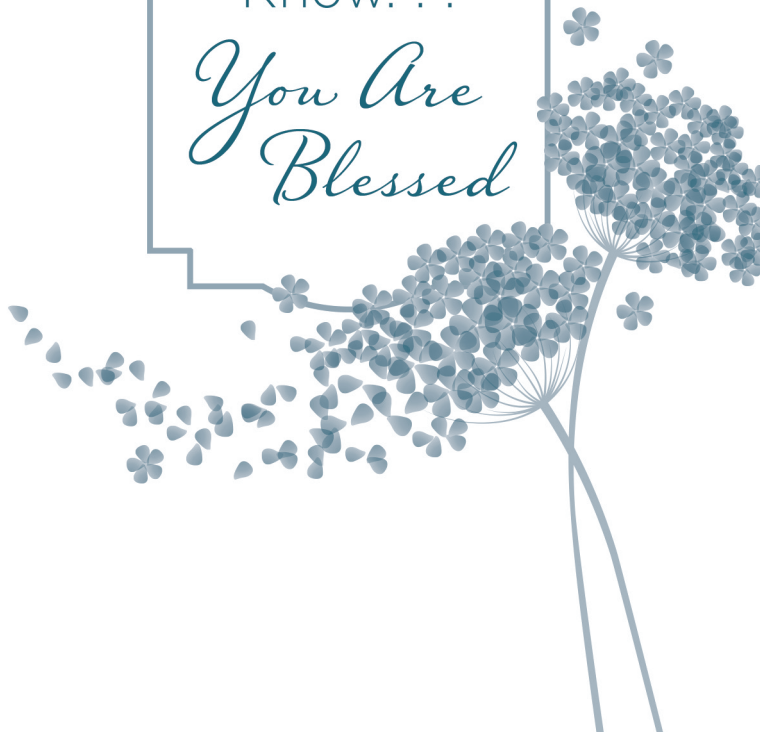


Today God  
Wants You To  
Know. . .

*You Are  
Blessed*





Rae Simons



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# Introduction

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*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 NASB



Our lives are filled with God's blessings. Even our physical blessings have spiritual meaning. They come to us from "heavenly places."

In *Becoming the Beloved*, author Henri Nouwen writes that we need God's "ongoing blessing that allows us to hear in an ever-new way that we belong to a loving God who will never leave us alone but will remind us always that we are guided by love on every step of our lives."

So when we count our blessings, we're counting God's love letters, His reminders of His constant presence with us, His unconditional love. It's a message we can never hear too often. Luckily for us, it's also a message He never gets tired of sending!





Part 1:  
WHAT IS A BLESSING?



*A Familiar Word?*



*And God blessed them. . . .*

GENESIS 1:22 KJV



In the very first chapter of the first book of the Bible, we read that God was already in the business of blessing. He created the world—and then He blessed it. But what are we talking about when we use that familiar word *blessing*? Did you ever stop to think what it means to be blessed?

# Sixfold Blessings



*"I will be with you and bless you."*

GENESIS 26:3 NLT



*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* gives six definitions for *bless*:

1. to hallow or consecrate
2. to invoke divine care for
3. to praise or glorify
4. to give happiness and prosperity
5. to protect and preserve
6. to endow or favor

God blesses you in all these ways. You are set aside to be God's dwelling place—and that makes you sacred. Through Christ, you have the right to ask God for help and care. He speaks to You; He gives You happiness and health; He protects you; and He gives you countless gifts!

## The Blessing Circle

---

*May all. . .enter his circle of blessing  
and bless the One who blessed them.*

PSALM 72:17 MSG



When we look at the Old Testament words translated as *bless* and *blessing*, we find deeper meanings. Two different Hebrew words are used in this psalm. The first one has to do with kneeling down; it's how we bless God. The second is how God blesses us; it means "to lead." These two blessings form a circle that never ends: God leads us, we surrender to God, He leads us even further. . .on and on.

## Fruitful Blessings



*"I will bless him, and will make him fruitful."*

GENESIS 17:20 NASB



The Hebrew word in this verse that we've translated as *bless* has to do with making something bear fruit. God blesses us by making our lives productive. We create homes and gardens, we raise children and help others; we write stories, paint pictures, and make music. That's one kind of fruitfulness He gives us. He also, however, makes our spirits bear a different kind of fruit—joy, humility, peace, understanding, and most of all, love.

## *Happiness!*



*How blessed is the one whom You  
choose and bring near to You.*

PSALM 65:4 NASB



The Hebrew word used here simply means “happy.” When God chooses us, He makes us happy. When He brings us near to Him, our hearts fill up with joy. We’ll still have the ups and downs that everyone else has, of course. Sorrows will come, and we’ll face days that challenge us. But when we look back at our lives as we enter eternity, we’ll see clearly: we’ve been so blessed. God’s given us so much to make us happy!

## Spoken

.....

*"Come, you who are blessed by my Father,  
inherit the Kingdom prepared  
for you from the creation of the world."*

MATTHEW 25:34 NLT



The Greek word translated as *blessed* in the New Testament adds another meaning to our understanding. In this verse, the word Jesus uses means "to speak well of, to say words that give or create something good." Speaking is important in the Bible. In Genesis, God spoke the world into being. Jesus is the Word. And your name is on God's lips. He has spoken your very self into being. You are a child of the Kingdom!

## *The Blessing of True Identity*

---

*This is my beloved Son,  
in whom I am well pleased.*

MATTHEW 17:5 KJV



This is the blessing the Father gave to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. It's a spoken affirmation of a reality that already existed. Through grace, we can also claim this blessing as our own. When you feel down on yourself, when your self-esteem feels beaten down to nothing, repeat this blessing to yourself. It affirms your true identity. Christ has made you part of His family, and now you are God's beloved child. He is pleased with you!

## Consecrated



*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not  
the communion of the blood of Christ?*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16 KJV



The Greek word used here means “consecration;” in other words, to commit something totally to God. This adds another element to our understanding of blessing: something that is blessed is completely surrendered to God. We commune in our hearts with Christ—we share intimately with Him in His absolute self-giving on the cross—and this consecrates us. Our hearts are God’s. We have drunk from Christ’s cup of sacrifice and blessing.



## *God's Abundance*

---

*God is able to bless you abundantly.*

2 CORINTHIANS 9:8 NIV



The literal meaning of these Greek words adds still another layer to our understanding of God's blessings. When Paul wrote this sentence to the Corinthians, he was talking about God's power—something that is over and above anything else we've ever encountered—to give grace and kindness to us that is also over and above anything we can even imagine. God's blessings are as abundant as His power to shower them upon us. None of our fears and doubts can ever limit either one!

## The Secret of Material Blessings

.....

*Be harmonious. . . kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

1 PETER 3:8–9 NASB



These verses contain two meanings of the Greek word for *blessing*: first, speaking well of others (this is one way we bless others, by affirming them with our words rather than gossiping, insulting, boasting, or quarreling); and second (the consequence of the first), tangible good things in our ordinary lives.

## Body and Soul

---

*Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.*

3 JOHN 1:2 NASB



The New Testament makes clear that God sends both physical and spiritual blessings into our lives. He wants our lives to be healthy and prosperous—emotionally, physically, financially, spiritually. We tend to separate the spiritual world from the physical one, but the Bible shows us a perspective where each sort of blessing flows into all the others. As we are spiritually blessed, our physical lives will be blessed as well.

Part 2:  
SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS



*Already Blessed*



*God. . .has blessed us in the  
heavenly realms with every  
spiritual blessing in Christ.*

EPHESIANS 1:3 NIV



That's pretty amazing. Right now, in the world of eternity—the spiritual world—you and I already possess all that God has to give to us. We don't have to wait for these blessings. We don't have to wait until we die and go to heaven. We don't have to earn them first, and we don't have to work hard to become "more spiritual." They're already ours, right now.

## *Spiritually Strong*

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*I long to see you so that I may  
impart to you some spiritual  
gift to make you strong.*

ROMANS 1:11 NIV



In this verse, Paul is talking about a particular kind of blessing: a spiritual gift. The Greek word is *charisma*, a grace-gift that empowers us to work on behalf of God's Kingdom. It's given to us freely; we don't have to do anything to earn it. We can't see this kind of blessing, but we can feel its power. It fills our lives with love, joy, and peace. We are spiritually strong. We have abundant life.

## Thriving

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*I am like an olive tree, thriving  
in the house of God. I will always  
trust in God's unfailing love.*

PSALM 52:8 NLT



Children need love to thrive. So do all of us older folks. Without love, our hearts would be sad and lonely. Our lives would be narrow and unfulfilling. In fact, love is the most important of all the many spiritual blessings we've received. All God's blessings, both spiritual and physical, are wrapped up in His love. Because He loves us, He will never stop blessing us. His love never fails.

## *The Ultimate Love*

.....

*This is how God showed his love among us:  
He sent his one and only Son into the world  
that we might live through him.*

1 JOHN 4:9 NIV



We don't have to try to grab hold of intangible proof of God's love. He sent it to us in the physical body of Jesus. Jesus was the love of God walking on earth. God blesses us in countless ways; He expresses His love through the many, many good things in our lives. But the ultimate expression of His love is still Jesus.

## *Hearts Full of Love*



*God's love has been poured out into  
our hearts through the Holy Spirit.*

ROMANS 5:5 NIV



God's love touches our entire lives. Even better, He pours His love into our very being. We are like a cup that God never stops filling up with His love. Love is a constant stream flowing into us until that love runs over and spills out to others. Because we have been blessed with God's unfailing love, we can pass that blessing on to others.



## Reliable



*We know and rely on the love  
God has for us. God is love.*

1 JOHN 4:16 NIV



When we talk about God's love, it's not just a pretty phrase or some lofty theological concept. The Greek word translated here as *know* implies firsthand experience. We know God's love because it touches us personally. The more we allow ourselves to experience His love, the more we will be able to trust that love. We can put our full weight on it, knowing that God will never jerk it out from under us. How could He, when His very nature is love?