking home alone in the dark.

About two years later, Billy called and said, "Do you remember me?" Are you kidding? Of course! We had been wondering where he was. Billy said he was in a half-way house in Houston - had just gotten out of prison for drug and alcohol abuse. He said he met Jesus in prison and wanted to know if we would hire him again. I told him when he was finished with the program to come see us. Now, you and I know some prison conversions aren't real and there is no real fruit - so I wondered if Billy just said what he thought we wanted to hear.

About six months later, Billy walked into the restaurant. Mike sat down with him and visited, and decided to offer him a job. But the only job we had available was for a waiter. Oh, boy. No hiding him in the kitchen this time. We contacted DETCOG (Deep East Texas Council of Government), and told them we wanted to offer Billy a job, that we only had a waiter position open, but his teeth were in too bad of a condition to have him serving food to our guests. The agency volunteered to pay for fixing his teeth if we would hire him.

Billy began going to the dentist every week, and working at the restaurant. He would rush to the front door to greet our guests as they came in and help them find a table. He was always smiling, always up, always sober. By this time, our customers were saying, "Is that Billy? I hardly recognize him!" I would just smile and say, "Yes, that is Billy. He's a new creation in Christ now."

Video: [You are a NEW Creation!](#)

The enemy will lie to you, and I imagine Billy believed many of the lies in this video when he was at his lowest point. After Billy became a new creation in Christ, Satan's lies could no longer discourage him or turn him away from the straight and narrow path.

Prayer for Restoration:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)

Questions:

People are always trying to change themselves for the better. They go on crash diets, have plastic surgery, get new hairdos, or buy new clothes. Americans spend \$50 million a year on subliminal message tapes designed to help them do everything from improving their self-image to stopping smoking.

Compared with the renovation God has planned for us, our own efforts to improve ourselves are trivial.

1. According to our memory verse, what is our condition when we are "in Christ"? _____

2. What characteristics did the Apostle Paul observe in the Thessalonians that led him to believe they were indeed new creations in Christ? (1Thessalonians 1:3)

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

3. In my own case, when I became a new creation in Christ, the change was internal. No one knew what had happened until I shared my testimony. Other times, as in Billy's life, the change is so dramatic everyone can see it on the outside as well as on the inside.

Who was the person changed, and what type of change took place in that person when Jesus touched his life?

a) Mark 9:14-29

i) _____ Internal

ii) _____ External

iii) _____ Both internal and external

b) Luke 19:1-10

- i) _____ Internal
- ii) _____ External
- iii) _____ Both internal and external

c) Luke 5:18-26

- i) _____ Internal
- ii) _____ External
- iii) _____ Both internal and external

d) John 9:1-11

- i) _____ Internal
- ii) _____ External
- iii) _____ Both internal and external

e) Acts 8:26-40

- i) _____ Internal
- ii) _____ External
- iii) _____ Both internal and external

4. The above are all examples of people coming to a saving relationship with Jesus for the first time. However, there are times when, despite the most compassionate environment, the best teaching and the strongest accountability networks, people still find themselves caught up in sin.

According to Luke 15:11-24, is it possible to break the yoke of sin and be restored to a right relationship with the Lord? _____ Yes _____ No Explain your answer

What type of change(s) took place after the Prodigal Son was reconciled with his father?

- a) _____ Internal
- b) _____ External
- c) _____ Both internal and external

5. The video, The Cop and the Cook, is a similar testimony of restoration by Daniel Hiers, the author of several of our courses and workbooks. Daniel was a preacher's kid and saved, but backslid into a very bad situation. See how Jesus restored him both internally and externally.

a) What was the sin of which Daniel was guilty, both in God's eyes and the government's? _____

b) Who caught Daniel and brought him to justice? _____

c) What changes did the Lord make internally, in Daniel's heart? _____

d) How had the appearance of Daniel, preaching his first sermon after being released from prison, changed from his appearance 7 years before at the time of his arrest? _____

e) Who is the only Person Who could have effected such a change inside and out? _____

BLESSING #30

Salvation

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:8-9

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast"

The Motivation:

Mike and I rode the Incline Railway at Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee. This is a nine minute trolley-style train ride, going nearly straight up for one mile. The breathtaking grade of the track increases to 72.7% near the top, giving this ride the distinction of being the steepest passenger railway in the world. It was a great ride, but we were placing all our faith in two pulleys, pulling two sets of cables, connected together with a bunch of bolts and screws. That's crazy!



To non-believers, faith in Jesus for salvation sounds crazy too. Common sense would tell us that we need to do good works, live a sinless life, or pay a hefty price for our sins, to make it to heaven. But none of those things will save us. It may sound too easy, but all it really takes is faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Video: [The Birdcage](#)

This skit is a classic and moving illustration of God's love for mankind and His plan for salvation.

The Sinner's Prayer:

God in heaven, I come to you in the name of Jesus. I acknowledge to You that I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins and the life that I have lived; I need your forgiveness.

I believe that Your only begotten Son Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross at Calvary and died for my sins, and I am now willing to turn from my sin.

You said in Your Holy Word, Romans 10:9, that if we confess the Lord our God and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we shall be saved.

Right now I confess Jesus as the Lord of my soul. With my heart, I believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. This very moment I accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior and according to Your Word, right now I am saved.

Thank You, Jesus, for your unlimited grace which has saved me from my sins. Thank You for dying for me and giving me eternal life.

Questions:

As you work through these questions on salvation, don't simply copy the scriptures, but type the responses in your own words

1. How does the Bible describe sin in 1 John 3:4? _____

2. According to the following verses, what is the result of sin?
 - a) _____ (Romans 6:23)
 - b) _____ (James 1:15)
3. How many of us are righteous? _____ (Romans 3:10)
4. How many of us have sinned? _____ (Romans 3:23)
5. What word explains why God would send His only Son to die for our sins? (John 3:16) _____
6. Does God love us as sinners or do we have to become good enough for God to love us? _____ (Romans 5:8)
7. Are we saved by Jesus alone, or has God provided another way for salvation? _____
_____ (1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 4:12; John 14:6)
8. God's Word says sin causes death. Jesus took that penalty upon Himself in our place. How did Jesus take the penalty of sin for us? _____
_____ (1 Corinthians 15:3)
9. What must we do to be saved from the penalty of sin? _____
_____ (Romans 10:9; Acts 16:30-31)

10. Why does the Bible say that we are NOT saved by our works? _____

_____ (Ephesians 2:8-9)

11. What should be the result of God's goodness and mercy toward us? _____

_____ (Romans 2:4)

12. When we repent, what happens in Heaven? _____

_____ (Luke 15:10)

Have the angels rejoiced over you? If you're not sure, all you have to do is pray the sinner's prayer in the left-hand column, and mean it in your heart.

If you are saying this prayer for the very first time, send me a personal email. I would LOVE to rejoice with you and answer any questions you might have.

BLESSING #31

Security

Memory Verse: Psalm 18:2

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

The Motivation:

In our travels, my husband and I have hiked through several caves. In the deepest areas, I always find myself mentally humming that old hymn, "Rock of Ages."

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.*



This hymn of victory was written in 1776 by Augustus M. Toplady. Reverend Toplady, a preacher in Blagdon, was travelling along a gorge in the Mendip Hills in England, when he was caught in a sudden storm. He found shelter in a crevice in the gorge, and it is said he wrote the original lyrics on a playing card while waiting for the torrential rain to let up.

David wrote a similar song of victory in our memory verse for today, Psalm 18:2. For years, David had been on the run from King Saul and his army — and he often hid in the crevices of mountain rocks. But through it all, David always knew his secure, safe place was in the Lord.

Video: [The Rug](#)

We all know what it feels like to have the rug pulled out from under us. Where can we find solid footing?

Prayer:

Lord, I declare that You are my bedrock, the Rock upon which I will build my life. Direct my steps so my feet will always be set on secure ground. (Prov. 16:9)

Questions:

There is safety and security for those who trust in Christ Jesus, accept His free gift of salvation, and build their lives on this secure foundation. But there is misery and destruction for those who reject Him, and build their lives according to the views of this world.

1. Read Matthew 7:24-29. What is the most important part of any structure - whether it be your own home, a skyscraper, or a cabin in the woods? _____

2. Jesus told about two men who built houses. They both looked the same from the outside, but where had they built them?
 - a) One laid the foundation on _____ (vs.24).
 - b) One laid the foundation on _____ (vs. 26).
3. What happened when the rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon the houses? _____

4. Time and the storms of life will prove the strength of a person's foundation, even if we try to make it nobody's business but our own, hidden from the view of others. What was the foundation upon which each of these persons had built their lives?
 - a) Judas
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - b) Peter
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - c) Ananias & Sapphira
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - d) Some in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 5:1-2)

- i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - e) Demas
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - f) Trophimus & Tychicus
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
 - g) Herod
 - i) _____Rock of Jesus Christ
 - ii) _____Sinking Sand of this World
5. In today's world, is it possible to discern the foundation upon which a person has built his/her life? _____Yes _____No Explain your answer. _____
_____(Thought question)

I pray that you are able to sing this old hymn with confidence ...

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Refrain:

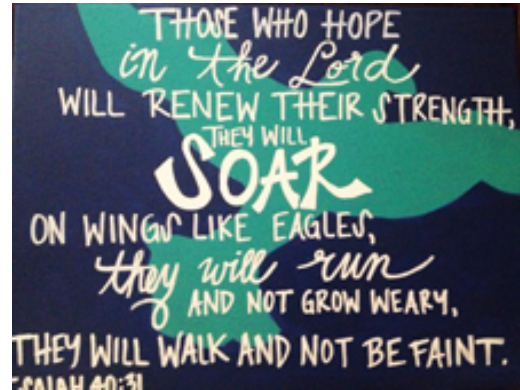
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

BLESSING #32

Strength

Memory Verse: Isaiah 40:31

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."



The Motivation:

Even though God had recused Israel from the bondage of the Egyptians, Israel had never really known a season of peace. Someone was always trying to conquer them. In the passage above, Israel had become so discouraged, God had to remind them of just Who He Is, and how to recharge their batteries.

God told the Israelites that they would receive renewed strength as they waited on Him. The Lord didn't mean they should sit around passively, wondering if He was going to do something about their situation. The truth is, He brings strength to believers as they seek Him, and rely on Him, instead of their own strength.

Notice the sequence of promises in our memory verse. First He says we will mount up with wings like eagles. Then we will run. Finally we will walk. Does it seem out of order? Not at all. First, recognize that we soar up into heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). Then we set ourselves on the course to run the race (Hebrews 12:1). Then we are in the right place to walk in a way that is worthy of the calling to which we have been called (Ephesians 4:1).

Video: [Isaiah 40:31](#)

Have you ever wondered what it would feel like to mount up with wings like an eagle. This video was filmed with a camera strapped to the back of an eagle. Soar with the eagle over the mountaintops.

Prayer:

Lord, I confess, when I was younger I tended to solve problems with my own plan of action, using my own abilities and strengths - such as they were. But the longer I live, the more I realize I must access Your strength when troubles come my way. Remind me of this the next time I look to myself instead of You for strength.

Questions:

Most of us want to do things for God, to be productive in service for His Kingdom. But, more than at any other time in history, Christians are suffering from burnout. They are too worn out to do one more thing. They have forgotten how to renew their strength in the Lord.

1. Read the following verses to identify problems that could cause a believer to become tired, run down, uninterested, and unenthused about serving the Lord. Explain in your own words.

a) Exodus 20:8 and Mark 2:27: _____

b) Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:31: _____

c) 2 Chronicles 20:17: _____

d) Hebrews 12:1: _____

e) 2 Corinthians 4:16: _____

2. What might be other issues that could arise in the life of a Christian who has let his batteries run down, who is operating without renewed strength in the Lord? (Thought question - answers will vary.) _____

3. Using the same verses, list things a believer who is suffering from burnout could do to get charged back up with the strength of the Lord?

a) Exodus 20:8 and Mark 2:27: _____

b) Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:31: _____

c) 2 Chronicles 20:17: _____

d) Hebrews 12:1: _____

e) 2 Corinthians 4:16: _____

4. In addition, instead of having a pity party about how busy he is, or how tired she feels, a believer should _____

_____ (Psalm 103:1-2)

5. Instead of making excuses, what should be our constant state of mind? _____

_____ (Philippians 2:5)

6. The comparison of strength in the Lord to an eagle's strength would have had great meaning for the people of that time. The facts are, if an eagle is just flying from one feeding area to another, it flies about 20-30 miles per hour. However, when migrating, eagles seldom flap their wings. Instead, they use thermal updrafts to gain great altitude, and they soar in a long, descending glide, as you will see in the video, within which they can easily hit 50 to even 75 mph.

It has been estimated that eagles can see 3 to 4 times farther than humans and that they can see another eagle soaring nearly 50 miles away.

The eagle molts in his old age and renews his feathers, and with them, his youth. That's why the psalmist said, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles." The new feathers on their wings represented renewed strength in the Lord.

Who is the Only One Who has the power to transform the old, bored, tired, burnt out, overworked, under-driven, sin-filled men and women into young, excited, productive,

powerful people with renewed strength? _____

BLESSING #33

Success

Memory Verse: Matthew 6:33

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The Motivation:

The world sees success as becoming wealthy, moving up the ladder socially, and owning nice things. But the way God defines success is so much different. He is watching to see if we reach achievements with infinite, eternal value - not only in this life but also in the life to come. When He sees we have our priorities in order, material success will follow.



Video: [The Successful Man](#)

God desires dependence, trust, and faith in Him for success - not faith in our ability to succeed on our own.

Prayer:

Lord, ultimately You, oh Lord, are the One who gives me success. Bless the work of my hands and cause me to walk each day in Your favor and blessing.

Questions:

Success is a blessing God wants to give you. You may not have the finances or the education the world tells you it will take to enjoy success. But you can start where you are and use what you have - especially when you have the blessings of God over your life.

1. In your own words, describe how the world measures success. _____

What does God look for in the successful person? _____

2. According to Joshua 1:8, what is the key to success? _____

3. Psalm 1, verses 1 and 2 give us several important keys for success. What are they?
- a) _____ (vs. 1a)
 - b) _____ (vs. 1b)
 - c) _____ (vs. 1c)
 - d) _____ (vs. 2a)
 - e) _____ (vs. 2b)
4. What does Psalm 1:3 say will happen in the life of such a man? _____

5. In the video, The Successful Man, what did the man fear? _____

- Does the person who puts God first have any reason to fear? _____ Yes _____ No
6. Where can we get everything we need for success? _____
_____ (Philippians 4:19)
7. God doesn't look down on small beginnings in our efforts to be successful. In Luke 16:10, Jesus said that a person who is faithful in a _____ will also be faithful in _____.

The Lord is watching you and desires to bless you greatly. Be faithful in what He has given you, and begin rejoicing right now. He's getting ready to give you the increase.

BLESSING #34

Wisdom

Memory Verse: James 1:5

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The Motivation:

God encourages us to seek any kind of wisdom. He Heavenly insight that can and benefits.



wisdom, but not just wants us to gain the unleash blessings

But Satan wants nothing more than for Christians to be influenced by worldly wisdom. Unfortunately, we often take carnal wisdom, cover it with scripture so we can "Christian-ize" it, and then adopt it as our own.

God invites us to pursue His wisdom. We begin this pursuit by entering into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Once that relationship is established, embrace a moral standard that lines up with His Word and seek God's wisdom for every situation. You will see results.

Video: [The Mom Song](#)

We tend to share with our children the collection of wisdom passed on by people who have had significant roles in our lives - especially our mothers. How many of the bits of wisdom in this video has your mother said to you?

Prayer:

Lord, I pray for wisdom in my marriage. Fill me with wisdom at the workplace. Grant me wisdom in dealing with difficult relationships. Saturate me with wisdom as I minister to others. If I lack wisdom in any area, open my eyes so I can seek it with diligence, Lord.

Questions:

Wisdom is the combination of knowledge and skills which enables a person to make right choices. But it goes beyond that. Wisdom involves the practical use of that knowledge to deal with life's issues in a way that honors God.

1. Where does true wisdom begin? _____ (Proverbs 1:7)

2. How do we passionately pursue God's wisdom? _____
_____ (James 1:5)
3. What one thing would you ask of God if you knew absolutely that it would not be refused? _____
Solomon had such a choice. What did he ask for? _____ (1 Kings 3:9)
4. God was pleased by what Solomon asked for, because He knew Solomon had a great need for wisdom, discernment, and understanding in guiding the kingdom. What three things was God pleased that Solomon did NOT ask for? (1 Kings 3:11)
- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
5. The Lord granted Solomon's request, and Solomon valued this gift above things others might put first in their lives. In Proverbs 3:13-15, Solomon said that wisdom is better than
- a) _____ and
- b) _____
6. According to Proverbs 2:7, the Lord lays up sound wisdom for the _____,
and He is a shield or buckler to those who _____.
7. Read Luke 21:14-15. In verse 14, Jesus warned his disciples not to spend hours in their prison cells preparing eloquent speeches, so they could recite them, word perfect, to their judges. Instead, in verse 15, what did He say He would do for believers? _____

8. Read James 3:16-18. In verse 16, James identified the end results of worldly wisdom as confusion and every evil thing. But in verses 17 and 18, James listed the fruit of godly wisdom.
- a) _____ e) _____
- b) _____ f) _____
- c) _____ g) _____
- d) _____ h) _____

BLESSING #35

Word of God

Memory Verse: Psalm 119:105

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

The Motivation:

In 2009, my husband and I took an unforgettable 15,000 mile trip in our RV between jobs. Packing was complicated, because we moved at the same time. We had to decide whether each item should be put in storage or taken along in the travel trailer. A few times, we went back to storage, slit open a box, and moved something back to the trailer. And there were things we had to move back to storage because of limited space. But we knew there was one thing we couldn't leave behind — our GPS.

The morning we were to leave, Mike reached for his GPS and came up empty-handed. It wasn't where he thought he had put it. We had visions of going back into the now tightly-packed storage unit, and opening dozens of boxes to find our GPS, because we just couldn't leave without it.

The letters "GPS" stand for Global Positioning System, and the GPS was to guide our turns along every mile of the way. Know that God has also given us a GPS, a Godly Positioning System, to guide every step we take. Our spiritual GPS is the Bible. A wise person will never start his day, or make an important decision, without first praying and consulting his spiritual GPS. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (2 Timothy 3:15).



We finally found our GPS, and it sat in a place of honor on the dash the entire trip. We used it every day. Where is your spiritual GPS? Do you keep it in a handy spot? Are you using it every day?

Video: [Her First Bible](#)

Do you remember when you received your first Bible? In this video, Jaime Jamgochian, worship leader and Christian songwriter, shares how she received her first Bible and how as a songwriter, she was encouraged to read Psalms.

Jaime is also the creator of the "Modest Is Hottest" conferences. These are one-day events for young girls, ages 12-19, and their moms, and integrate speaking, worship, concerts, modest fashion tips and an honest Q&A session.

Prayer:

Lord, I thank You for the remarkable gift of the Bible. As I open my Bible, I ask that You open my heart, so I will have a deeper understanding of Your truth. I pray that these ancient scriptures come alive within me - to inspire, heal, cleanse, teach, restore and guide my heart and mind.

Questions:

If we go walking through the woods at night, it is a good idea to carry along a flashlight - so we can shine it on the ground to avoid tripping over obstacles in the path. Likewise, God's Word illuminates the path of our lives. If we keep God's Word shining along the way, then we will be far less likely to trip up or be deceived.

1. How many books are there in the Bible? _____
How many books are there in the Old Testament? _____
How many books are there in the New Testament? _____
2. How did men write the Bible? _____
_____ (2 Peter 1:21)
3. List the names and occupations of 6 men whom God called to write a portion of Bible.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____
 - f) _____
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16. Why has scripture been given to us? _____

5. In what way is the Bible like a mirror? _____
_____ (James 1:22-25)
6. In I Peter 1:25, what special power of the Word of God is described? _____

7. According to 2 Timothy 2:15, why are we commanded to study the scriptures?
a) _____
b) _____
8. Read Hebrews 4:12. Explain in your own words what the Word of God is able to do.

9. What are two essential parts of the protective armor God has given to us?
(Ephesians 6:17)
a) _____
b) _____
10. How does faith come? _____
_____ (Romans 10:17)

BLESSING #36

Work

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:23

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

The Motivation:

According to the Survey of Income and Program Participation conducted by the 2010 U.S. Census, well over 100 million Americans are enrolled in at least one welfare program run by the federal government. Many are enrolled in more than one.

A portion of our tax dollars have been earmarked to help out if we lose our job, but there is a problem when Christians receive welfare and other benefits by falsifying weekly job-search reports and refusing to look for work.

The Bible is clear that we are commanded to work, and that our work will be blessed. Just as Adam was told to tend and keep the garden, we are meant to work as part of our God-given directive.



Video: [The Beauty of Mathematics](#)

Here is an interesting way to look at the beauty of mathematics, hard work, and the love of God.

Prayer:

Lord, lead me to the work that I love, and that has value. Guide me to a place with an atmosphere of respect and cooperation. Help me to find employment in a place where I can share Your love. Thank you, Lord, for meeting every need.

Questions:

Work can be fulfilling, but it can also be the cause of great frustration. The Bible helps put those exhausting, perhaps boring, days in perspective. Work is honorable, the Bible says, no matter what kind of occupation we have. Honest toil, done in a joyful spirit, is like a prayer to God. Be encouraged by these Bible verses about work.

1. Read Deuteronomy 15:10. In what two areas has the Lord promised to bless us?

- a) _____
- b) _____
2. In the same verse, what is the condition for receiving these blessings? _____
- _____
3. In Deuteronomy 28:12, the Lord promised to bless the work of our hands, so that we are financially secure and well able to
- a) _____ and not
- b) _____
4. In Deuteronomy 28:2, the Lord gave the Israelites a big "if". There was something they had to do to be overtaken with the blessings promised in verse 12. What was His condition? _____
- _____
5. According to Proverbs 10:4, Proverbs 14:23, Proverbs 21:5, Proverbs 21:25, and Proverbs 24:33-34, what will be the result if you do not work? _____
- _____
6. In Ecclesiastes 3:22, God said that there is nothing better than for a man to
- a) _____ because that is
- b) _____
7. God's normal way of providing for the needy is not through the church, and not through the government. According to 2 Thessalonians 3:10, what is His plan? _____
- _____
8. Read 1 Timothy 5:8. How did Paul describe the person who will not work in this letter? _____
- _____
9. Read again our memory verse, Colossians 3:23. People are often tempted to work only as hard as they have to, just enough to get by, thinking they only have to please the boss. But God wants every worker to see that, ultimately, they work for (whom?).
- a) _____ Therefore, every employee should...
- b) _____