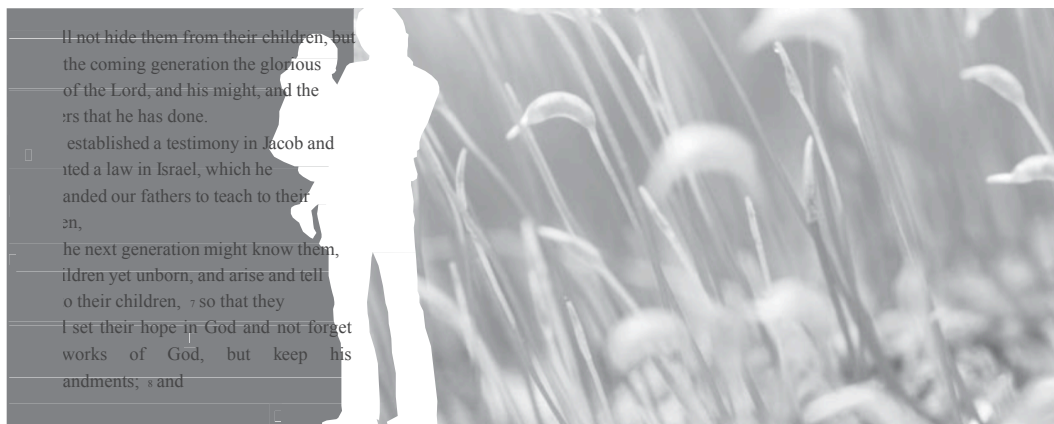


A Father's Guide to Blessing His Children

By David Michael



Do not hide them from their children, but tell them to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

For the Lord established a testimony in Jacob and decreed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,

so that the next generation might know them, and the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they may set their hope in God and not forget his works of God, but keep his commandments; and

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Beginning a Pattern of Blessing

In the Spring of 1991, as a part of our “Family Week” activities, our church presented a film entitled “The Blessing” featuring Gary Smalley and John Trent.¹ I came away from that film feeling inspired and challenged to be a blessing to my family and sobered by the painful consequences of paternal failure. Later that evening, while kneeling beside my 7- and 10-year-old daughters, overwhelming feelings of inadequacy came over me as I pondered the calling and responsibilities of fatherhood. After I finished praying, Aaron’s blessing from Numbers 6 came to mind and I felt moved to pronounce it over my daughters. I turned first to my eldest, placed my right hand on her head, looked into her eyes and said:

Amy, may the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make His face shine on you,

and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you,

and give you peace. Amen!

This blessing came as a refreshing three-fold reminder that the Lord is the source of all blessing. Although I was painfully aware of my potential failure to be a blessing to my children, there came the assurance that I could look to the One who has no potential for failure—the One who could be for my daughters what I could never be in the flesh. After repeating the blessing over my younger daughter, I resolved from that day forward to make “The Blessing” a regular part of our bedtime routine.

Nine years have passed since that night. The after-supper wrestling matches, bed-time stories on my lap, and airplane rides into bed are either impossible or no longer “cool.” I am now looking into the eyes of two emerging young women, who still happily anticipate their father’s blessing before falling asleep. For the occasional times when I am away from home, I record a prayer followed by a blessing for my daughters to listen to each night that I am gone. On one of those occasions my oldest daughter, feeling the effects of our separation, e-mailed a note that included this line: “I really miss your prayers and

blessings (in person) and can't wait for you to return home." It was no surprise that for both daddy and daughters the moment of blessing has become, by God's grace, a cherished (and "cool") part of our bedtime routine.

What is a Blessing?

Several months after I began regularly blessing my daughters, I was introduced to Rolf Garborg's book, *The Family Blessing*.² Garborg not only gave me a biblical foundation for what I was discovering about the blessing, but he also inspired me with the experience and testimony of a man who had been blessing his children for more than 18 years. I urge aspiring "blessers" to read Garborg's book for a much more thorough treatment of the subject than I will be able to provide in this guide.

Garborg identifies four different categories of blessings in Scripture, one of which is "the blessing spoken by one person to another, often in the name of God."³ Garborg goes on to explain that within this category there is a general use of the word that simply means "to speak well of, to express praise."⁴ There is also a more specific use that defines blessing as "the intentional act of speaking God's favor and power into someone's life, often accompanied by a symbolic gesture such as laying hands on the person."⁵ This specific use of the word is what I have in mind as I encourage blessing in the church and especially in Christian homes where it can become another significant way to nurture the faith of our children and bestow God's blessing on their lives.

Biblical Understanding of Blessing

Although a blessing could be considered to be a form of prayer, there is a clear distinction between the two. Simply put, in prayer we are directing our attention toward God. We "ask God for things"⁶, which may include His blessing. A blessing, on the other hand, comes from God and is directed toward His people. When we bless, we are invoking, summoning, or calling upon God's blessing for the benefit of another. When we bless, we become a channel for God's blessing to flow through us to another.

We see this clearly in Numbers 6:22-27 where the Lord, through Moses, gives this instruction to Aaron and his sons: “Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.’ *So they shall invoke My name* on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.” (Emphasis added.)

Notice how many times the Lord’s name is identified with the blessing that Aaron and his sons were to bestow upon the people of Israel. It is the Lord who will bless. It is the Lord who will keep. It is the Lord who makes His face shine on us. It is the Lord who directs His countenance and smile toward us. And it is the Lord who gives grace and peace to all.

In verse 27 we can see clearly that the sons of Aaron were given authority by God to call down His blessing upon an individual or group: “So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.” This is not unlike the authority Jesus gave His disciples. In John 20:23, He tells them, “If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.” In Luke 9:1, He calls the 12 and gives them power and authority over all the demons, as well as to heal diseases. And in Acts 3:6, Peter declares to the lame man, “I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene—walk!”

It appears that blessings were a regular part of Israel’s experience at home and when they gathered as a people. As Laban was parting company with Jacob and his family he “arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them” (Genesis 31:55). Jacob, at the end of his life, gathered his children together and “blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him (Genesis 49:28). Aaron “lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them (Israel) after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings” (Leviticus 9:22). After Joshua had given the half-tribe of Manasseh their possession he “blessed them and sent them away” (Joshua 22:6). King David brought the Ark of God back to Jerusalem and “blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts” and then “returned to bless his household” (2 Samuel 6:18-20).

Twice in the Gospels, Jesus blesses people. In Mark 10, we are told that He took the children into His arms “and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them” (Mark 10:15-16). And just before ascending to heaven, Luke tells us that Jesus led His disciples “out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” (Luke 24:50-52).

One of the more notable blessings in the Bible was the blessing Isaac intended for Esau, but through deception was given to Jacob. Here it is important to make a distinction between the ordinary blessing that we just described and what I will call a “prophetic blessing.” Although the prophetic blessing is similar to an ordinary blessing, it also has significant differences that can be observed in the circumstances surrounding Isaac’s blessing. This blessing was not something Isaac’s sons had received before. It came when Isaac knew his days were coming to an end (Genesis 27:2-4), and he was ready to pass on the authority and perhaps the Covenant blessing that had been handed down to him by his father Abraham. Once pronounced, it was irrevocable. Even when Isaac realized he had been tricked, it was impossible for him to remove the blessing from Jacob (Genesis 27:33ff). We see the prophetic blessing again at the end of Jacob’s life when Joseph’s sons are blessed. Joseph’s unsuccessful attempt to remove Jacob’s right hand of blessing from Ephraim to Manasseh points to the prophetic significance. Not only are the words of blessing important, but so is the placement of the hand (Genesis 48:9-20).

Such prophetic blessings were extraordinary and mainly associated with God’s covenant purposes as they unfolded from one generation to the next. Although we do not want to minimize the spiritual significance of ordinary blessings, we should avoid giving them the spiritual weight of a prophetic blessing. When I place my hand on my daughter’s head and say “May you be blessed by being a woman who fears the Lord, a woman who finds great delight in the Lord’s commands,” I am calling down God’s favor upon her in the hope that she will be a woman who fears the Lord. I am not declaring, in a prophetic sense, that she will be a woman who fears the Lord because I have pronounced this blessing on her.

Responsibility and Authority to Bless

We saw in the Numbers 6 passage that instructions concerning the blessing were directed specifically to the Levitical priesthood. This responsibility was reaffirmed in Deuteronomy 10:8 following the death of Aaron when “the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to serve Him and *to bless in His name* until this day,” and again in Deuteronomy 21:5 when Moses said to Israel “...the Lord your God has chosen [the sons of Levi] to serve Him *and to bless in the name of the Lord.*” (Emphasis added.)

Although there are no comparable instructions to fathers, it is clear that the responsibility and authority to bless carried over into family life. It was the father who assumed the responsibility for blessing his children.

From the biblical teaching and examples we have observed, it is reasonable to conclude that it is biblically appropriate for spiritual leaders in the home and church to pronounce blessings. Furthermore, if we consider the “priesthood” of all believers (1 Peter 2:5) and the general instructions given by Jesus and Paul (Luke 6:28, Romans 12:14), it would seem that under the New Covenant any believer should feel the freedom to bless others.

Having said this, I will hasten to encourage spiritual leaders in the church, and especially husbands and fathers, to assume the responsibility and privilege of blessing those they are called to lead. I believe the church is well-served when pastors, elders, small group leaders, ministry leaders, and Sunday school teachers bless their people. Similarly, families and marriages benefit when husbands and fathers bless their wives and children.

This booklet and the accompanying blessing cards have grown out of a heart and vision to encourage men to bless their households. Most Christian men understand that they are called to be spiritual leaders in their home, but not all have a clear idea of what that means. Part of the reason for this is that many of us grew up with fathers who were not good examples of spiritual leadership. In fact, for the past several generations men were more likely to assume spiritually passive roles in the home, thus abdicating both the physical and spiritual

care of their children to their wives. The more troubled families and marriages I see, the more I am motivated and inspired to encourage men toward life-giving spiritual leadership in the home.

Although blessing his wife and children will not make a man a godly leader, I have found it to be a place where many men can begin. The discipline of blessing his children at bedtime can begin to give a man a sense that he is doing something spiritually significant for his children. It helps him to feel more like a leader and thus more likely to embrace the wider responsibility for the spiritual encouragement of his wife and children. It helps to build confidence when he sees God work through such a simple thing.

I invite you, dear brothers, to join me in being a blessing to our households. I urge my sisters to encourage and support their men in this vision for the faith and the joy of the next generation.

The Fruits of Blessing

In the years that I have been pronouncing blessings on others in my role as a father and pastor, I have discovered, through my own experience and the experience of others, that alongside the benefit and joy of being an instrument of blessing in another's life, there are other fruits as well. Here is a "taste" of what I have enjoyed over the years.

1. The blessing exalts God as the source of all blessings for the joy of His people.

Based on the biblical understanding of blessing, the most obvious benefit is that it is a channel of God's blessing to His people. Although we have acknowledged the distinction between prayer and blessing, God's response to our blessing is similar to His response to our prayers. The Lord delights in magnifying His name by fulfilling the desires of those who fear Him (Psalm 145:19). He is not obligated to act according to the blessings we invoke anymore than He is obligated to give us what we ask for in prayer. Nevertheless, we bless in the same confidence that we pray, knowing that God is faithful to His Word and delights to act in response to the faith of His people.

2. Blessings touch the future.

Blessings have a forward view. This is obvious in the prophetic blessings of the patriarchs, but it is also true of ordinary blessings. The fact that many blessings were given at moments of parting or separation points to the future orientation of the blessing. When we say to someone, "The Lord bless you and keep you," we are not only seeking God's blessing for the moment, but desire God's blessing to continue as they go. We commend them to God's keeping power with confidence that He will "not allow their foot to slip" and that "the sun will not smite them by day or the moon by night" and that the Lord will guard their "going out" and their "coming in from this time forth and forevermore" (Psalm 121:3-8).

As my daughters move toward adulthood, I have fewer and fewer opportunities to personally watch over them. Hours of separation will become days, and days will soon become weeks and months or even years. One day I will be completely removed from their lives, so today I bless them with a keen awareness of my fleeting influence upon them. For me the blessing becomes an opportunity to touch their lives for today and for the day when time and miles, or death separate us.

As I face these separations, I am encouraged by the biblical notion that the Lord stores up the prayers of His people and pours them out according to His timetable. One place I see this is in Acts 10:4, when the Lord spoke to Cornelius and said, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God." At the right moment, God answered those prayers and granted this Gentile the repentance that leads to life.

Another place I see this is in Exodus 3:9 when the Lord spoke to Moses and said, "the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them." These cries had been ascending to the Lord for more than 400 years. When the time was right He poured out the fruit of those prayers.

As I bless my children in the presence of God, I am conscious that God hears and remembers the blessing. He remembers today's blessing on my children, and He will remember it 70

years from now, when the time is right, and pour out His favor on my octogenarian daughters in response to their daddy's blessing decades before.

I will take this idea one step further and say that even beyond the lives of my children I expect there to be fruit from these blessings. So many of the blessings that I give my children reflect my desire that the fruit of God's work through me will extend far beyond my life: "May He watch over your coming and going, both now and forever" (Psalm 121:8), "May your name be remembered forever" (Psalm 112:6), "May you dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6), "Even to the next generation may you and your children be blessed" (adapted from Psalm 112:2), "May the Lord give you pleasure at His right hand, forever" (adapted from Psalm 16:11).

Since I first began blessing my daughters I have had a vision of a night, 160 years from now. I imagine a young man kneeling beside his child's bed, pronouncing the same blessing that his great great grandfather Michael pronounced over his great great grandma. This is more than a sentimental desire. It is rooted in an earnest prayer that a river of faith will flow through my descendants and that all of them will fear the Lord.

3. The blessing gives my children a vision for what I desire most for them.

The blessing is not only given in the presence of God, but also in the presence of the ones being blessed. As parents we care that our children have a good education, good health, a good spouse, and a good job. We expend a great deal of energy and resources toward these ends. As important as these things are, they fade when compared to those things that have eternal value. The blessing is a way for my children to hear and understand what their daddy desires most for them. Night after night they hear me express my desire that they fear the Lord and delight to do His will. They hear the hope that the Lord will be their counselor all the days of their lives and that they will always set the Lord before them. They catch a vision for being like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever (Psalm 125:1), and also for

having their names be remembered by the Lord forever (Psalm 112:6).

4. The blessing can be a means of comfort and reassurance.

The blessing is a reminder of the presence of God and his care for us: “Even while you sleep, may the Lord instruct your heart” (adapted from Psalm 16:7), “May the Lord watch over you and be a shade at your right hand so the sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night” (adapted from Psalm 121:5-6), and “May the Lord answer you when you pray and relieve you in distress” (adapted from Psalm 4:1).

I have heard several testimonies from parents whose children had different problems related to fear at night. In many of these cases there was a remarkable change after the parent began blessing the child at bedtime. As a pastor, I have often blessed people in hospital settings, and it became a way to minister the Lord’s peace to anxious souls awaiting surgery or struggling with a critical illness or disease. For those who grieve, the blessing has brought hope and comfort as I call upon the God of hope to fill them with all joy and peace as they trust in Him that they may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

5. The blessing can help heal breached relationships.

The blessing can give children assurance of parental love after a hard day. It is not uncommon for there to be days when a parent and child get irritated or angry with each other and perhaps say or do things that are hurtful. There are also days when a child disobeys and is punished by the same hand that blesses. At the end of such a day it can be a great encouragement for the child to hear words of blessing directed toward them. It provides a way for the parent to say, “In spite of what has happened between us today, I still love you, and the desire of my heart is for your good.”

The blessing can have this effect on adults as well. It is disarming when a blessing is pronounced on someone in a relationship that is strained. It is very difficult to stay angry with a person who is sincerely blessing you. The defenses will often begin to drop while the doors of forgiveness and reconciliation will begin to open.

6. The blessing can help strengthen the bonds of affection between children and parents.

The day will soon be here when I will be walking past two empty bedrooms, and the joys of tucking my girls into bed with a prayer and a blessing will be only precious memories. My daughters know my shortcomings and mistakes and have felt the pain of my careless words and foolish actions. But as they look back over the years when they were young, I pray they will remember the heart of a daddy who desired, more than anything, that they be filled with God and enjoy Him forever.

I believe the blessings have helped my daughters to see this desire in me. God has used the blessings to knit our hearts together with a deep affection and love which I trust will endure for a lifetime. By itself, the blessing cannot take the place of faithful parenting. Do not be deceived into thinking that you can bless your children once a day but ignore them and their needs the rest of the time. However, when combined with faithful parenting, the blessing can be a powerful tool in strengthening the bonds of affection and establishing our children firmly in faith.

7. The practice of blessing encourages men in their roles as spiritual leaders.

In the previous section, "Responsibility and Authority to Bless," I encouraged husbands and fathers to initiate the practice of blessing in their homes and gave reasons why I believe the church and the home would both benefit. Little more needs to be said here except to point the reader back to that section and emphasize that one of the fruits I have seen in men who are regularly blessing at home is that they also take spiritual leadership in other areas of personal and family life.

Blessing Suggestions

1. This booklet is designed to be a companion to the blessing card set, which I first prepared for my personal use. Even though the blessings on these cards can be applied to a variety of situations, keep in mind that all of them were prepared with either my daughters or the children growing up at Bethlehem Baptist Church in mind. The cards are intended to help people get started with blessing, but I encourage you to create your own to reflect your heart for the people you are blessing.
2. Two things that I find important in blessing someone are eye-contact and touch. I make every effort to look the people in the eye when I am blessing them. I use my eyes to communicate as much sincerity and love as I possibly can. Placing a hand on a person's shoulder, head, or back is not only a way to communicate the affection that is often associated with the blessing, but it is also symbolic of "imparting" or "invoking" a blessing of God upon them. This same idea is communicated in group settings by lifting one or both hands over the group as the blessing is pronounced.
3. The blessings are printed on cards for two reasons. First, they can be easily held in one hand leaving the other hand free to place on the person being blessed. The second reason is so that they are portable and thus available for memorizing or for an unexpected opportunity to bless someone.
4. I strongly encourage people to memorize the blessings they are using. This not only helps us maintain eye-contact with the people we are blessing, but it also helps the words of blessing flow from the heart. This is very easy to do if you are using the blessing on a daily basis with your children or spouse. When I am learning a blessing, I take 15 minutes or so to memorize it, and then keep the card with me for the first few nights in case I get stuck. I use the same blessing every night for one or two weeks until I can pronounce it without hesitation, and then once a week for a while until it is well established in my mind and heart.
5. Some of the blessings are direct quotes from a portion of Scripture. Other blessings were inspired by a text and adapted to fit a

blessing format. But there is nothing magical about the combination of words I have used, so do not limit yourself to these particular blessings. I encourage you to prepare your own.

6. If you look at the biblical text that inspired the blessings I have prepared, you will see the way it was adapted to take on a blessing format. Almost all of these blessings were born in the context of Bible reading and prayer. I am often gripped by a text and begin praying the truth or the promise for my children, and then turned it into a blessing for them. You will see things in the Bible that I have not seen, and they will inspire you to pray for people and circumstances that I do not know. So as God speaks through His Word and touches your heart to bless, turn His truth into a blessing, and watch God minister His blessing through your words and your heart.

One Final Thought

I began this booklet by sharing about a point in time when I felt a desperate need to be a blessing to my children and how the practice of blessing grew out of that need. Today I feel less desperate, but more responsible than ever, in the calling that is on my life to be a means of blessing to my children, my wife, and the brothers and sisters I serve at Bethlehem Baptist Church. Regularly pronouncing blessings has given me a daily reminder that God is ultimately the One who will see to it that my loved ones are blessed, which is what helps minimize the desperation I feel. Blessings are also a daily reminder to me that I am a channel of blessing, not only with a particular set of words and the laying on of a hand, but by the way I live out my life and faith before those who are looking to me as an example. So as you begin or continue in blessing others, I want to leave you with one of my favorite blessings that reflects my earnest prayer and desire that God use you to bless others with your words, and with your life.

*May you bless as a person who fears the Lord,
May you find great delight in the Lord's commands.
May your children be mighty in the land;
Even to the next generation,
may you and your children be blessed.*

*May you find your wealth and your riches in God,
May you endure in righteousness forever.
Even in the darkness may the light dawn for you.
May you be a gracious, compassionate and righteous person.
May you never be shaken.
And may your name, and the names of all whom you bless,
be remembered by the Lord, forever. Amen!*
(Psalm 112:1-6)

Endnotes

1. *The Blessing*, produced by Jeff Bowden, 60 min, Thomas Nelson, 1991, videocassette.
2. Garborg, Rolf. *The Family Blessing*. (Dallas: Word Publishing Company, 1990).
3. Ibid., Garborg, 12.
4. Ibid., Garborg, 13.
5. Ibid., Garborg, 13.
6. For further discussion of this understanding of prayer, see John Piper's sermon on Colossians 4:2-4, "Devote Yourself to Prayer," January 9, 2000; Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN. Available on-line at www.desiringGOD.org.

Blessings

Genesis 48:15-16

Jacob's Blessing

*May the God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd to this day,
and who has delivered me from all harm—
bless you and make His name live on in you
and in your children after you. Amen!*

Numbers 6:24-26

*May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make His face shine on you
and be gracious unto you.
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you
and give you peace. Amen!*

Deuteronomy 28:3-6

*Blessed shall you be when you obey the Lord your God.
Blessed shall you be in the city.
Blessed shall you be in the country.
Blessed shall be the offspring of your body.
Blessed shall be the work of your hands.
Blessed shall you be when you come in.
Blessed shall you be when you go out.
Blessed be the name of the Lord in your life, forever and ever.
Amen!*

1 Kings 8:57ff

*May the LORD our God be with you as He has been with me.
May He never leave you or forsake you.
May He incline your heart toward Him
and cause you to walk in all His ways.
Day and night may your prayers be near to Him.
May the LORD maintain your cause*

*and the cause of all His people
So that you and all the peoples of the earth may know
that the LORD is God, and there is none other! Amen!*

Psalm 1

*May the LORD Bless You!
May the LORD give you
the courage not to walk in the counsel of the wicked;
the faith not to stand in the path of sinners;
and the resolve not to sit in the seat of mockers.
May you always delight in the law of the LORD
and meditate on it day and night.
May you be like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
May the LORD prosper all that you do for His glory,
And may the LORD watch over your way
all the days of your life
so that you can stand in the day of judgment
and join the assembly of the righteous forever. Amen!*

Psalm 4

*May the LORD answer when you pray
and relieve you in distress.
May He lift up the light of His countenance upon you
and put gladness in your heart exceeding all earthly joy.
May the LORD establish you as a godly man/woman
who trusts in Him.
May the LORD make you dwell in safety.
And when you lie down, may you sleep in peace. Amen!*

Psalm 13:5-6

*May the LORD deal bountifully with you
all the days of your life,
And may you always trust in the loving-kindness of the LORD.
In the days of sorrow and darkness,*

*may you rejoice in the Lord's salvation
and sing to Him forever and ever. Amen!*

Psalm 15

*May you be blessed with the abiding presence of the LORD.
May your walk be blameless and your work be righteous.
May the LORD keep your tongue from sin
and your relationships pure.
May you be honorable, loving, and generous with your money.
May the LORD keep you in His way
so that you will not be shaken
but endure in righteousness forever. Amen!*

Psalm 16

*May the LORD be your counselor all the days of your life.
Even in the night, may the LORD instruct your heart.
May you always set the LORD before you.
May the LORD always be at your right hand
so that you will never be shaken.
May your heart be glad, your tongue rejoice,
and your body rest secure.
May the LORD make known to you the path of life,
fill you with joy in His presence
and give you pleasures at His right hand forever and ever.
Amen!*

Psalm 23

*May the LORD be your shepherd.
May He bless you with all that you need.
May He make you lie down in green pastures,
and lead you beside quiet waters, and restore your soul.
May He guide you in paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.
May His rod and staff comfort you so that you fear no evil
even when you walk
through the valley of the shadow of death.*

*May the LORD prepare a table before you
in the presence of your enemies.
May He anoint your head with oil.
May your cup of joy overflow continuously.
May the Lord's goodness and mercy follow you
all the days of your life.
And may you dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Psalm 103:1-5

*May you bless the LORD all the days of your life.
With all that is within you, may you bless His holy name.
May you never forget the benefits of Him who
forgives your sins, heals your diseases and
redeems your life from destruction.
May the LORD satisfy your years with good things
and crown your life with loving-kindness
and tender mercies forever. Amen!*

Psalm 112

*May you be a blessed man/woman who fears the Lord;
May you find great delight in the Lord's commands.
May your children be mighty in the land. Even to the next
generation, may you and your children be blessed.
May you find your wealth and your riches in God.
May you endure in righteousness forever.
Even in the darkness may the light dawn for you.
May you be a gracious, compassionate
and righteous man/woman.
May you never be shaken. And may your name, [full name],
be remembered by the Lord forever. Amen!*

Psalm 121:5-8

*May the Lord watch over you.
May He be a shade at your right hand
so that the sun will not harm you by day
or the moon by night.*

*May the Lord keep you from all harm.
May He watch over your life.
May He watch over your coming and your going,
both now and forever. Amen!*

Psalm 125:1-2

*May the LORD increase your confidence in Him.
May you be like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken
but endures forever.
As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
may the LORD surround you
both now and forever. Amen!*

Romans 15:13

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
as you trust in Him,
so that you may abound in hope,
through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!*

2 Corinthians 13:14

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with you
now and forever. Amen!*

Ephesians 3:14-19

*And now, may our great and eternal Father bless you.
May He strengthen your inner being
with power from the Holy Spirit.
May Christ dwell in your heart through faith.
May you be rooted and grounded in love
so that you will comprehend with all the saints
the breadth and length and height and depth
of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.
May you be filled up to all the fullness of God
according to the riches of His glory.*

*And may you exalt His glorious name forever and ever.
Amen!*

Ephesians 3:20-21

*Unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly
beyond all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works within us,
[and beside us, and above us, and beneath us,
and all around us,]*

*To Him be the glory
[in your life,] in the church, and in Christ Jesus,
to all generations forever and ever. Amen!*

Ephesians 6:10-17

*May you be a man/woman who is strong in the Lord
and in his mighty power.*

*May you be blessed with the full armor of God
so that you can resist the devil's schemes.*

*May you stand firm with the belt of truth
buckled around your waist, and the breastplate
of righteousness in place, and your feet
fitted with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

*May you take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation
and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God
so that when the day of evil comes,
you will be able to stand your ground. Amen!*

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

May the God of peace sanctify you through and through.

*May your whole spirit, soul and body
be preserved without blame*

at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*And may you always trust the One who calls you
and who has faithfully accomplished your redemption.*

Amen!

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

*To this end I bless you in the name of the Lord:
That the Lord may make you worthy of His calling
fulfilling every good resolve and work of faith,
by His power.
And may the name of our Lord Jesus be glorified in you
and you in Him, according to the grace
of our God and our Lord Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen!*

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 3:16

*May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father,
who loves you and by His grace
gives you eternal encouragement and hope, comfort
and strengthen your heart in every good deed and word.
May the Lord of peace give you peace continually
and in every circumstance.
And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
now and forever. Amen!*

Hebrews 12:1

*May the LORD bless you like the mighty (men/women) of faith
who have gone before you.
May He give you:
grace to lay aside every encumbrance and
the sin which so easily entangles us;
endurance to run the race set before you;
and eyes fixed on Jesus,
who is the author and perfecter of our faith! Amen!*

Hebrews 13:20-21

*May the God of Peace
who brought up from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord
through the blood of the eternal covenant
Equip you with every good thing to do His will,*

*and work in you that which is pleasing in His sight
Through the power of Jesus Christ
to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen!*

Children Desiring God Resources

A Father's Guide to Blessing His Children is published by Children Desiring God, a ministry that exists to equip the body of Christ to spread to the next generations a passion for the supremacy of God in all things, for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

People from many denominations and churches throughout North America and the rest of the world are using Children Desiring God resources to introduce children, youth, and their parents to the greatness and glory of God.

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Children Desiring God

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Bethlehem Baptist Church

A Note from Pastor David Michael about the Blessing Cards

I never expected this collection of biblical blessings to be more than the handwritten index cards I used to carry in my shirt pocket. In 1991, I began taking portions of Scripture and turning each into a blessing. Pronouncing these blessings upon my daughters at bedtime became a simple way for me to express my prayer to God, my heart's desire for my children, and they also became a way to communicate to them a vision for the kind of women that I wanted them to be.

Later, we started using these blessings at Bethlehem Baptist during our child dedication services. I share them with you in the hope that they will encourage you in your efforts to be a channel of God's blessing to others. It is also my hope that, by God's grace, this effort will more firmly establish the biblical tradition of blessing in the Christian home.

Each blessing in this collection is titled with the Scripture text that inspired it. Some of the blessings follow the text word-for-word. Most have been adapted so that they flow more easily in the form of a blessing.

If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to take a few minutes to read the booklet, *A Father's Guide to Blessing His Children*, which explains the vision behind these blessings and provides a number of suggestions for how to use and incorporate them into family and church life.

*May God bless you as you bless others for His glory
and for the joy of all generations!*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Michael". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the blessing text.