

BLESSING PRAYER: A GIFT OF LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

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Perhaps you struggle, as I often do, with what to give your spouse, children, or other loved ones on their birthdays or holidays! Have you considered the incredible gift of Blessing Prayer? Over the years, I have found much joy in being on the giving and the receiving end of prayers that bless. My younger sister gives me the incredible gift of one minute of prayer for each year of my life every birthday. She prays for me every other day as well, but her covenant to pray for me on my birthday is such a special blessing to me!

Other than the gift of interceding for others, it is especially powerful to pray specific “blessing prayers” from Scripture over loved ones, missionaries, neighbors, coworkers, pastors and church leaders, and yes, even “enemies.” Not only has God commanded us to pray for others, He has given us multiple ways to do so that please His heart and agree with His kingdom purposes.

Here are some of my favorite blessing prayers to pray for others:

Romans 15:13: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

You can personalize your prayers as well. For example: God of Hope, may You fill my spouse/son/daughter, _____, with

all joy and peace as he/she trusts in You, so that he/she may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 – “We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Thessalonians 3:5, 16 – “May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance...Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 – “May the God of peace...equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Philippians 1:9-10 – “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.”

It is always good to pray blessings for others...what an incredible way to love them and to show that love! There are many creative ways to deliver these prayer blessings. Here are just a few:

In Person! I love to place my hand on someone’s head or shoulder and pray blessings over them. This is especially amazing to do with your children. One day, after praying the Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6:24-26 over my youngest son for the first 4 years of his life, he put his hand on my head and blessed me back...not only had he internalized the Scripture, he understood the power of blessing and wanted to offer it back

to me as a gift.

Special Occasions – weddings, showers, new babies, birthdays, graduations, retirements and other celebrations give opportunities to bless people!

Notes and Emails – It only takes a few moments to change someone's day through encouraging them with a written blessing, and the acknowledgment that you are praying this blessing for them. Pastors and missionaries are especially grateful for these blessings...and they always seem to arrive at just the right time when we allow the Holy Spirit to prompt us.

May our hearts be moved to bless others in prayer as we go about living a transformed everyday life!

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Biography

Kim serves as the Executive Director of Harvest Prayer Ministries which she co-founded in 1993 with her late husband, Dave (1953-2022). Her ministry involves teaching/training and consulting as well as writing and developing resources. She is content coordinator for HPM's teaching platform, PrayerU.com

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Some of Kim's Books



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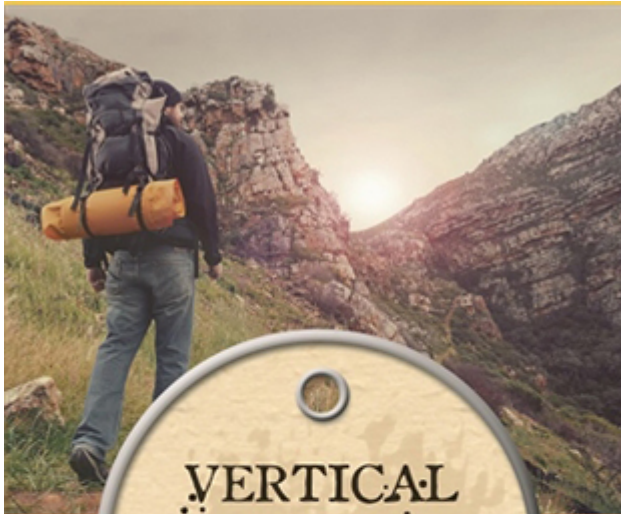
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30 Days of Prayer for Neighbors and Nations

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LORD, MAKE ME HOLY

BLESSING PRAYER: A GIFT OF LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

I used to struggle uncomfortably with the command of God to be holy as He is holy...not because I didn't believe it or think I could become more holy, but because I couldn't imagine being holy in the same way that God is holy. I equated holiness with perfection, which only God is. Until I understood fully that the Christian life is a process of becoming holy through emulating the life of Jesus Christ, I fought the despair of never being able to attain what the command seemed to imply.

A few years ago, a friend of ours gave us a copy of a book he had written, and in it I discovered what for me, was an incredible treasure about the holiness of God compared to the holiness of His people. In his book, *God Focus*, Walter Price shared a fascinating insight. He stated that when comparing degrees or levels of holiness in English, we use the terms holy, holier and holiest. In Hebrew, there are no such words to describe different degrees of holiness; therefore, the word holy is repeated in order to give it higher levels of importance. For example, “holy, holy, holy” equates to “holiest”. We, God's children, can be holy, but only God is “holy, holy, holy.” Only God is “holiest.”

I recall a sermon my husband, Dave, preached where he pointed out that holiness is a process that requires something of us, even as the Lord “makes” us holy: “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy” (Leviticus 20:-8). To be consecrated means that we are set apart for a purpose...God’s kingdom purpose! If the Lord, who makes us holy, is to do so, we must first set ourselves apart from the standards of behavior that the world says is acceptable. We must keep His decrees and follow them, even if they are unpopular with the world. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says, “...let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. We are to set ourselves apart because of our reverence for our Father.

Therefore, my prayer for holiness must come from a heart of deeply felt worship, awe and desire. It is a realization that I will not be “zapped” with holiness simply because I ask my Father for it. With the life of Jesus as my model and the Holy Spirit as my teacher, I must pray for the strength to set myself apart and do what He has commanded. My prayer includes gratefulness that I am able to be in the process of holiness only because my Abba Father is holy, holy, holy!

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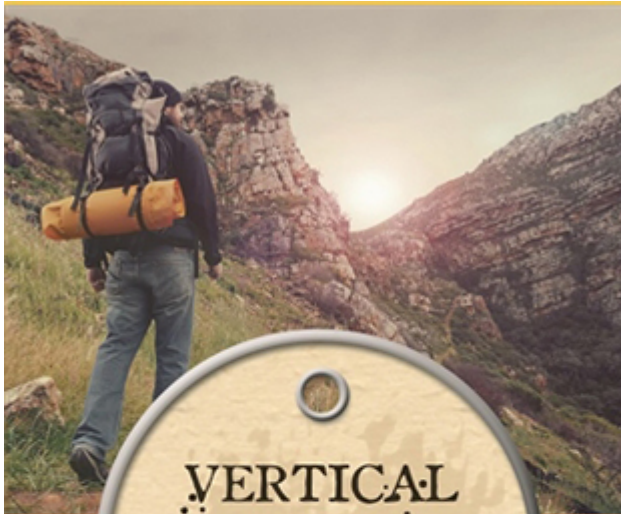
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GOD WITH US

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“As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy” (Luke 1:44).

Several years ago, through the miracle of FaceTime and iPhones, I was able to see the 3-D photograph of a very special baby...my granddaughter. At that moment, she weighed only about 12 ounces and was only 6 ½ inches long, but her senses were developing to the point where she could already hear noises outside the womb. Our God is an amazing Creator!

I pondered the miracle that such a tiny baby can hear voices and sounds halfway through her development in the womb, and it occurred to me that perhaps the Father was already whispering His heart to hers. Scripture says that the baby in Elizabeth's womb leapt at the sound of Mary's voice (Luke 1:44). We, whom God created in His likeness, were formed for fellowship with Him. All of life in the womb is prayer, as Creator forms and then speaks to His beloved new child...His creation.

We are predisposed to hear God's voice from the earliest possible moment. Unfortunately, from the moment we are born, somehow the holy voice that fueled our souls is easily lost in a myriad of other voices and stimuli. Even in the womb there are many new sounds to begin listening to...the voices of our parents and siblings, television, traffic, music... much of it

loud and frightening. What if our prayers provide the incubator that sustains our precious children from the moment we learn of their existence? What if we read and speak out the Word of God to them so that they always know and feel the security of the love and mercy of the Father through us?

Perhaps our own prayerful lives have a greater impact upon our little ones than we have ever realized!

For most of us, prayer no longer seems as simple as breathing in and out and we have found ways to confine our prayers into segments of time rather than incorporate it into our everyday moment by moment living. Yet, there are some who find a way to give life to prayer in the midst of every moment. Brother Lawrence was just such a soul. He said, "I gave up all devotions and prayers that were not required and I devote myself exclusively to remaining always in his holy presence. I keep myself in his presence by simple attentiveness and a general loving awareness of God that I call 'actual presence of God' or better, a quiet and secret conversation of the soul with God that is lasting." (Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God: Critical Edition*, 53)

I believe that children understand this Presence better than most...even before they can clearly articulate it. Yet, most of us do not have a clear awareness that the God of the Universe used to speak to us. We were born into a life that either nurtured our relationship with the Father, or allowed it to fall into neglect until we were judged to be "mature enough" to comprehend how to have a relationship with the very One our hearts have always known.

As parents and grandparents, perhaps we can learn how to reassess the prayer lives of the youngest in our midst, understanding that they may actually be more in tune with the voice of God and the rhythms of life within the kingdom than we have previously suspected. Perhaps Brother Lawrence has articulated exactly how Jesus came to His Father in and for all things... as a little child – simply living in His Presence

and having soul conversations continually. I have no theological proof, but I am willing to assert that Jesus lived in such communion with God from His earliest moments. He knew the voice that fueled His passion and His ministry...the voice that had spoken life to Him. Are we not created in the image of this loving Father?

My prayer for my unborn granddaughter was that she would hear and cherish the voice of God all the days of her life...that no external noise would ever quench the still small voice of her Heavenly Father! Perhaps if all of us prayed this way for our children, grandchildren and the children in our spheres of influence who are yet unborn, the upcoming generation will be so spiritually in tune that the world will once again be turned upside down. As their young lives reflect the life of Jesus with every breath, His kingdom will be present to us all! Oh come, Oh come Emmanuel – God with us!

“His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation” (Luke 1:50).

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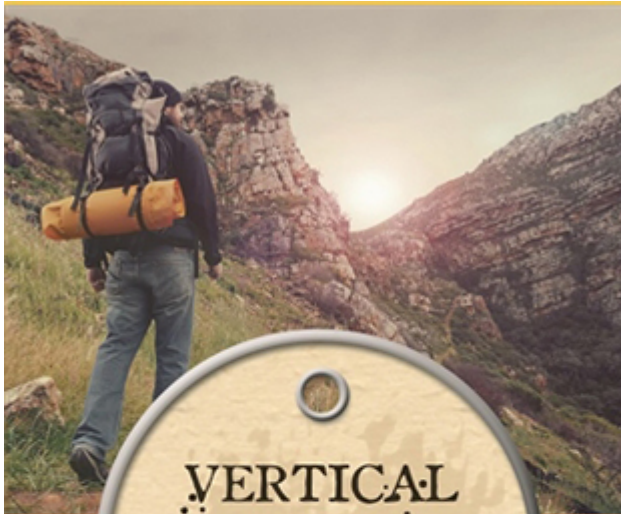
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Silence As Intimacy with God

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“But oh! God is in his holy Temple! Quiet everyone – a holy silence. Listen!” Habakkuk 2:20 MSG

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:16

“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him...” Psalm 37:7a

Jesus frequently separated Himself from the busy, noisy life of His ministry to be alone in the Presence of His Father. Scripture teaches clearly how He repeatedly went to quiet, lonely places to pray. Jesus drew apart in order to hear from God and to be refreshed and renewed in the Presence of His Father. Because of this disciplined intimacy, Jesus was able to commune with God and discern His voice in the midst of the noise and activity around Him. If this was the regular rhythm of the life of Jesus, it should be so for us as well.

Dallas Willard states, “God’s provision for us and for His work through us is adequate. We do not have to ‘make it happen.’ We must stop shouldering the burdens of ‘outcomes.’ These are safely in His hands. Someone insightfully said, ‘The greatest threat to devotion to Christ is service for Christ.’ Allowing service for Christ to steal our devotion to Him is a radical failure in personal soul care. But it is one from

which the practice of communing with Christ in times of solitude and silence can deliver us.”

If we can't hear God in the silence, how can we ever hope to hear Him in the constant hammering din of everyday life? It is difficult to separate ourselves at times from all of the spiritual “do-ing” in order to take the time necessary to listen for His voice, no matter what form it takes (that's entirely up to Him). Often, we make a perfunctory attempt to be still and know that He alone is God, when we are really consumed with wondering “how long is this going to take before I hear something?” Perhaps a key lesson within silence is to learn how to be content in the Presence of God whether He chooses to speak or not. A sweet memory came back to me while writing this. I remember one late night when my husband and I discovered it had started to snow. We turned out the lights and sat snuggled together on the couch just watching in perfect silence...no words were spoken. Simply being together in that moment was enough.

Our purpose for silence must never be attached to an agenda in order to “get” something from God. Our intent is to simply be in His presence...and if we learn how to be content there...we will become in time, a prepared, consecrated vessel, ready to hear from Him when He chooses to speak. Silence teaches us contentment in waiting. Can the knowledge of His presence be sufficient in your every day life?

How do we make the transition from silence to carrying His Presence into whatever each day brings to us as Jesus did so seamlessly? Carving small moments of stillness into my day often helps...little mini Sabbaths of rest such as taking a walk, gazing out a window, putting on headphones to block out the noise around me, etc. There are creative ways to be still, but it is definitely a discipline that needs to be nurtured.

“In a noise-polluted world, it is even difficult to hear ourselves think let alone try to be still and know God. Yet it

seems essential for our spiritual life to seek some silence, no matter how busy we may be. Silence is not to be shunned as empty space, but to be befriended as fertile ground for intimacy with God.” Susan Muto

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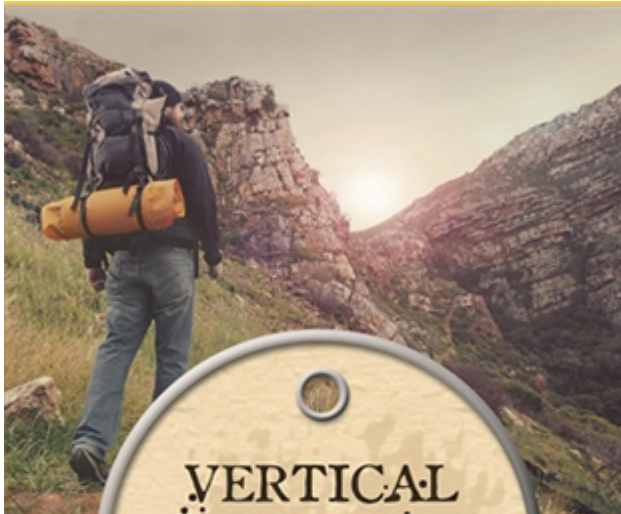
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