

Blessing a Child

By Douglas Wood

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Think of someone you identify as a person of integrity. Prepare to share this person's name and some of what you see in this person's life that is evidence of integrity.

Assignment Two

Think of a family in your church with a deep and genuine faith in God. Prepare to share who this family is, how they have been blessed by God, and some of the ways they bless one another.

Assignment Three

Think of some of the disobedient ways you have observed in the lives of others that seem to keep them from following Jesus and thus receiving His blessings. Prepare to share what you have observed.

Scripture to Memorize

"And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them." Mark 10:16

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand some of the ways parents can bless their children.

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It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

A family welcomes a new baby into their home. They have been waiting a long time for this little one to join their family. They look at the infant, lying so still and sweet in their crib, and they wonder what their child may grow to be. They want to lavish all the love and attention they can on the child, but mostly they want to be a blessing to the child. What does the Bible say about blessing children?

Read Proverbs 20:7 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Proverbs is filled with instruction for God's people and has much to say about blessings within families.

Verse 7. blessed are his children. What parent does not wish to see their children blessed? This blessing comes as a result of the children witnessing integrity in their parent's walk. **The righteous.** Righteousness is the fulfillment of expectations in any relationship, usually referring to the covenant relationship of God to man. The relationship between parents and children can mirror the relationship between God and mankind. A wise parent follows the Lord in righteousness. The parent models God's commandments in front of the child, and the child notices. God's people rejoice in God's righteousness (see Psalm 89:16), and the person who is devoted to the service of God in worship and life is called righteous (see Malachi 3:18). **integrity.** Sadly, this attribute of a godly person is rare in today's society. *Integrity* means to walk in honesty and was seen in men such as Abraham, David and Job. These were honorable servants of God. A parent passes on integrity to a child through example. A righteous man's impact on children can continue for generations (see Psalm 37:26).

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share the name of a person who seems to be a person of integrity and some of the evidence of that life of integrity.

Discussion Questions

In what way do you see integrity in the lives of your parents and in other significant people in your life? How has that integrity in the lives of significant people resulted in blessings to you?

Read Acts 3:25–26 out loud.

Studying the Passage

Verse 25. sons. The promises of God are for all people and for all members of the family. The Bible is clear that God calls all to Himself. "For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself" (Acts 2:39). **covenant.** A biblical covenant is a promise between God and His people (see Romans 9:4). God did not break His covenant with His people in the Old Testament, and He will not break it with believers today. That's a promise you can count on! God made a covenant with Abraham and the patriarchs, He has made one with your current family, and He will make one with your future family. **Offspring . . . be blessed.** This is similar to the promise God made to Abraham when He said all the nations of the earth would be blessed through Abraham's seed (see Genesis 22:18). Parents who love Jesus deeply desire to bless their children and to see their offspring

(their children) blessed by God.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now share the name of a godly church family, some of the ways those family members have been blessed by Christ, and some of the ways they bless one another.

Studying the Passage

Verse 26. To you. This personal statement identifies you as the recipient of God's blessings. Those blessings are for you and all who will believe. **raised up His Servant.** The Servant is Jesus, raised from the dead to give you life everlasting. Parents can pass on to their children no greater blessing than the knowledge and understanding that faith in Christ leads to eternal life. **turning every one.** We follow Christ by turning 180 degrees from our pursuit and love of sin and by following Him. More than seven hundred times the Bible uses the term *every*. This shows the love God has for His people by opening heaven's doors to all who will repent and follow Him (Matthew 3:2). **wickedness.** What keeps us from the blessings God has promised us? The answer is our constant desire to follow the things of the world rather than the things of His kingdom (see Psalm 1:6).

Parents have choices in rearing their children. They can tell their children that happiness comes with material things or they can teach their children the ways of the Lord. They can walk in integrity and righteousness so that their children will want to follow in their parent's ways or they can walk in the ways of the world, showing their children a way that will not lead to blessings, but rather to disappointment and death.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share some of the disobedient ways observed in the lives of others that seem to keep them from following Jesus and thus receiving His blessings.

On Your Own

Write below some of the blessings you have experienced because of the faithfulness, righteousness, and integrity of your parents. If your parents are not yet believers, write some spiritual blessings you would like to receive from them in the future.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart (the real you) for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something in your life for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below, and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Sadly, many parents believe the best way to bless their children is to flood them with material possessions. Consciously or unconsciously, they train their children to expect those possessions in childhood, in adulthood, and even after the parents' death through an inheritance.

Other parents believe the best way to bless their children is to help them excel in academics, athletics, or the arts. Parents invest time, energy and money trying to ensure their children bring home the tallest trophy, score the winning goal or receive the top scholarship.

Parents have a moral obligation to provide for the basic material needs of their children. When resources are available, most parents want to provide a few things beyond the necessities, but assuming money and material possessions are the key to genuinely blessing a child is a vain hope.

Parents have a moral obligation to detect their children's gifts and abilities and to help children build on those gifts, but again, assuming ribbons and trophies are the heart of blessing is an empty promise.

If God blesses you with children, how can you truly bless them? The Bible clearly states how this can occur.

- You can follow the example of Jesus. He blessed children as He laid His hands on them and spoke affectionately to them. "And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them" (Mark 10:16).
- You can walk in righteousness and integrity so that blessing might flow to your children. "The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him" (Proverbs 20:7).
- You can introduce your children to Jesus, thus giving them the biggest blessing of all—eternal life with Him. "God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you" (Acts 3:26).
- You can trust Jesus to turn children from disobedience and be blessed, "turning every one of you from your wickedness" (Acts 3:26).

An old hymn says, "When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way!" Parents who truly seek God's will in their own lives also will want to see His glory and blessing shed on their kids.

Follow up Question

What are some of the ways God blesses children through their parents?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.