

Acknowledgements and Introduction

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank publicly certain people who helped us discover, and share with others, the life-giving truths contained in this book. We are deeply grateful to:

Craig Hill, (Family Foundations International) for pioneering the concepts of seven crucial stages of blessing;

Alf Davis, for friendship and wise counsel when we needed it most;

Rolf Garborg, for believing in us when he hardly knew us;

The Lakemount Worship Centre, and its leadership team for allowing us to practice on them for many years;

The Crossroads Centre Team, especially Gary Gerard, Ron Mainse and Norm MacLaren for coaxing us to record this message in book form and for making it available to the nation;

Daina Doucet, whose skill in editing is surpassed only by her patience with novice writers.

Introduction

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

In more than 20 years of serving in various forms of church leadership, we were constantly challenged by the reality that many people cannot seem to receive or retain the truth of God’s personal love for them. While most of us can appreciate the concept with our intellect, too few of us seem able to apprehend the reality in our heart.

We were also challenged by the reality that we were not much better off than the people we served. And so we embarked on a personal journey to discover the keys to wholeness based upon God’s revealed Word.

Somewhere along this journey toward emotional and spiritual health, we stumbled across the understanding of the power of blessing. We found that blessing worked restoration much more quickly and effectively than anything we had ever before experienced. Understanding and applying blessing as taught and modeled in Scripture radically and permanently altered the way we counselled, ministered and related to others.

The Bible speaks of many kinds of blessings, both material and spiritual. They range from blessings people bestow upon God, to God blessing our implements of work and worship. This book focuses on what we call “The Family Blessings” – those that convey the personal impartation of identity and destiny.

After having learned the seven stages of blessing, we studied Scripture and discovered these stages in the life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. Suddenly, as if we had put on a new pair of glasses, new insights concerning the role and power of blessing leaped off the pages. We discovered that from His conception until His baptism, Jesus was the recipient of needed blessings that the heavenly Father brought into His life through others. It soon became apparent that if Jesus needed these blessings in order to fulfill His destiny on earth, then we would too!

The Family Blessings refer to the words, deeds and ceremonies that confer heaven’s favour upon our identity and destiny. They are our birthright as children of God. With them we prosper despite our weaknesses. Without them

we struggle even though we may be gifted. As Ephesians 1:3 clearly states, they are stored up for us in heaven, purchased by Jesus, and ready to be distributed to us at key moments throughout our entire lives.

When you arrived on earth, two special people were assigned by God to give you those blessings at each stage of your development. The technical term for these people is "parents." Most of them did the best they could, but very few understood the role and power of blessing during their children's formative years.

The resulting bad news is that all of us have missed some of God's intended blessings during our life's journey.

The good news is that it's never too late to recover missed blessings, or to pass them along to the next generation.

This book will help you to understand the blessings every person needs, how to get the ones you have missed, and how to give blessing to the ones you love. The best news is that it may be a lot easier than you think!

May Ephesians 1:3 be yours!

Terry and Melissa Bone

I.D. Ministries

Foreword

My wife Ann and I both felt the same way after attending an inspiring teaching series led by Terry and Melissa Bone for our staff at *Crossroads/100 Huntley Street*. We concluded that this special couple *must* come back and bring to our TV viewers the same insightful, life-transforming message of *The Power of Blessing*. During the teaching sessions, Ann and I frantically scratched out as many notes as we could (hers were legible) while wishing we could have simply picked up the book...but it didn't yet exist! We later encouraged Terry and Melissa to share their God-given wisdom in book form, in addition to their continued on-the-road seminar ministry, thus enabling a much broader and lasting impact. And I'm so glad they did!

You are holding a resource that I know God will use to open your eyes to the truth of how specific blessings at pivotal points in life have a profound bearing upon the discovery of your personal identity and destiny. I had never before understood how clearly these principles are revealed in the Bible, especially as experienced by Jesus during His life on earth. Since gaining these new insights, Ann and I now are seeking ways to practice *The Power of Blessing* in our family. I encourage you to read these pages prayerfully, and then ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom in the application of these powerful principles for you and your loved ones. Get ready for miracles!

Ron Mainse

President

Crossroads Christian Communications Inc.

Chapter Two

Blessing is the Answer - What is the Question?

“So God created people in His own image; God patterned them after Himself; Male and female He created them. God blessed them and told them ...fill the earth and subdue it” Genesis 1:27-28a
New Living Translation.

“Thus conscious that I do exist, In time’s eternal plan; O grant that I may know at least, Why I was made a man” Thornton Hayward.¹

We live in the beautiful Niagara Peninsula, about 30 minutes drive from one of the main border crossings between the U.S.A. and Canada. Like four million other Canadians in the area, we often find ourselves traveling between the two friendly nations for a variety of reasons. Whenever we approach the uniformed officials in a booth at the border, we know we will have to answer several questions. The journey is delayed until we provide believable answers. The first two questions always have to do with our identity: “What is your citizenship?” and “Where do you live?” For some reason, when we tell them the answer, they never take our word for it. They want proof! At that point, it sure helps to have a passport in hand.

But that’s not all. Two questions sure to follow are more difficult to prove. “Where are you going?” and “What is your purpose for going there?” Until we convince the stern-faced official that we really are going where we say we are going, we won’t get across the border.

The same is true in life. There are key transition points in everyone’s life journey at which we must stop and address the questions, Who am I? and Where am I going? Our life’s journey is delayed until we provide satisfactory answers.

Discovering your true identity

Who am I? This question has to do with identity – the sum total of who you are. Your identity is what makes you unique in this world. Before we come into relationship with God, our identities are largely a product of our family experience, our personality and choices we make. But as we come to know God and submit to His transforming work in us, our identities are reshaped. Boy, have you changed! a friend may say to a new believer. Which one, then, is the real you?

Your true identity is the one that God has purposed for you – the one tailor made just for you.

Terry has a tailored suit purchased at great cost by a generous friend who sent him to a well known tailor. All Terry had to do was choose the fabric and allow the tailor to measure him meticulously. Weeks later when Terry returned, the tailor, who remembered him by name, disappeared into the back room and reappeared holding a three-piece suit that fit only one person in the world. That suit was not only made from the finest fabrics, but every detail of Terry’s frame had been taken into consideration. It felt right and fit comfortably because it was made just for him by an expert. It also looks so much better than something off the rack!

Did you ever hear about the man who purchased an off-the-rack suit on sale even though it was five sizes too big? When asked how it fit, he replied, "The jacket is fine, but the pants feel a little loose around the armpits!"

Trying to be someone God has not purposed for you to be is like wearing a suit that's not made for you. It may look great on the rack, but when you put it on, it feels awkward or looks silly.

Understanding who you are in God is like putting on a designer outfit made just for you by an expert. You feel good about yourself just the way you are. You know you are important and valued.

Discovering your divine destiny

The next set of questions you must answer at key transition points in life are, "Where are you going?" and, "What is your purpose for going there?" After all, your destination defines the purpose of your journey.

The word "destination" comes from the same root word as "destiny." It is defined as "a pre-determined course of events to which a person is assigned by fate." While that is true for one who does not know God, your destiny in God is far more secure. It isn't like a suit off the rack assigned by an impersonal power called "fate." Yours is the "designer" version. God has pictured a special future for you and pre-planned exactly what He intends for you to accomplish in life. He also wants to reward you for fulfilling your destiny once your life is done. Not a bad deal at all!

If we are secure in our identity, but unsure of our destiny, then we will be delayed, or even denied permission to move on at the "border crossings" in life. So, what are those border crossings, and how do we discover our true identity and destiny so that we may find safe passage?

Seven border crossings in life

Author and pastor Craig Hill describes seven crucial times when blessing is required to impart a sense of identity and destiny (*Ancient Paths*).² In our ministry we have found that these "crucial times" are truly the border crossings of our life's journey where we must address the important questions in order to cross successfully into the next phase. We have also found that these questions are not answered until we receive specific blessings pertaining to each stage.

The only two people on earth who didn't need blessing to move from one phase of life to another were Adam and Eve. They were uniquely different from the rest of us. They were the only two people without belly-buttons. In other words, because they were not born, they were not subject to the stages of life. God imparted the full measure of blessing to them in their full-grown state.

Everyone since Adam and Eve, including Jesus, was born into the world through a woman's womb. A full understanding of identity or destiny isn't imparted to us in a moment's time as it was for Adam and Eve. We acquire knowledge of our destiny more gradually as we progress through the major stages of development, from conception, pregnancy and birth, through early childhood and teen years, and on to adulthood and senior years.

At each stage God has assigned certain persons, especially parents, to bless us through words, deeds and ceremonies. These blessings become divine deposits in our hearts, and represent essential affirmation about who we are and where we are going. In addition, they enable us. When we possess them in abundance we prosper in life without striving. When they are absent, we struggle in life in spite of our valiant efforts.

Blessings at the border crossings

How do we know if we have been sufficiently blessed? We have developed a series of life-questions that correspond to each stage. These questions will help you determine the divine deposit of blessing you need in your soul and spirit at each developmental stage so that you can mature into your rightful identity and destiny.

Stage of life

Major life questions

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|---------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Conception</i> | Am I welcome in this world? |
| 2. <i>Pregnancy</i> | Is there a safe place for me in the world? |
| 3. <i>Birth</i> | Will my needs be met in this world? |
| 4. <i>Early Childhood</i> | Who can I trust in this world? |
| 5. <i>Teen Years</i> | Do I have what it takes to make it in this world? |
| 6. <i>Adulthood</i> | What am I called to do in this world and who will share my journey? |
| 7. <i>Senior Years</i> | Am I still needed in this world? |

Conception: Am I welcome in this world? We like to say that your life begins on your “earth” day (day of conception when your spirit arrives on earth – see Chapter 8), rather than on your birthday. Therefore the first time you need a blessing is the moment the announcement comes that your mother is “expecting.”

Seeds of rejection are sown at conception. How you were conceived, and how your parents received the news of your conception are powerful factors in shaping your sense of identity.

Think of your first day at a new school or church. Your immediate need is to be recognized and welcomed. Feeling unwelcome will affect your entire experience afterward. In the same way your little being needed a warm welcome into this world when you arrived here for the first time.

Pregnancy: The second time we need a blessing is during our months as a pre-born child. Is there a safe place for me in this world? we ask.

The “fear factor” in life taunts us even before our birth day. Recent studies provide evidence of a fact most mothers perceive intuitively – that pre-born children are affected by their mother’s emotions, whether good or bad. The home environment and the mental, physical and emotional states of a mother serve to answer this life-question for the baby she has not yet met.

Birth: Will my needs be met in this world? demands a new-born. Before you understood your parents’ language, you learned from experience. How you were held, touched, fed; the words you heard, and the manner in which they were spoken, taught you whether or not your needs would be met in life.

Early childhood: A child reaching out to others asks, who can I trust in this world? From a toddler through to a pre-teen, you learn which relationships are safe and which are not. A foundation of basic trust needs to be poured into your personality during those years for you to grow in relationships later in life.

Teen years: Puberty brings the biggest transition since conception. At the beginning of your teen years you need to know, do I have what it takes to make it in this world? This question is a powerful driving force that must be

answered so that you can develop the kind of emotional maturity and confidence that will make it possible for you to accomplish your calling in life.

Adulthood: Over the past few years we have ministered to many young adults in various countries. The question we are asked most often is, What am I called to do in life? A companion question arises: Who will share my journey?

Many people are married to someone who does not share their spiritual journey. Creating and maintaining shared dreams and hopes for the future can be an elusive goal. For those who are single by choice or chance, God intends to bring alongside them one or two good friends who understand them and share the dream of who they are to become.

Senior years: Everyone who has reached their senior years needs to know that they are still needed. Thus the question, Am I still needed in this world? In biblical times elderly people stopped working in the fields and took up their positions of honour in the city gates. This was a place of authority. Once they reached this stage in life, they were valued not for what they did, but for who they were, and for their wisdom. Our seniors today also ought to be valued for what they know and who they are, and not just for what they do for others.

As we encounter each of these major life questions, they continue with us for life. If a question remains unanswered, we are drained of emotional energy and sapped of spiritual strength. We feel like a leaky bucket that requires constant re-filling to maintain the water level. If a question was answered negatively, we build protective walls within our heart. Unfortunately walls designed to shut out pain also keep out love.

As a result, questions not answered adequately become emotional baggage we drag along throughout our journey.

For instance, a person may suffer from a sense of not belonging. They might also tend to respond with fear and have a hard time trusting people. In their innermost being this person may not be sure they "have what it takes" to succeed in their highest dreams. To top it off, they might have married someone who doesn't express much interest in their journey. What an enormous amount of baggage to carry while trying to determine and fulfill a destiny!

Perhaps you don't find it hard to imagine this scenario. Maybe you even identify with some of these feelings. There is hope! But it is important to realize that major life questions aren't answered in one day or through a single event. Answers begin to be assimilated at each stage and are reinforced throughout life.

What is the ideal answer to each question? A blessing! God designed you to be blessed. At each stage of life, you deserved to receive a full measure of blessing. Yet, the people God assigned to ensure you receive all He has intended for you may have let you down. That's inevitable. Everyone misses some blessings. The good news is that it doesn't matter why or how you missed them. It's never too late to recover them. Let's find out how.

Endnotes

- 1) Hayward, Thornton. *My Plea*. An unpublished poem from the Bone family archives.
- 2) Hill, Craig, *The Ancient Paths*, p.69. Family Foundations Publishing, 1992.