

Guest commentary: Be a blessing to your kids

I cannot tell you how many clients are seen in my office simply because they never received a "blessing." The parents of these now adult children made sure that their children's bodies were inoculated against deadly diseases, but their parents forgot to inoculate their minds and hearts against rejection. In most of these cases, they met their child's basic needs, but somehow they failed to communicate worth to them. "I love you" was rarely if ever heard, and criticisms lurked around every corner.

You cannot imagine the pain these adults still feel. In many cases, their parents are now deceased, and all hopes of hearing words of love, praise, encouragement, validation or a blessing have died with them. The pain seems to magnify since the hope is gone, too.

In many cases, all that remains in this void is insecurity, anger and resentment. These individuals' lives reek with pain. There is often an echo in their minds that repeats the words that were spoken over them. "You'll never amount to anything." "You are a lousy (fill in the blank)." "I wish you were never born." "Why can't you be like (so and so)?" "You are not good enough to (fill in the blank)." "Nobody will ever want you."

Somehow, as these words were spoken, something took place inside the person to whom the words were directed. It acted like a cattle brand. These words became implanted in their being. This implant acts as a mental fort that can subconsciously interfere with day-to-day success. This rooted implant gives life to the term "self-fulfilling prophesy." Because they were spoken by parents, they have extra power and spiritual authority. After all, haven't most of us been taught since birth that our parents are wise? If they don't think that we measure up, then we haven't got much of a chance.

I wish I could say it was a rare occurrence to see these degraded individuals in my counseling office. Unfortunately, it occurs way too often, and it negatively impacts men and women alike. It seems that our Creator designed us with a need for this impartation of worth, especially from those of influence in our lives, and especially our parents. Marriage and family experts, Gary Smalley and John Trent, tell us that "No matter your age, the approval of your parents affects how you view yourself and your ability to pass that approval along to your children, spouse and friends." Many people spend a lifetime looking for this acceptance the Bible calls "The Blessing."

Sadly, many adults do not realize the power of their words in their children's lives. Many want to be good parents. They do not always realize that they have left a "brand" on their child's being. Sometimes these "word curses" are spoken by accident. These words and attitudes merely appeared after a long tiring day or under the influence of alcohol, but they were still damaging. Somehow, negativity seems to have a way of more profoundly impacting the memory and taking root. There is life and death in the power of the tongue.

To begin the healing process, I encourage you to ask for a blessing, if possible. If your parents are deceased, you may want to ask another important person in your life to write and speak this into your life. It may not be the same, but it can have healing properties. Look for others who

may appreciate a blessing from you, too. Smalley and Trent encourage us to incorporate meaningful touch, spoken word, expression of high value, description of a special future and the application of a genuine commitment in our blessings.

-The Rev. Virginia Loew-Shelhammer is a graduate of West Liberty State College and West Virginia University. She is a licensed professional counselor and a board-certified professional Christian counselor. Loew-Shelhammer is in private practice at Footsteps Christian Counseling in Wheeling.