

*The Power of
Spoken Blessings*

**“Death and life are in
the power of the tongue.”**

—Proverbs 18:21—

Institute in Basic Life Principles

Oak Brook, IL 60522-3001

Preliminary Edition © 2002

**“Death and life are in the
power of the tongue:
and they that love it shall
eat the fruit thereof.”**

—Proverbs 18:21

THE POWER OF SPOKEN BLESSINGS

CHAPTER ONE

Every time Alicia thought about her grandfather, a violent and painful scene came back to her mind . . .

When she was ten years old, she was trying to comfort her mother, who had been severely burned. Her grandfather came into the room and gave Alicia a glare that was filled with hate and disgust.

He walked over to her, jerked her up from the bed, and literally threw her across the room onto a couch. Still in shock from this violent assault, Alicia felt the sting of his bitter words: “You’ll never be good for anything but a -----.” Words that a ten-year-old mind could not comprehend, but words that were perceived as being very evil.

What would cause a grandfather to spew out such deadly venom toward a ten-year-old granddaughter? To him, she represented the shame that her mother had brought upon him and his family by giving birth to a child out of wedlock. The father of the child was from another ethnic group, which was quite obvious from the physical features of the granddaughter.

Throughout her childhood and teenage years, Alicia continued to bear the curses of shame from her mother’s immorality. Each time she was taunted or ridiculed, the painful words of her grandfather returned to torment her. She was emotionally wounded. She was tortured with fears of further rejection and anxieties about the future. When she was married, she continued to be angry and frustrated with her own husband and children.

Then, one day she learned how to resolve the pain and rejection of the past. It was so simple. She marveled that she had not learned about this sooner. Her husband was also amazed at how effective it was. He told her that the tone of her voice had actually changed and that she was no longer harsh with the children.

Alicia had discovered a powerful truth that is taught in four New Testament books and illustrated throughout the Bible. It is a truth that explains how to respond to the deadly venom of the tongue.

A Surprising Snakebite Remedy

The poisonous words that came from Alicia’s grandfather have a significant parallel in the account of another ten-year-old girl.

Elena was sleeping in her bed one night when a dreaded bark scorpion climbed up onto her leg and stung her. She screamed with pain from its potent poison, waking the rest of the family. Her mother understood exactly how she felt, because she too had been stung by this type of scorpion, which thrives at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. Elena and her family were living there, ministering to Native American Indians.

Based on the mother’s experience, Elena could expect excruciating pain and numbness, then swelling, physical weakness, dizziness, tightening of her throat, and tingling in her limbs for weeks to come. However, Elena suffered none of these effects, because her parents applied a simple remedy to her scorpion sting. The pain stopped immediately, and only a slight sensitivity remained in the spot where the venom had entered.

Both Alicia and Elena had been afflicted with venom of different types. Alicia experienced the venom of the tongue, which Scripture describes as being “full of deadly poison.” Elena felt the pain of the bark scorpion, which is the most poisonous scorpion in Arizona.

Elena’s parents applied a high-voltage, low-current electrical charge to the spot where the poison had entered. This hand-cranked device had been designed by the JAARS missionary organization and had been used with many positive results with different types of poisonous bites. Although doctors are not totally sure why it works, the positive charge of the current somehow neutralizes the negatively charged venom.

Neutralizing the Venom of the Tongue

A similar phenomena takes place when we give a verbal blessing to somebody who has inflicted us with a venomous curse.

When Alicia learned about verbal blessings and how powerful they were to overcome curses, she gave a verbal blessing to her grandfather and all the others who had assaulted her with curses of shame.

Amazing results took place. The pain of the past ended. The chains of rejection fell off, and she experienced a freedom that literally changed her tone of voice and her attitudes toward herself, her marriage, and her children.

Shortly after experiencing this release, she had occasion to call her father-in-law and tell him about a business decision that she had to make. He did not understand all the factors, and cursed her with hurtful names and conclusions. When she finished the conversation, she was stunned and trembled from this unexpected verbal attack. But then she remembered the power of a spoken blessing. She lifted up her hand and with her voice said, “O God, would you bless my father-in-law with your love and your wisdom and your patience!”

Immediately, the trembling stopped. The pain of his words seemed to fall off of her and was replaced with peace and confidence that God would work it out. Alicia has a painful past, but a bright future, because she has discovered the powerful truth of Jesus’ command to “bless those who curse you.”

And that is what this little book is all about . . .

WHY WE DON'T BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE US

CHAPTER TWO

It doesn't seem fair.

[Ralph] was also a victim of verbal abuse as he grew up. His father would regularly assault him with the statement "You will never amount to anything."

His father was also a perfectionist, so that nothing Ralph did was good enough to receive his father's unqualified approval. There was always something not quite right or that could have been done better.

Ralph's self-worth was devastated, and his ability to function was greatly damaged. He felt totally inadequate for basic responsibilities, and dreaded the future. He feared being around his father and closed off his spirit toward him.

This was Ralph's way of saying, "You have hurt me, and I am going to make you sorry for what you have done. I am going to cut you off so that you can't hurt me any more."

Ralph's response to his father was quite natural and logical. After all, if his father did not suffer for what he had done, he may not ever know how he had wronged him and he would probably also wrong others in the same way.

God is very aware of our thinking on this matter, and He makes provision for it. If we bless those who curse us, God will bless us and will also take full responsibility for whatever punishment needs to happen in the lives of our offenders. This is the promise that God gives us in the twelfth chapter of Romans. First, there is this clear mandate: "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Romans 12:14).

We are then given this further assurance and instruction: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:19-21).

The Blessings and Cursings on Joseph

This was the precise experience of Joseph. His father blessed him with special favor, and God blessed him with a vision for his future. But his brothers hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Instead, they cursed him among themselves and one day said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams" (Genesis 37:19-20). They sold him as a slave and meant it for evil. However, Joseph did not curse them in return. Nor did he curse Potiphar's wife when she falsely accused him and he was consequently put in prison.

When Joseph interpreted the dreams for the butler and baker in prison and explained to the butler that he was innocent, he said nothing negative about his brothers or about Potiphar's wife. Instead, he simply stated, "For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon" (Genesis 40:15).

God arranged circumstances so that Joseph's brothers had to come to him for corn. At that time, Joseph blessed them with the corn and also returned their money in their sacks. When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, he gave them a further blessing by saying, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not" (Genesis 50:20-21).

Because of Joseph's positive spirit, he was the means of blessing the entire nation of Egypt, as well as other nations and his own family.

In contrast to this is the story of Ralph. He was familiar with the Bible. He had often read the words of Jesus, "Bless them that curse you," and the words of Paul, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." However, instead of neutralizing his father's curses with a blessing, he doubled the potency of the poison by cursing his father in return.

Ralph did not understand the reasons why a blessing is so powerful: God and His Words are more powerful than Satan and his words; light is more powerful than darkness, for whenever light appears darkness must flee; and good is more powerful than evil. In fact, we overcome evil with good.

THE POWER BEHIND SPOKEN BLESSINGS

CHAPTER THREE

There are actually three innate powers that cause a spoken blessing to be so effective.

1. The Power of Our Words

The first power is the power of our own words. Scripture states, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21). With our very words we can produce devastating damage in the lives of others, and we can also transmit life-giving energy.

The potential for death is described in James 3:5–8: “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

The power of the tongue is further emphasized by Jesus when He explains why it cannot be tamed.

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:34–37).

2. The Power of God’s Word

The second power is also described in the words of Scripture: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

When the power of our words is combined with the power of God’s Word in a verbal blessing, a life-giving energy is imparted to those who receive those words.

In Numbers 6:23–26, God gave precise words that were to be used in communicating a spoken blessing:

“On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

It is not the person who speaks, but rather it is God Who blesses the person. “And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27).

Replacing a Scolding With a Blessing

An older sister was in verbal combat with her younger brother who had irritated her. Her mother came in, evaluated the situation, and said to the older daughter, "I think you need a blessing."

Her mother then said, "Father, put your hand of blessing upon Joy, and keep her and cause Your face to shine upon her and be gracious unto her. Lift up Your countenance upon her and give her peace."

When the mother finished, a peace came over her daughter. She realized that she had been wrong in not yielding her rights, and asked her brother to forgive her, which he did. This was the first time the mother had ever used a blessing instead of a reprimand in disciplining her children, and it was the first time that such positive results were experienced.

3. The Power of the Lord's Name

When the priests of Israel were commanded to bless the people, God made it very clear how the blessing was to come about: "They shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:27).

The word *put* could also be translated *invoke* or *impart*. To invoke the name of God is to release divine favor and impart God's power to carry out the blessing.

A blessing gives life, and life is in the name of the Lord. As the Scripture states, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

HOW SPOKEN BLESSINGS BUILD FAITH

CHAPTER FOUR

A single mother had run out of answers on how to deal with her rebellious teenage son. He tested her patience beyond its limits and stirred up the rest of the children.

She saw no end to the confusion and tensions. She had tried to reason with him and asked others to counsel him. She sent him off to camps and conferences, but nothing worked. Then she remembered the importance of praising her children for specific character qualities—perhaps that would help.

She got out a book that explains forty-nine basic character qualities, *The Power for True Success*. She searched through the entire book, but could not find any quality that she could honestly use in praising her son.

Then she learned about the power of spoken blessings. One day, during a sibling battle, she said to her son, “I want to give you a blessing.” She then took the qualities that she knew God wanted to develop in him and spoke them as a blessing.

“O Father, would you bless my son with wisdom and understanding, and with kindness and compassion. Would you cause him to know your love and your peace and your joy, in the name of Jesus.”

The words startled the boy, and she continued to bless him and each of the other children at appropriate times. Within a few weeks, the entire atmosphere of the home had changed. The power of spoken blessings was being fulfilled in the life of each child.

The Substance of Things Hoped For

Through this experience, this mother discovered a powerful truth about spoken blessings: They are not dependent on the character or condition of the one receiving them or even the one giving them. She blessed the children, not on the basis of what they were, but on the basis of what God wanted them to be.

The transformation in the home of this single mother was a fulfillment of God’s description of faith: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

The blessing of Jacob confirms that the one receiving a blessing does not have to be worthy of it. *Jacob* means “supplanter,” and that is exactly what he did in stealing the blessing from his brother Esau. He deceived his father and outright lied when his father asked him who he was, saying, “I am Esau thy firstborn.”

His mother directed the scheme by wrapping “the skins of the kids of goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck” (Genesis 27:16) and having him wear Esau’s coat, which smelled like the field. With Isaac’s dim eyes, he had no means to discover the scheme, and he blessed Jacob.

When Isaac learned that he had been deceived, he trembled, but stated that he could not withdraw the blessing: “I . . . have blessed him . . . yea, and he shall be blessed” (Genesis 27:33).

The story of Eli affirms that the one giving a blessing does not need to be a Godly leader. Eli took the forbidden fat from the sacrifices and violated God’s Law by eating it.

He allowed his sons to be immoral with the women that came to the Tabernacle. God's judgment was upon him and his sons.

When Eli saw Hannah agonizing before the Lord, he misjudged her as one who was drunk, and reprov'd her with these words: "How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee" (I Samuel 1:14). Hannah did not retaliate with angry words, but rather explained that she was appealing to God for a son. Eli then blessed her: "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him" (I Samuel 1:17). God fulfilled Eli's blessing and gave Hannah not just one son, Samuel, but also five more children after Samuel's birth (I Samuel 2:21).

King Saul is a further example of the fact that the one blessing another does not need to be spiritual. King Saul was envious of David and hated him. Saul had an evil spirit within him and was intent on killing David. However, after David showed kindness to King Saul and spared his life, Saul blessed him. "Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail" (I Samuel 26:25). Saul's blessing came to pass in David's life.

A blessing describes what God wants to accomplish in a person's life, rather than what they have already achieved.

Jesus said to His disciples at the beginning of His ministry, "Ye are the salt of the earth Ye are the light of the world" (see Matthew 5:13-14). Actually, they were rough-edged beginners in the ways of God and had a long way to go before these words were to become reality.

When the angel found Gideon hiding in fear of the Midianites and the men of the city who worshiped at his father's heathen altar, the angel blessed him by saying, "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (Judges 6:12). That was certainly not Gideon's condition when those words were spoken, but they described what he became through the power of God working in him.

Scripture states that "by faith" Isaac blessed Jacob, and "by faith" Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph (see Hebrews 11:20-21). Therefore, faith requires spiritual discernment based on the Word of God. One who is to bless another should ask God for spiritual understanding of what that person needs, and then look for the Scripture that describes what God wants to do.

The one doing the blessing is simply a channel of the power of God that is working through His words and the words of the one giving the blessing.

Faith for Good or Evil

One day, Jeff and his wife called with a concern about their oldest daughter, Sarah. Since she had turned thirteen, there had been constant fighting in the home.

In looking back, Sarah explained that if they would have asked her to do something in a gentle way, she would have done it. But whenever they told her to do something, she vigorously reacted with a very strong will.

When she met friends whose parents gave them more freedom, she transferred her allegiance from her parents to her friends.

Now, what should the parents do? Several options to help the daughter were suggested to the parents. These options included courses of training, ministry opportunities, and work experience at various training centers.

The daughter agreed to accept these opportunities because she was happy to get out of the home. However, during the next three years, her heart never fully turned to the Lord or to her parents. Whenever she was home, the fighting broke out almost immediately.

When she was seventeen, she moved out of the house and went the way of the world. Her parents and all those who had tried to help her were grieved and wondered what they had done wrong.

Meanwhile, her younger sister Lisa experienced the same attractions to the world and temptations to turn from the Lord. She also had the normal struggles that come with spiritual growth. She wanted her older sister's approval, yet she remained dedicated to the Lord and was even willing to be rejected by her sister in order to follow the ways of God.

Lisa is now turning eighteen, and her one desire is to serve the Lord as a missionary in other countries. When she heard this teaching on spoken blessings, she exclaimed, "That's the answer! Ever since I was four or five years old, my parents would say to me, 'Lisa, you are going to be our family missionary. God is going to do great things through you in other countries.' "

Since that time, her focus has been future ministry as a missionary. One day when she was reading the Scripture, she came across the words of Isaiah 49:6. This verse perfectly described the desire that God had put in her heart, and she claimed it as her life verse. ". . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

When Sarah was asked if her father had ever given her a similar blessing, she said, "Oh, no, we were always fighting." Her father would often say to her, "You are going to be just like your friends who are in the world."

Unknowingly, the father had given a curse to his older daughter by speaking these words, and today his older daughter affirms that part of the reason for her rebellion was to live out the words of her father.

She now reveals that when she was seventeen, she picked a fight with her parents so that she could move out and not feel so guilty about it.

When the parents realized what they had done wrong, they began blessing all their children. The oldest daughter, Sarah, met a young man she wanted to marry, and together they sought her parents' blessing for their wedding, which her parents gave.

Sarah and her husband are now growing in the Lord, and Sarah's parents are thrilled with the continuing fulfillment of the vision God gave them many years ago that someday all their children would serve the Lord.

A Word of Faith

Most of us do not realize the impact that a word of faith has on the heart and life of the one who receives it.

A word of faith is based on a Biblical goal that God would have for every believer, but that has special significance to those who are given a blessing for it.

Years ago, Dwight L. Moody spoke to tens of thousands in England. During the meetings, Mr. Moody and his assistant, Ira Sankey, visited a nearby Gypsy camp and preached to them. Just before they left, a little Gypsy boy ran up to them and wanted to shake their hands.

Ira Sankey's heart was drawn to the boy. He put his hand on him and said, "Young man, someday you are going to be a great preacher for God." That spoken blessing impacted that little boy, and years later, he became a world-renowned preacher known as Gypsy Smith.

"A Real Little Soul-Winner"

One day when I was about ten years old, I was in a rowboat with a neighbor boy whom I had met at the summer conference our family was attending. It was soon obvious that he was not a believer, and I began to talk to him about how to become a Christian.

He did not seem at all interested, so I felt like it had been a futile effort. The next week, my father gave me a blessing that impacted my life. It was so vivid that I can still picture the details of my surroundings when it happened.

I was in the back seat of our green Chrysler, going west on Hillgrove Avenue. My father was the only other one in the car. He turned his head slightly and said to me, "Billy, I hear that you witnessed to your friend at the lake."

I wondered how he knew, since I had not mentioned anything about it. Apparently, the boy had told his mother, and she must have told my mother. At any rate, I replied, "Yes."

He then stated, "You are a real little soul-winner."

My father's one love was to lead people to Christ, and I was honored with his statement, but I knew I was not worthy of it because I did not lead the boy to salvation. However, I remember clearly saying to myself, "I am not worthy of this title, but if I keep growing in the Lord, maybe one day I will be!"

Blessing a person with the goal of being a missionary or winning people to the Lord is different from giving him a specific prophecy of some future work or event, because every believer ought to have a missionary attitude, and every believer ought to win others to Christ.

The final command of Jesus to His disciples was to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and God is glorified when His followers produce fruit. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30). "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

EXCHANGING BLESSINGS AFTER WEDDING VOWS

CHAPTER FIVE

Bill and Dorothy Jean had been married for fourteen years. They had never had any major disagreements, but neither was there the intimacy of fellowship in their marriage that they had expected and hoped for.

Then Bill began studying the Biblical basis for blessings. He came upon the instruction of Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

He was especially impressed with the phrase "washing of water by the word." There is purifying power in the words of Scripture.

Even Jesus cleansed His disciples by the words He gave them. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Also, he prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

As a husband cleanses his own life by engrafting the words of Scripture into his soul, he sanctifies himself in the same way that he can then sanctify his wife. This is what Jesus did for His disciples. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19).

Twenty-six years ago, Bill and Dorothy Jean began to bless each other as they started each day. First, Dorothy Jean would kneel down and Bill would place his hand on her head and speak a blessing over her. Then Bill would kneel down and Dorothy Jean would put her hand on his head and speak a blessing over him.

The intimacy of fellowship that this has brought to their marriage is beyond anything that they ever imagined. The discussions that they have each morning are rich and inspiring, and the power of God becomes evident throughout the day on the basis of the blessings they received that morning.

There are numerous Biblical examples of fathers blessing children. But where in the Bible is there a precedent for husbands and wives blessing each other?

This was the question that was put to Bill. In turn, he went to the passage in I Peter 3:7-9: "Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

Bill pointed out that, based on this passage, if husbands and wives can rail, slander, reproach, and vilify each other, they can also bless each other.

The experience of Bill and Dorothy Jean has inspired thousands of other couples to follow their example, and the reports are thrilling.

One couple has been married for fifty years. During those years, they experienced many tensions and pressures.

After hearing about this Biblical procedure, they tried this practice of blessing each other as they began the day. That evening, the wife stated to others, "All day long, I have experienced a peace that I have never known before."

Another woman wished that she could have blessed her husband. Twenty years earlier they had gone through a bitter divorce.

They had had no communication, and he was remarried. When their son was married, they both attended his wedding. She walked over to her former husband and with all the emotional energy she could muster, she gave him a blessing.

He was stunned, and then reached over and shook her hand with firm sincerity. A freedom came over her, and the walls between them came down.

The next day, he called her about another matter, and they had a pleasant conversation—the first one in twenty years.

THE AWESOME ACT OF BLESSING GOD

CHAPTER SIX

David is mentioned more times than any other person in the Bible—over eleven hundred times! He received the marvelous testimony from God of being “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will” (Acts 13:22).

What made David so great and blessed of the Lord? One important factor was his practice of continually blessing God. He wrote, “I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).

He urged all of us to do the same. “Ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD,” and “Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD” (Psalm 135:20, 150:6).

There are three primary ways in which we are to bless the Lord.

1. Bless His Holy Name

There is nothing more worthy of our blessing than the matchless name of the Lord and all that it represents. Neither is there any greater concern of the Lord than to have His name honored. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, His first statement was, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9).

God honored Job by describing him as the most upright man of his day. In the midst of his suffering, he was careful to bless the name of the Lord. “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).

David reminded himself of the importance of blessing God’s name when he said, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name” (Psalm 103:1). The Levites instructed the people to “stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever” and then to say, “Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Nehemiah 9:5).

The name of the Lord is given in many different forms and represents every good thing that we need. Thus, each form of His name can be the subject of a blessing: The Almighty God, The King of Kings, The Lord of Lords, The Great Physician, The Alpha and Omega, The Good Shepherd, The Lord God of Hosts, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace, The Creator of Heaven and Earth, and many others.

2. Bless His Righteous Character

God is the ultimate expression of every holy character quality that there is, and Jesus Christ is the express image of His Father.

The term *express image* in the Greek language is the word *charakter*. David exalted the character of the Lord when he said, “Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness . . .” (Psalm 31:21).

Daniel praised the name and character of God when he stated, “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his” (Daniel 2:20).

Paul blessed the character of God when he wrote, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort” (II Corinthians 1:3).

Since every positive character quality is an expression of the Lord, we can use any one of them in blessing Him. He is attentive, bold, compassionate, kind, generous, patient, wise, creative, and loving.

3. BLESS HIS MIGHTY DEEDS

God is glorified as we praise His mighty acts. Therefore, the psalmist proclaimed, "Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness" (Psalm 150:2).

David stated, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:2-5).

The more we bless God for His mighty deeds, the more we will be able to say with David, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation" (Psalm 68:19).

Paul picked up the same theme when he wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

A marvelous Psalm that gives praise to God is as follows: "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness" (Psalm 145:1-6).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

MAKING A BLESSING

A BLESSING

CHAPTER SEVEN

A blessing must be instantly recognized by the one receiving it as something that is valuable and beneficial to his life.

It must not be perceived as a mini-sermon or a subtle correction, but as a genuine expression of one's desire to have God enrich and benefit the recipient's life with all that He has for him. This is the essence of the priestly blessing. It is short, to the point, and general enough to be applied to every situation.

We have an example of an exchange of blessings in the story of Boaz and his reapers: "Boaz . . . said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee" (Ruth 2:4).

A blessing can also be directed to a particular need that a person has, such as sickness, financial pressure, or family conflicts.

In these cases, a blessing could consist of words like these: "The Lord bless you with health and strength," "The Lord bless you with wisdom and understanding for every decision," and "The Lord bless you with peace and joy in your family."

Peter emphasizes the importance of speaking blessings. He also wrote that we are to "above all things have fervent charity" and use the gifts that God has given to us to edify one another. Then he wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Peter 4:8–11).

The word *oracles* is the Greek word *logion*. It indicates a declaration, especially an utterance of God. Stephen referred to the "lively oracles" that God gave to the "church in the wilderness" on Mount Sinai (see Acts 7:38).

Paul spoke of the oracles of God that had been committed to the nation of Israel (see Romans 3:2) and also used this word to describe the "first principles" of teaching that new believers are to receive (see Hebrews 5:12).

By taking statements of Scripture and adding them to the priestly blessing, we have an unlimited number of potential blessings that can be used in appropriate times and places. Here are some examples.

The Lord bless you . . .

- With the fullness of His salvation (Ephesians 1:23).
- With the spirit of wisdom (Ephesians 1:17).
- With the hope of His calling (Ephesians 1:18).
- With the riches of His glory (Ephesians 3:16).
- With the exceeding greatness of His power (Ephesians 1:19).
- With His riches that add no sorrow with them (Proverbs 10:22).
- With a heart that seeks after Him (Psalm 42:1).

May the Lord keep you . . .

- Strengthened with might by His Spirit (Ephesians 3:16).
- Rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17).

- From falling and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).
- From the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Peter 1:4).

Make His face to shine upon you . . .

- With the brightness of His wisdom (Ecclesiastes 8:1).
- With a zeal for good works (Matthew 5:16).
- To turn many to righteousness (Daniel 12:3).
- To make His ways known upon earth (Psalm 67:2).
- With the light of His commandments (Psalm 19:8).
- With a path that grows brighter each day (Proverbs 4:18).
- And make you the light of the world (Ephesians 5:8).

Be gracious unto you . . .

- That you may receive all that pertains to life and Godliness (II Peter 1:3).
- So that you can abound to every good work (II Corinthians 9:8).
- To turn sufferings into the power of God's love (II Corinthians 12:9).

Lift up His countenance upon you . . .

- That you may have fullness of joy in His presence (Psalm 16:11).
- To cause your face to shine with His glory (II Corinthians 3:7).
- To give you good things that will bring you gladness (Psalm 4:6-7).

And give you peace . . .

- By being yoked to Christ (Matthew 11:29).
- That surpasses human understanding (Philippians 4:7).
- That comes through the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).
- That overcomes all human fear (John 14:27).

The act of giving a blessing is an exercise in spiritual discernment and genuine sincerity. The one who blesses another should ask God for wisdom and understanding, as well as keen sensitivity and discretion.

The goal is to help others understand and experience the abundant life that God provided for us through Christ; and that, when all is said and done, is *the power of spoken blessings*.