

Confident Parenting

The Lesson of the Blessing:
Bringing Security and Honor to Your Home

Teaching Pastor: Dr. Garth Leno
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We are celebrating Father's Day today, and we wish all of you dads a Happy Father's Day. May the Lord bless you as you seek to live for him from day to day. May the Father in heaven help you father your children and dispense timely wisdom to your children's children. May the love of God sink into the deepest cavities of your heart and fill every crevice of your being with love for your Saviour, and your wife, your children, and your grandchildren.

Dad, if you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, you have everything you need to lead your kids and your family into the Promised Land of God's blessing. We love you, and we are praying for you this weekend. May you receive the honor and blessing that comes to fathers who walk with God.

Let's pray....

Renee was a lonely, isolated child. She moved around a lot as a kid because her mother was a drug addict. She barely knew her father. Eventually she was placed in foster care. The system functions fairly well, but it was far from perfect for Renee.

When she was sixteen her social worker took out a piece of paper and said, "Renee, we have a family who will take you." And with that she was sent to another home. She figured it would be the last foster home before she found freedom.

But this family was different. They prayed before meals. They laughed and played together. There was a connection between them that Renee had never seen or experienced. As time went on Renee learned that both her foster mom and dad had been abandoned as kids and later met at an orphanage. They too had known rejection. There had been abuse and broken promises in their lives as well. Yet somehow they had managed to find the most meaningful life Renee had ever seen.

Six months after taking her in, they came to her one day. The foster father said, "Renee, we are so honored to have you in our home. In fact, we love you very much." Tears began to well up in her eyes.

“Renee, we want you to think about becoming our adopted daughter. We want to be your mom and dad for all your life. We want to love and support you; we want you to be family. The other children all agree – they want you as their sister.”

Renee just sat there stunned. She didn’t know what to say.

Then the foster dad swept a strand of hair from Renee’s cheek, and kissed her with a father’s love right on the birthmark that always embarrassed her. Then he said, “If you would like, I would be honored to be your dad forever.”

More than a year later, on her 18th birthday, Renee became a legal member of the Burrows family. It wasn’t until after her own marriage that she realized her parents had spoken a blessing into her life that would change her generational direction for eternity.

Odds are, Renee’s story is nothing like the story of your family. Still, I think it’s unfortunate that many families today are not providing generational blessings to their children. In the Old Testament it’s common to read stories about parents bestowing a blessing on their children and their children’s children. (So that tells me that the practice of blessing is for parents *and* grandparents alike!)

These spoken blessings were taken very seriously and given with much reverence.

1. What is the origin of the family blessing?

One of the earliest examples of blessing in the Bible appears in Genesis 12 where God speaks Abraham. Let’s have a look:

Genesis 12:2-3

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

In Num 6:23 the Lord gave instruction to Moses about blessings. He said

Numbers 6:23-26

Tell Aaron and his sons, “This is how you are to bless the Israelites. 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 turn his face toward you and give you peace.’”

So I believe the foundation of any spoken blessing we might give to others is the blessing that God gave his people from one generation to the next. God’s blessing is the *perfect example* for generational blessing in our families.

2. What should blessing include?

Biblical generational blessings typically contain five elements.

A family blessing begins with *meaningful touch*. It continues with a *spoken message of high value*, a message that pictures a *special future* for the individual being blessed, and one that is based on an *active commitment* to see the blessing come to pass.

One of the best examples of this kind of family blessing can be found in Gen 27.

Genesis 27:26-29

Then Jacob's father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." So Jacob went to him and kissed him (*meaningful touch*). When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said (*spoken message*), "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed (*because the Jews highly valued the land that God had given them, and they still do, this reference to the smell of a field attaches high value to Jacob*). May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness-- an abundance of grain and new wine. (*here's the picture of a special future for Jacob*) May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed".

Isaac was involved and committed in the life of his family to ensure that this blessing came to pass.

But perhaps some people are wondering...

3. Why is generational blessing so important?

Well, it not only follows a pattern that God the Father established for us, but it also gives security and honor to the recipients of the blessing. Perhaps I can answer this question by telling you another story....

In my work with Promise Keepers, and the men of our church, I have taught on this idea of blessing several times, including the Men's Summits. At one particular Men's Summit there was a young man named Scott Wiesner. At the time, Scott was on staff here at Heritage Park Church.

Scott and Nori moved to Calgary 5 years ago, but just two months ago Scott sent me a copy of a paragraph he had composed earlier that week. In it he said,

One of the most meaningful and powerful moments in my Christian journey happened during one of the Men's Summits at Heritage Park. Garth had been speaking about the power of a blessing and ... while I had received much affirmation from my mother growing up; I had received very little from my father.

So when Garth (stepped in as my surrogate father for that moment, and) laid his hands upon my shoulders and spoke words of affirmation over me and prayed a prayer of blessing, a hidden wound was exposed deep in my soul, even as hot tears streamed down my face. As I received the words that I had secretly longed for my father to say, a void seemed to be filling that I didn't even realize was there.

I wonder what would have happened if my Dad had worked up the courage to overcome his detached German heritage and thick-skinned RCMP training to simply say: "You done good son...I'm so proud of you...I love you."

The blessing was important to Scott because it brought healing to the father wound embedded deep in his male soul, and it bestowed security and acceptance and affirmation.

Many families today do not impart generational blessings to their children. But they should! And this weekend, as we celebrate Father's Day, and the acquisition of new power tools and polo shirts, I want to encourage you dads to step up and start blessing your family.

Scott said he "secretly longed" to hear his father speak words of blessing to him. Moms are better at this than dads. But children need to hear the blessing from Dad. Guys, maybe *your* kids are secretly longing to hear words of blessing from *you*.

4. When should we bless our children?

Rites of passage and milestones in life are wonderful opportunities to celebrate everything about your child.

For every birthday, one family I heard about sits around the dinner table and every family member shares three "favorite things" about the birthday person. That could provide remarkable blessing at every birthday celebration!

- When your child graduates from kindergarten or public school or high school or college...
- When a child steps across the line of faith and decides to follow Jesus...
- When your son or daughter gets baptized – CELEBRATE!
- When your kid's team wins a championship...
- When your son or daughter helps a neighbour without being asked –
- When you share in communion together as a family - SPEAK BLESSING!

Just look for opportunities to bestow blessing! They are everywhere!

In our family there have been many such blessing celebrations, but one of the most memorable took place several years ago on Kristin's 16th birthday.

We gathered friends and family together in our family room, and using Genesis 1, I affirmed that Kristin was created in the image of God. Using Psalm 8, I declared that our daughter was "crowned with glory and honor." And then I asked her to stand before me, and as I looked into her beautiful eyes, I said:

Kristin, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I bless you today. In Christ you are accepted. You are complete in Him. In Christ you are secure – free from all condemnation... In Christ you are significant... You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

Nothing you ever do will separate you from the love of God. He is so proud of you, and so am I. God the Father is pleased with who you are in Christ, and so am I. You are stinkin' delightful! I love you deeply. Today I bless you in the name of our God. You are a beautiful woman on your sixteenth birthday, crowned with glory and honor...

I am proud of the way you love your family. I am proud of your faithful friendships... I am proud of who you are. You are His girl, and my daughter. I love you.

Kristin, you...have abilities and skills from God that will make a difference in the world as you surrender yourself and your talents to the guiding hand of the Sovereign God whom we serve... Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for every believer by your faith, your love, and your service for Jesus Christ. And don't ever settle for second best. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and give you peace.

It was a powerful moment in her life and in mine. And we often reflect on that blessing together.

Application today:

Generational blessing in the Bible always begins in the context of parental acceptance. However, I believe the principles of the blessing can be used in any close relationship. For example, husbands can apply these principles to bless their wives, and wives their husbands. Friendships can be deepened and strengthened by including elements of the blessing.

So the application is much broader than parents and children, but, of course, that's our primary focus today.

LIFE groups could practice blessing the members of their group on special occasions like birthdays and wedding anniversaries. When applied in a church family, the blessing can

bring so much warmth, healing and hope to our brothers and sisters in Christ, many whom have never received an earthly blessing from their parents. So, as we move toward the close of our service today, I want to invite you to consider taking action.

I want to invite you to the front of the worship centre for prayer.

If you can't remember having received a blessing from your parents, and they are not in a position to bless your life now because of death or distance or spiritual differences, then I want to invite you to receive a blessing from God your Father, through your pastor.

If your mom or your dad cannot speak a generational blessing into your life, for whatever reason, then let me stand in for your dad, regardless of your age or your gender. Let me be God's representative today.

I did that for Scott Wiesner, and you heard what a powerful impact it had in his life... *As I received the words that I had secretly longed for my father to say, a void seemed to be filling that I didn't even realize was there.*

Do you have a void?

Has God the Father opened up your hidden wound today?

Has your secret longing for the blessing been exposed by the Spirit of God?

Then come. Step out from where you are now, and come. Let me bless you in the name of the Triune God. Let me speak a word of blessing into your life, and let's believe God for healing and hope.

Come now, don't wait. I invite you to come now and stand here with brothers and sisters in Christ and receive the goodness of the Lord by faith... I invite you to step out in faith right now, and come... Receive the blessing that God has prepared for you.

The Father is inviting you into his heart right now... Receive his blessing today...

BLESSING

Friends, Matthew's gospel tells us that...

As soon as Jesus was baptized...heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

It was a blessing of Identity - You are my son!

Whom I love – that's the blessing of Affection!

With him I am well pleased -- the blessing of Affirmation!

And just as the Father's heart went out to Jesus that day, the Father's heart is going out to you right now. He knows you. He's fond of you. He cares for you!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, I bestow a blessing of love and affection and affirmation upon each one of you today. Your heavenly Father loves you with an everlasting love. Nothing you do will ever separate you from the love of God, and he sent his Son Jesus to die upon the cross to prove it to you. Your Father in heaven is pleased with you. He is not angry with you or disappointed that He created you.

This is Father's Day, and your Father in heaven is very proud to be your Father and he is ready to bless you with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He chose you to be his son or daughter before the creation of the world! That's how special you are to him!

In Jesus Christ you have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. He smiled the day you were born and he's been smiling ever since. Father never missed a game or a recital. He never failed to rejoice over your grades; he never missed a tear that fell from your face. He was there. He was there for your first date, your first kiss, your first heartbreak. He was there.

Your heavenly Father applauded from heaven the day you stepped into faith and decided to follow Jesus. Now you are secure and significant and your future in Christ is yes and amen! He is thrilled that you are serving him in this church and in our community. He loves you! And he is well pleased with you. In Christ your future is bright and full of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until that Day.

Father, seal this blessing in the heart of every person standing here today. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.