



BLESSING OTHERS

In today's fast-paced world, with social media profiles and the constant push to create a perfect image, it's hard to remember why we do nice things for others. Sometimes, it feels like it's more about getting a thumbs-up online than genuinely caring for someone. But think about it: God has been so generous to us, not just in the tangible things we've been given, but also in always being there for us, through thick and thin.

God's gifts to us—His blessings or "presents" and His constant "presence"—are reminders of the kind of love we should aim to share with others. A simple gift or just spending time with someone can mean the world to them, much like how we value God's blessings in our lives. It's not about getting noticed or keeping score; it's about sharing the love and grace we receive from Him daily.

So, instead of focusing on how our acts of kindness might look online or whether people will see or give us kudos, let's try to give as God does: freely, without expecting anything in return, and being fully present. Let's bring both presents and presence into our everyday interactions, showing God's love in all we do.

Be a blessing to others, just as Christ has been to us.

KEY VERSES

James 1

Jeremiah 29:13

Psalms 34

Matthew 6

Matthew 28:20

Acts 20:35

Psalms 16

Hebrews 13:16

TEACHING



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SMALL TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Discussion 1. Blessed by God's Presents

Verses:

James 1:17 - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."

Psalms 34:8 - "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!"

Questions:

In what ways have you personally experienced God's blessings in your life?

How do you differentiate between gifts that are from God versus those that are simply the result of circumstances or human effort?

Small Table Challenge - Gratitude Journaling: For one week, each day, write down three specific things that you are grateful for that you believe are blessings from God. At the end of the week, reflect on how recognising these 'presents' has affected your perspective and attitude. *(See the View of Gratitude Practice for more ideas around this).*



SMALL TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Discussion 2: Blessed by God's Presence

Verses:

Matthew 28:20 - "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Psalms 16:11 - "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence, there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Questions:

When have you felt God's presence most profoundly in your life?

How does recognising God's continual presence influence your daily decisions and feelings of security?

Small Table Challenge: Daily 'God Reminders': Set aside two specific times during your day (e.g., morning and evening) to pause, take a deep breath, and acknowledge God's presence. Use this time to pray, meditate on a scripture, or simply sit in silence, recognising that God is with you.



SMALL TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Discussion 3: Our Presence with Him

Verses:

Jeremiah 29:13 - "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Matthew 6:6 - "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Questions:

How do you intentionally cultivate your connection with God amidst the noise and validation of the world?

What challenges do you face when trying to maintain a genuine relationship with God, and how do you address them?

Small Table Challenge: Digital Detox: Designate one day of the week where you reduce or completely eliminate the use of digital devices for a certain duration (e.g., from 6 pm to 9 pm). Use this time to deeply connect with God through prayer, reading, or worship without the distractions of the online world.



SMALL TABLE DISCUSSIONS

Discussion 4: Blessing with Presence and Presents

Verses:

Acts 20:35 - "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Hebrews 13:16 - "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Questions:

How can we genuinely be a blessing to others without expecting anything in return?

How does blessing others (both in presence and presents) align with the life and teachings of Jesus?

Act of Kindness Challenge: Commit to doing one act of kindness daily for a week. It can be as simple as sending an encouraging note to someone, buying a coffee for a stranger, or spending quality time with a loved one. Reflect on how these actions impact both you and those you're blessing.

SURPRISE THE WORLD

[Find Mike Frost Book Here](#)

In "Surprise the World," Michael Frost articulates a vision for everyday Christians to live in a way that naturally sparks the interest of those around them about the Christian faith. Instead of major evangelistic campaigns or dramatic gestures, Frost emphasizes the power of daily habits to shape our lives and the perceptions of those we interact with. The five habits, summed up with the acronym **B.E.L.L.S.**, are designed to cultivate a missional lifestyle that is intriguing, genuine, and rooted in the teachings and example of Jesus. We are going to use his concepts for some ideas around this practice this season.



Bless

Frost challenges believers to execute intentional acts of kindness, encouragement, and service.

Challenge: Bless three people every week, at least one of whom is not a member of your church. Identify three individuals this week you can bless through words, deeds, or gifts.

Eat

Encouraging deeper relationships through shared meals, Frost's idea is rooted in the intimacy and fellowship that comes with breaking bread together.



Challenge: Commit to sharing three meals this week with someone outside of your immediate family—this could be a coworker, neighbour, or even a stranger.



PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Listen

Devote time to silent meditation and listening to the Holy Spirit. Frost believes this practice can enhance our sensitivity to God's voice in the daily hustle and bustle.

Challenge: Set aside at least one period this week for quiet reflection and listening to God.

Learn

Immerse yourself in the Gospels, diving deep into Jesus' life and teachings to understand and emulate His ways better.

Challenge: Choose a Gospel to read this month. Dedicate time each day to study and reflect on the life and teachings of Jesus.

Sent

Acknowledge that each Christian is dispatched into the world as Jesus' representative. Reflecting on our experiences can enhance our sense of mission and purpose.

Challenge: At the end of each day, jot down a note or spend a moment reflecting on where and how you felt "sent" by God that day.

Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7, is a fantastic section of the Gospel of Matthew to spend some time in this season. It speaks to Jesus' heart for His kingdom and gives some beautiful descriptions of what that looks like. Some of the themes include:

Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12): Jesus lists qualities of those blessed in the Kingdom. By embodying characteristics like mercy and peacemaking, believers naturally bless others around them.

Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16): Jesus' followers are referred to as the earth's salt and the world's light, implying that through genuine faith, they enhance and preserve society's goodness, thereby blessing others.

Love for Enemies (Matthew 5:43-48): Jesus introduces the radical idea of blessing not just those close to us, but even those considered adversaries.

Secret Charity (Matthew 6:1-4): Acts of kindness, like giving, should be genuine and not for show, emphasizing the idea of blessing others without seeking external validation.

The Sermon on the Mount, in essence, provides a blueprint for a life that blesses others by promoting love, humility, and sincere righteousness.

REST

Practising Christmas Blessings as a Family

Christmas envelops us in a season of warmth, wonder, and gratitude, reminding us of the most profound blessing humanity has ever received: the birth of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate His coming, there's an invitation for every family to be a conduit of His love, sharing that same blessing with others.

Being Truly Present: Amid the festivities, make an intentional effort to truly be present with others. Whether it's attentively listening to a grandparent's story, joining in a neighbour's carol singing, or simply enjoying a family board game night, be fully in the moment, exemplifying the way God is always present with us.

Expressing Hospitality: Extend an invitation. It could be to a school friend of your children who might be spending the holiday season alone, a new neighbour unfamiliar with local traditions, or even a colleague. Open your home for a meal, a cup of cocoa, or a cookie-making afternoon. In doing so, you're not just sharing food or fun, but offering a taste of Christ's warmth and welcome.

Engaging in Community: Christmas is often filled with events—plays, concerts, and community gatherings. Attend these with the intent of supporting others, especially those in your children's lives. Whether it's cheering on a school friend in a Christmas play or appreciating a neighbor's house decorations, make your presence a gift of support and encouragement.

Blessing the Less Fortunate: Christmas is also a time of giving. Consider adopting a family in need, participating in a toy drive, or preparing care packages for the homeless. Teach your children the joy of giving without expecting in return, reflecting Jesus' teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.

In all these activities, the aim isn't to add more tasks to an already busy season, but to bring Christ's presence into what we're already doing. By consciously choosing to bless others in these ways, you're not only making memories, but also cultivating a spirit of genuine love and generosity that mirrors the heart of the Christmas story.