

Final Copy

THE BLESSING  
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Most people are chained to their past emotionally, even after they have left physically. If they had a lack of approval from their parents, they have trouble feeling accepted in the present. Three reactions are common:

1. Some people are driven to workaholicism as they search for the acceptance they never received at home. They never feel that they are measuring up - even though they achieve greatly.

2. Some get mired in withdrawal and apathy as they give up hope of ever truly being blessed. This can lead to chronic depression, even suicide.

3. Some try all sorts of extreme behavior.

But the reason is that these people as children missed out on their parents' blessing at some level, and this lack of acceptance set off a lifelong search.

"Leaving" home carries with it not only the idea of physical separation but also of emotional freedom as well. The terrible fact is that most people who have missed out on their parents' blessing have great emotional difficulty leaving their parents, but unmet needs for personal acceptance can keep a person emotionally chained to his or her parents, unable to genuinely "cleave" to another person in a lasting relationship.

What is the BLESSING? What are the elements of which it consists? How can I know whether I received it or whether my children or disciples are receiving it now.

Five elements for the blessing is necessary:

1. Meaningful touch
2. A Spoken Message
3. Attaching "High Value" to the one being blessed
4. Picturing a Special Future for the one being blessed
5. An Active Commitment to fulfill the Blessing.

Element #1: MEANINGFUL TOUCH

Your spouse and children need meaningful touch (example of young woman who rocked with her arms wrapped around herself--her mother abandoned her in an orphanage.) The need for touch does not go away with grade school. The way to protect your child from immoral relationships later is to give him/her plenty of meaningful touchings when they are children. Hugs, hands on the head, touches of encouragement, etc. Jesus touched the little children, the

leper, the blind man, and his disciples. For children, things become real when they are touched.

Promiscuous men and women often merely a looking for a way to satisfy the yearning to be touched and held. Dr. Ross Campbell says "(homo) men never had meaningful touches by their fathers. "I never knew of one sexually disoriented person who had a warm, affectionate and loving Father."

Element #2: SPOKEN WORDS

Words have incredible power to build us up or tear us down. This is particularly true in families. Many can clearly remember words of praise their parents spoke years ago - others can remember negative words, even what their parents were wearing when they spoke them.

Children need to hear spoken blessing and so do husbands and wives need to hear words of love and acceptance regularly. James clearly called the tongue a "forest fire, a ship's rudder, the bit in a horses' mouth," i.e., words can shape a child's life and send him/her in a direction they don't want to go - destroys them. Or, they can be directed towards God by our words. As your most significant disciples, your children are also the ones most impacted by your words. Every day in every way, from birth on, what you say to your child and to others in their hearing, affects them for life. Is your language seasoned with Grace and full of God's values, even in the mundane schedule of homemaking?

If we agree this is important, why do we put off saying accepting, loving compliments by the lame excuses of...  
 ...overactivity - "I'm too busy,"  
 or, "it's not a big deal--they know I love them."

Such excuses are not valid. Silence communicates something far different from love and acceptance. It either makes children workaholics or extremely withdrawn. For example, for some children, the only time verbal approval was given was for some accomplishment. So the child grows up trying to gain approval by working hard. But work can never sustain a missing sense of acceptance. The children who withdraw give up and travel a road of apathy, depression and underachievement. (P. 57 A Cipher in the Snow). "Death and Life are in the power of the tongue. (Prov. 18:21).

The reason many people hesitate to bless with spoken words of love and acceptance is that their parents never gave them this part of the blessing. Both praise and criticism seem to trickle down through generations.

Element #3: EXPRESSING HIGH VALUE

To value something is to attach great importance to that person. Like God is Someone of high value to me. He

is my Best Friend, the Source of my Life. We also need to place high value on our family, husband, wife, children, The Body of Christ, our disciples. Recognizing them as very special persons is shown in word pictures or nice nicknames, or their special days or special events just for them.

Jesus often used parables to communicate his love and vision for His disciples. He called Peter the "rock" because He saw his great undeveloped traits. He challenged his disciples by many word picture analogies to commit to Him and go out and witness, like the wedding feast, the two brothers, the vine-branches, the good shepherd.

#### FIVE REASONS TO USE WORD PICTURES

1. Word pictures are used by the greatest communicators,
  - (a) Jesus
  - (b) Uncle Tom's Cabin - slavery became an issue
2. Word pictures grab and direct your attention - especially an emotional word picture.
3. Word pictures bring your story to life (Kimberly's letter to her father about car accident - he drove her and her mom off the road. (Divorce.)
4. Word pictures lock thoughts into our memory. A constant complaint is that people do not remember what we say, e.g., Corrie Ten Boom -piece of embroidery-back side-no clear pattern. Turned it around, beautifully embroidered Crown - or, the Cross *spanning the gulf between death/life.*
5. Word pictures provide a *gateway to intimacy*:
  - (a) clarify thoughts and feelings
  - (b) move you to a deeper level of commitment
  - (c) praise or encourage someone
  - (d) lovingly correct someone.

#### STEPS IN PREPARING WORD PICTURES

1. Establish a *clear purpose*, e.g., David confronted by Nathan.
2. Carefully study the other person's *interests*.
3. Draw from 4 Wells:
  - (a) Nature,
  - (b) Everyday objects,
  - (c) Imaginary stores, or
  - (d) Past experiences and remembrances.
4. Rehearse your story.
5. Pick a *convenient time without distractions*.
6. Try and try again. This is so true in discipling. I keep going at it, even after failing repeatedly. Eventually they listen and are *willing* to change.
7. *Milk* your word picture for all its worth. Bring more issues up by expanding or changing word pictures.

Jesus spoke in word pictures about discipling, e.g.,

- ...seed planting
- ...taking up cross
- ...hating Mother, Father

...building a tower - counting the cost.

Element #4: PICTURING A SPECIAL FUTURE

How would you feel if your mother said to you after the birth of your baby, "How could anyone as dumb and ugly as you have such a good-looking child?"

Kids are literalists, especially with predictions from parents. For this reason, communicating a special future to a child is such an important part of giving the blessing. When a child feels the future is hopeful and to be conquered, it is something to look forward to and will greatly affect their future attitude on life. If children only hear their personal inadequacies, they start down a hurtful path - one that has been pictured for them.

Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions." (Jn. 14:2-3). Paul talks about the "transformed mind." And, he says in Phil 4:8 "think on good things."

How do we apply this in our homes and with our disciples?

1. Consistency in the Past. We trust God because of His faithfulness, His Power, Our Salvation - He is reliable and loving and consistent in the past so we can trust Him today.

Can we be trusted? Are we consistent? Do we promise and not follow through? Daily decisions demonstrate our commitment to our children, or anyone we are trying to disciple.

Consistency and Commitment go hand in hand. You are not committed if you are always breaking promises, putting off the time you promised to spend with a child or disciple, or not teaching them what you said you would. You build a record.

Commitment in the Present. Are we around enough to see our predictions about our children's future come true? For example, many mothers go back to work when the kids go to school. Often the reason given is to earn money for the children's future education, or to buy things, or to plan a vacation. They don't need more money - they need your undivided attention and personal presence, especially in school years. You are their anchor during the most turbulent years. If you aren't there, they will find their support outside the home with peers and activities. In fact, teenage years are the most important years to be at home.

Element #5: AN ACTIVE COMMITMENT

A. Commit your children to the Lord

Words are not enough. They need to be backed by the commitment of a person to see the blessing come to pass. James says, "Do not be hearers of the word only, but doers."

This means, put into practice in our homes what we claim to believe. God said in Gen. 28:13-15, "I am with you. I will keep you. I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. My peace I give to you. I will send a Helper," the Holy Spirit. "I will give you power." Wise parents will model God's commitment as best they can, and always teach their children about God's changeless ability to help us, give us strength, righteousness and guidance. Convince them that He is personally involved in their lives and he is personally interested in being the child's best friend, encourager and close companion.

B. Commit our lives to their best interests.

This requires time, energy, and all your resources physically, mentally and spiritually - total sacrifice. Every child is unique. It takes a lot of extra time, thought and personal involvement one-on-one to determine what that child needs, hopes, fears, goals, desires, are. Also involves disciplining them. Appropriate discipline will deter harmful behavior. Don't ignore wrong behavior - it will not go away by itself. It must be dealt with. It is usually the prevailing sin, often your own, reproduced in your child. Be consistent with your discipline, no matter how painful or how often you have to discipline, keep remembering, "I am training him/her into the character of peace and righteousness (Heb. 12).

C. Become a student of each child.

By lovingly, persistently encouraging them to talk, and listening, set up times when meaningful communication can take place, i.e., special dinners, evenings on the porch, etc. Listen to them with full attention and ask the Lord to help you discern their real needs. Don't be preoccupied when they talk to you. Accountability in one word. The children will be very honest and quick to realize it.

**Commitment is costly. It is time consuming. It is sacrificial.**

Children raised in godly homes are the greatest resource for spiritual leadership in the future. Mothers have the tremendous privilege of developing and maintaining a close relationship with each child - nurturing, protecting, and guiding regularly and consistently.

God's perspective is that your children are valuable and worth this investment. You will experience *profound* fulfillment as that child becomes a man or woman of God.