

Five Ways to Bless Others

In *Numbers 6:24-26* the Lord blesses Israel. Today we have been granted access to the fullness of God's blessing through Christ. This is a glorious gift that the Lord our creator, the source, and sustainer of all that is good would bless us. That He would be gracious to us and shine His face upon us. We would do well to spend our days contemplating and graciously receiving this gift. In doing so we are compelled to extend the blessing we have received from God to those He has placed in our lives. Blessing or withholding blessing has a profound impact on those we interact with. We have been blessed by God through Christ, and we are to bless others as we have been blessed. Let us briefly consider five ways to bless others.

Bless by Being Curious of Others (*Ephesians 4:32*)

One way we can bless others is to be interested in them and show that interest by our words and actions. There is something powerful about being noticed by another individual. The simple actions of seeing, moving toward, and giving a verbal greeting shows favor. It demonstrates interest in the other and this is a profound blessing. To go one step further, ask a question. When we ask someone a question it indirectly lets them know we care. Questions also give an opportunity for the relationship to deepen.

Bless by Remembering Them (*2 Timothy 1:3-4*)

We bless others when we remember what they say. Being curious about others leads to learning about their lives and as we learn, it blesses them when we remember. It displays that they are important to us and what matters to them matters to us. We need to remember though that while it is important to bless others by remembering previous conversations, there shouldn't necessarily be an expectation that others will always remember what they shared with us. Next time you learn of someone going through a season of celebration or sorrow, remember them in prayer and follow up when you speak to them. Because we have been blessed by God, we are to bless others.

Bless by Honoring Their Emotions (*Romans 12:15*)

It can be difficult to know how to respond to someone's emotions. Do you speak into their emotions, correct the lies that accompany their emotions, or distract by giving their mind something else to consider? There is a time and place for each of these and many other responses. Perhaps one of the best starting places is to make space for their emotion and simply sit with them in the emotion they feel. By allowing their emotion to be present without correction, instruction, or distraction we join them and this often communicates care. Extending care can be soothing to the hurting and fuel for those who are rejoicing. Exactly how to honor the emotions of others is often difficult to discern. However, seeking to honor another's emotions can be a powerful way to deepen relationship, allowing for additional responses in the future.

Bless by Seeing Their Talents (*Romans 12:6-8*)

We can bless others by noticing and nurturing the God-given gifts they have been given. As we interact with others, we can get focused on their areas of weakness. This is often our natural tendency, and an over focus here leads to cursing rather than blessing. When we look for and nurture their God-given talents, this blesses them and helps facilitate a culture of blessing each other. Instead of a culture of comparison and criticism, blessing leads to a culture of celebration and charity.

Bless by Encouraging (*2 Timothy 1:5-7*)

Difficulty brings questions, doubts, and an unsettling of things we were once sure of. This often brings growth and strengthening in the end, but in the middle, it can be painful. We can bless others when we come along side and let them know that we see their faith. We can remind them of God's call in their life and that sometimes there is a hard reality to walking as a disciple of Jesus through all of life. Bless others by expressing your belief in the Lord's presence and activity in

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their lives. Of the five ways to consider blessing others, blessing by encouraging when someone is in the midst of something difficult might be the one to be the most careful with. Encouraging those in difficulty is good; however, sometimes encouragement can come across as disingenuous when we don't know the other person well. Sometimes what we intend to be encouraging only adds hurt. Common ways this can happen is when we use cliché comments or tell them not feel painful emotions. Instead, we might be most encouraging by giving a simple smile and expressing appreciation for them.

God grants his blessing to all and a unique blessing to those who belong to him. This blessing is not measured in dollars or freedom from difficulty. Blessing comes through adoption into his family where we are called sons and daughters. As we interact with others, let us consider how we might bless them as we have been blessed ourselves.