

Are You Positioned to Receive God's Blessings?

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Blessings, can we even begin to count them? If I asked you right now to make a list of all the things you consider to be blessings from God, how long would your list be? I would name things like my husband, children, my home, employment, friends, health, our finances, and the list could go on and on. We tend to describe blessings as something we are grateful for, finding favor with God. I'm going to be so bold as to say blessings are not always the joyful things we experience. Blessings can come from the trials and hardships we endure. The death of my mother and all the trials it brought me sure did not feel like a blessing. A curse, yes! At the time I would have never called it a blessing, but now, I can see just how God used that entire situation and brought a blessing into my life. Not just physical blessings, but blessings for eternity. Ephesians 1:3 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ."

This year, I have embarked on a journey to read the entire bible. I have a devotion book that walks you through it. I am not reading cover to cover, but rather jumping around. I highly doubt I will get through it all in a year. Let me just say, the Old Testament is hard reading. If anyone ever starts out reading their bible from the beginning, I'm sure they give up rather quickly and close the book and put it away on a shelf. So far I have gone through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. After I get to the end of a book, I am so thankful to be done with it, only to realize the next one is even more grueling to get through. Each one I am finding so difficult to grasp. I'm not gonna lie, I may have just

skimmed some chapters in Numbers. Here is what I am finding is a recurring theme throughout - God gave a command, and the people just did not listen to Him. In Deuteronomy, Moses was presenting the Israelites with two options. The God who made a covenant with the children of Israel gives them a choice - to be blessed or be cursed. God told Moses to tell the children of Israel that if they listened diligently, kept all his commandments, then all of these blessings would come upon them. God rescued the Israelites from Pharaoh, and instead of listening to God, and finding the promised land, they wandered the wilderness for 40 years until their entire generation had died off. God declared that because of their disbelief, only Joshua, Caleb, and their descendants would enter the promised land. Why was it so hard for them to obey God? Did they not want to receive the blessings God was promising? I can't help but think, aren't we like the Israelites at times? God only appeared in a burning bush to Moses. If he would have appeared to the Israelites, I am sure they would have listened. However, this is where the true test comes. If God appeared to us in the physical, we would have no choice but to believe. But then, where would our faith come from? We must believe in order to receive God's blessings.

Like the Israelites, we too have a hard time listening. Many of us come to church each week. We listen to the word preached, and then go home, and on with the rest of our week. Is that preached word from God even penetrating? Are we holding on to it and applying it to our lives? I don't know about you, but for me, if things are going to work together for my good, then I need to be in His will. I need to do what He says to do. We may show up to church every week, but completely miss the mark when it comes to doing.

So how do we receive God's blessings? Do they magically just fall from the sky and land right in our laps, like the manna that God provided the Israelites? First and foremost, God must be our first love and our greatest need each and every day. This is a constant process. It doesn't happen overnight. It requires a decision on your part, and dedication to follow through. Matthew 22:37 says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." When we condition our hearts to make God our greatest need every day, we are in the best position to receive His blessings. If God is not in it with us, how can we expect him to bless us? Allow God to break and humble you. God allows us to go through loss, suffering, and sorrow. Why does a good God allow this? The simple answer is, He wants all of you, wants you to turn to him in your time of need. God wants to be able to use you as a vessel to bless others. God wants all of you. Pour everything out before him. You need to be invested in your relationship with God. As you begin to be intentional in your relationship with the Lord, start to take note of how God is working and moving in your life.

2 Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." A blessing in the bible is God's favor poured out into your life. Who doesn't want God to pour His favor into their life? The Hebrew word for blessing is barakah - a transmittal of God's favor. We can pray daily for the blessings in our lives and in the lives of others.

One of my favorite songs is titled, "The Blessing." Here are the lyrics. I encourage you to google this song and pull it up right now and just listen to it. Really listen.

"The Lord bless you and keep you

Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace
May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family, and your children
And their children, and their children
May His presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All round you, and within you
He is with you, He is with you
In the morning, in the evening
In your coming and your going
In your weeping, and rejoicing
He is for you, He is for you”

I remember after I lost my mom, being on my elliptical in the morning, with tears flowing down my face, and singing these words. The part that really got me was praying for a blessing for my children and their future children. It's something, if you are a parent, that you should be doing. Pray for your children! I want God to bless my kids immensely.

I encourage you to take out your journal, or even your bible, and jot down all of the blessings you can think of. I bet you will be surprised with how many things you can name. Now, when you are having a bad day or going through a rough patch, use this list as a reminder to yourself. God is longing to be by your side. He wants to bless you immensely. I will repeat a statement I made earlier on, “When we condition our hearts to make God our greatest need every day, we are in the best position to receive His blessings.” Are you in the best position you can be in with God? If not, I encourage you to seek Him. Don't spend years of your life wandering

aimlessly through the wilderness. Instead walk through the promised land with your Lord and Savior, and begin to count the many blessings he has for you.