

Don't Forget The Blessing

Before my first Psychology class I was very aware of the power of words to encourage or to tear down others. I had even seen cute little posters entitled 100 Ways to Praise Your Child. I knew that encouragement obviously made people feel good inside. Discouragement did just the opposite. I had no clue that this concept was not just psychological, but more importantly spiritual as well. The impact of these positive or negative words can last more than a lifetime.

The idea of blessing was God's from the very beginning. He must have felt that blessing had importance. He modeled blessing three times within the first thirty-four verses of the Bible. (Swope) The Bible is full of other instances of blessings too. Sometimes children were blessed and at other times things were blessed. God did not expect to be the only one speaking the blessing though. He imparted that power to us as well. We can be an instrument to activate God's blessings.

In Numbers 6:22-27 NKJV we read "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you: The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace." So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

Some of us seem to have lost site of the importance of the blessing, but our Jewish friends have not. They bless their children every Friday night at Shabbat and on other occasions. "I believe that God's blessings on the Jewish people are a direct result of Jewish parents regularly blessing their children," said a Jewish rabbi. This rabbi went on to explain that the majority of Nobel and Pulitzer prizes had been awarded to Jewish men and women, and that many of America's millionaires are Jewish people, even though they account for only 2.7 percent of the population writes Mary Ruth Swope.

Blessings are life giving and can be a healing balm. Even blessings which are not formal in nature can communicate love and value to the hearer. Without a blessing, pain can sometimes last an entire lifetime.

My mother and I have been studying this concept of blessing recently. Last week she took a fleece blanket to a baby shower and had everyone in attendance speak a blessing for the baby and tie a knot. Even before this little one can roll over, blessings have been activated on her behalf. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every new parent was taught the value of blessing? I encourage you to get a few copies of this tiny paperback book, *The Power of Blessing Your Children* by Mary Ruth Swope.

Fortunately blessings are not just for babies. They should be prayed over teens too. Blessings are often prayed over the bride and groom at weddings. They have power at all stages of life, even senior years. They can be written in letters, prayed over the phone, or privately prayed for an individual. You can even bless someone daily instead of only blessing them on special occasions.

Blessings have a way of tenderizing the heart just as marinades soften tough steaks. No wonder we are told in Luke 6:28 NKJV ...bless those who curse you, and to pray for those who spitefully use you.

There are many wonderful books and resources on the subject of blessings. You may wish to read *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D. Larry Huch, Bill and Dorothy Jean Ligon, and John Kilpatrick ministries also have some wonderful teaching materials.

I challenge you to leave a legacy and to make blessings a regular part of life