

THE POWER OF A PARENT'S BLESSING

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We often associate the word "bless" with our Filipino tradition of kissing our elders' hand as a sign of respect. "To bless", in Hebrew, is 'barak' meaning, to thrive, to prosper. It connotes two word pictures in Hebrew, that of a camel bending its knees so its master could mount it, and the word picture of coins on a scale. The greater the value of the coins, the scale tips over to that side.

So, when we bless our children, we are actually saying, "You are very valuable to me. You are special to me. I want to honor you". As a result, we propel our children to thrive, to prosper - in their studies, in their careers, in their future family lives, in their businesses, and in their health. The Old Testament is filled with examples of parents blessing their children - Abraham blessed Isaac, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, and Jacob blessed his twelve (12) sons.

The father's blessing was so important in their culture that if the child missed out on this blessing, it was very heartbreaking to the child, as Esau cried out in Genesis 27:34. In the New Testament, Jesus was blessed by His own Father in the river Jordan, "This is my son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17) This practice is being continued among modern day Jewish families. We, as parents, are God's anointed channels of blessing to our children, not the teachers, not the church, but us, parents.

It is our vision in the Family Builders Ministry to see a culture of blessing in GCF South Metro, which will make an impact and transform the generations after us. We introduced this culture 7 years ago by starting with our own families, and we have been influencing other families to do the same, by holding the first seminar, "How to Bless Our Children" in 2016, "The World Needs a Father" in 2019, and "The Power of a Parent's Blessing" in 2022. We also asked the fathers and mothers to pray over and bless their children during the worship services, and to continue blessing their children on a daily basis - upon waking up, before going to school, or going to bed (Deut. 6: 4-9).

Last Sunday, we were encouraged by the testimony of Adrian, Gretchen, and Yggy Ramos as they shared how this practice has influenced them, and how it has impacted their son, Yggy. On Sunday, September 17, we will all be given the opportunity to bless our children during the worship services.

We encourage ALL families to begin this practice TODAY. You can start by writing a blessing over each of your children today, and bring what you wrote, next Sunday, September 17.

Here are pointers for the content of your blessing:

1) Pray to the Lord for the right words to say to your child;

2) Be thankful for the positive attributes of your child. Tell your child how proud you are of him/her for these attributes;

3) Ask for forgiveness for any acts of omission or commission that may have hurt your child;

4) Ask the Lord for a special vision for your child. How do you see him/her in the future? You may quote a verse, e.g. Deuteronomy 28 vv. 1-14, or Psalm 1 vv.1-3.

You may use an image, e.g., "You are like an eagle soaring the heights - in your chosen career, in your business, in your family life". You can envision his future family where he will be the spiritual leader, and his family will obey the Lord with all their hearts, minds, and souls;

5) Express your love and support, and how proud you are of him/her.

Remember, too, that blessing our children doesn't end with the prayer or blessing you pronounce over them.

Blessing our children is a LIFESTYLE. Here are ways you can make blessing a lifestyle.

1) Bless them DAILY with words of encouragement rather than criticism, with words that give life rather than cursing.

Even in disciplining your children, speak words that build up rather than tear down.

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Instead of saying, "You're a liar!" ("Sinungaling ka!") when you catch your child lying, tell him "Anak, you will have the spirit of honesty, of truth in your lips, on your tongue, in your heart". Instead of saying, "Ang kulit kulit mo! Pasaway ka!", tell him/her, "Anak, you will have the spirit of patience, of obedience in your heart". Instead of saying, "Wala ka nang ginawa kundi mag reklamo!", tell him, "Anak, you will have the spirit of thankfulness!" Declare this everyday. Bless him with the positive attribute opposite to what you see now. Speak words of life, rather than death (Proverbs 18:21).

2) Actively commit to having a healthy relationship with your child. Spend quality AND quantity time with them. Turn off that cellphone. Listen to their stories. Make them feel that they are valuable to you.

3) Actively commit to the spiritual growth of your family. Commit to studying the Word of God on your own. By modeling, you can encourage your family to study God's word together. Make worship on Sundays a priority as a family.

Some of us may have difficulty pronouncing blessings to our children. Growing up, you may have received hurtful words from your parents. Some of you may have had a traumatic experience with your own father or mother, or you did not receive a blessing from your own earthly father or mother. You may go to your Heavenly Father right now and spend a time of reflection.

Talk to your Heavenly Father, "Father, I confess the sin that I have committed against my children. On behalf of the generations before me, I confess the sins of my fathers (enumerate the sins, as the Lord reminds you). Thank You, Jesus, that by Your blood shed on the cross, You have forgiven me and my fathers, and the generations after me. By your blood, You have set us free from the enemy's condemnation. Thank you, Father, that you have cleansed us and set us free! I may not have received a blessing from my own earthly father. Lord, please speak to me now, and tell me who I really am in your eyes. What is the truth about me? Who am I before you?"

Spend a few seconds of quiet. Listen to what God wants to tell you. Then talk to God about what He

told you. Afterwards, pronounce forgiveness and blessing of wisdom, peace, and good health over the person who may have caused you hurt.

Begin a culture of blessing in your own home NOW, and create a lasting impact on the lives of your children and your children's children.

The Family Builder's Ministry has lined up a number of activities for the families this September.

Our theme for the month is "Families Always Better Together," so we would like to get to know the families of GCFSM. Start sending your family pictures now, and have a chance to win one of the raffle prizes during the Family Potbless. You can submit a printed 4R picture to the Family Builder's booth or send a digital copy to this email address ninch.estrella@gcfsouthmetro.org. The last day for submission is on September 17, 2023.

One of the most impactful activities of our church is "Blessing the Children." So, on September 17, Sunday, we will be given the opportunity to bless our children during the worship services. Start writing your blessings now, and bring this next Sunday, Sept 17. You will use this to bless your children on that day. For those who cannot prepare, we printed Blessing cards which you can use to pray over your children on Sunday. Keep the cards in your wallet, so you can easily bless your children everyday.

Let us learn and be refreshed as Pastor Tony Yeo teaches us on "Intentional Discipleship in the Home," to be held at the Worship Hall, from 9am to 12 noon on September 23, Saturday. Please register using this link <https://bit.ly/IDMintheHome>.

We prepared the Youth Center as a Day Care Center for your children. So, you can come with your kids. The invitation is open to everyone, not just to parents.

We will culminate Family Month with the churchwide Family Potbless Celebration, after the 2nd worship service on September 24, Sunday. Bring food for your family and extra food to share. We will be fellowshiping with other families, get to know them, and share meals with them. We've prepared games and raffle prizes for everyone! Come and be blessed! ✨