

## How to Bless Your Child

(A summary of Dr. James MacDonald's booklet by the same name)

Deep within the heart of every person is a longing for parental approval. We search for it our whole lives. If we don't receive it from our parents, we search for it elsewhere, and our hearts are restless until *the blessing* is found. When we do receive *the blessing*, our lives take on a level of fulfillment and security that cannot be realized any other way.

***Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept aloud. (Gen 27:38)***

"We all long for *the blessing* (of our parents). Each of us is far more like Esau than we might want to admit. Yes, deep within the heart of every person is a longing for parental approval. We want to feel confident that our mother and father know us, love us, and value us, that they are proud of us and recognize our accomplishments. From the preschooler who calls out from the sandbox, "Dad, look what I made," to the young child who fidgets nervously as Mom reads the report card and sees the latest grades, to the high school student who appears in the kitchen dressed for the prom and says, "How do I look?" to the grown adult who can't wait for Mom and Dad to see the new house, the new car, or the new baby--- **parental blessing is a universal longing.**"

### I. What is *the blessing*?

*The blessing is a formula of words that expresses fondness for, confidence in, and recognition of a specific person.* In the Old Testament *the blessing* was a bestowal of favor and acceptance, a transaction that gave material and spiritual benefit to the recipient. It was rooted not merely in a child's appearance or accomplishments, but in the child's very personhood.

### II. How can a parent communicate *the blessing*?

#### A. Meaningful touch

Much has been written about the healing, nurturing, and affirming power of touch, and it's so sad when this is neglected in the home. Studies show that meaningful touch can lower blood pressure, protect our children from seeking sexual intimacy prior to marriage, and add up to two years to one's life.

#### B. Spoken words

A blessing is not a blessing until it is spoken. The most powerful way to build upon the foundation of meaningful touch is through the words you say to your children. The Scriptures tell us: ***"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).*** In our homes and with our children, the tongue has the power to destroy. How many adults are still struggling because of the angry words they heard as children? Here are the kinds of words that should ring out relentlessly in the hallways of our homes:

1. Words of affection - "I love you" should be the constant refrain in our homes.
2. Words of reconciliation - Jesus reminds us "blessed are the peacemakers."
3. Words of vision - We need to instill a spiritual confidence and hope in our children
4. Words of security - Assurance that nothing will separate our kids from our love

***"Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." (Proverbs 3:27)***

### III. What happens when *the blessing* is withheld?

When parents withhold *the blessing* from their children, either through ignorance or selfishness, the children will be tempted to respond in the following ways that can actually make matters worse:

- A. Some people try to earn *the blessing* - this leads to workaholic and other performance related disorders.
- B. Some people search for *the blessing* elsewhere - many studies indicate that the number one candidate for gangs and cults is a kid who did not receive *the blessing* from his or her parents.
- C. Some people withdraw into a world of isolation and loneliness - having been hurt by those whom they most needed to receive love, they conclude that being alone is better than making oneself vulnerable to others and then being wounded when they don't come through.
- D. Some people strike out in anger - because winning their parents' attention through disobedience is better than living with their apathy by being a 'good kid,' many young people rebel against the system.

**When *the blessing* is given, a child enters adulthood more likely to answer the three most important questions in life:**

**Who am I?      Why am I here?      Where am I going?**

### IV. How do you live without *the blessing*?

- A. Hearing your spiritual leaders - we, as God's servants, can communicate to the Lord's people those things that perhaps their own family never said to them. The Bible tells us that Timothy grew up without a father, but the Apostle Paul picked up the slack and spoke *words of blessing* to the young disciple.
- B. Hearing your Heavenly Father - here is the good news. If you have turned from your sin and embraced Christ by faith, then you are the son or the daughter of almighty God. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter what your earthly father says about you, or what your mother doesn't say. What really matters is what God says about you. **He loves you and wants to give you a wonderful life!**

### A Prayer to Go Higher

*Lord, thank You for loving me and affirming me as Your child. I so need that in my life! Thank You for being such a tender Father. Help me to please You and bring glory to Your name by living in the light of Your blessing, regardless of whether or not I received it from my own parents. Grant me a spirit of forgiveness toward my mom and dad for any failure on their part to pass along the blessing.*

*Lord, I want to chart a course that pleases You with the children in my own life. Help me to take any and every opportunity to convey the blessing to them. May they come to understand that You have a unique vision for their lives. Help me to give this blessing to those I love. I pray this in the strong name of Jesus.  
Amen.*

