



The Blessed Exchange

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Eternally Speaking Now

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Years ago I attended a huge women's conference at a stadium in San Diego. The event was immersed with excellent Bible teaching and music. I was especially moved by the segments of corporate worship, being somehow safely surrounded by a multitude of voices singing in one accord. There's something about singing to God in the congregation of other believers that brings a unique, deepened intensity of inner strength and confidence not experienced in smaller gatherings or individual worship.

During one of the many songs we sang, a woman beside me leaned over and commented on one of its phrases, asking, "Is this song right? I know *God blesses us*, but can *we bless Him?*"

I pondered that momentarily, searching the archives of Scripture in my memory bank. I was 25 years younger in the Lord than I am now, so I didn't have as much knowledge from which to draw. Curious, upon returning home, I searched the Scriptures and learned much about the topic of **blessing**.

Newsflash: Not only does God **bless** His people,
but He also calls us to **bless** Him.

There are over 450 verses that use the word **ble**ss in the Old Testament alone, so this short writing is far from an exhaustive study. (I'd love to provide that, but for now, [here's a link to a list of those Scriptures](#), if you'd like to peruse them yourself.) Regarding the topic of God **ble**ssing us, a brief scan of these verses reveals the following: here are a few ways the Lord blesses people.

God **ble**ssed humankind on the day He created Adam and Eve.
He **ble**ssed the seventh day of creation.
He **ble**sses His people with peace.
He **ble**sses the generation of the upright.
He **ble**sses those who fear the Lord,
He **ble**sses the house of the just, and
He **ble**sses those who are generous givers.

In Deuteronomy 28, The Lord literally "commands His **ble**ssings to overtake" those who obey Him. How glorious! So, are we to **ble**ss God?

The answer is a resounding yes.
Scripture after Scripture repeats the beautiful display
of God's people **ble**ssing Him.
Here is a short sample of the many verses:

*Sing to the LORD, **ble**ss His name;
proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.* Psalm 96:2

*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, and **ble**ss His name.* Psalm 100:4

*I will **ble**ss the LORD at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.* Psalm 34:1

*I will extol You, my God, O King;
and I will **ble**ss Your name forever and ever.
Every day I will **ble**ss You,
and I will praise Your name forever and ever.* Psalm 145:1-2

Believers, rise up and **ble**ss the Lord!
How do we do that?
The verses that say to **ble**ss Him also explain how.
Rereading the few above, we can see a simple checklist begin to form:
Sing to Him.
Proclaim His salvation daily.
Be thankful to Him.
Praise His name.
Continually.
Every day, forever and ever.

Is it really that simple?
Possibly, but there's a greater depth yet to explore,
and it has to do with the definition of the word **ble**ss****.

There are three Hebrew root words for our English word **ble**ss****. Two of those words include the overall definition of being made happy, even supremely happy. The third one, which appears 330 times in the Old Testament, is the one I'm addressing in this blog and is the one found at the root of all verses I'm citing. That Hebrew word is 'barak,' which means:

***To bend the knees, to kneel down, even break down;
To praise, celebrate, and adore, with bended knees;
To salute, congratulate, or yield to;
To kneel as a sign of adoration.***

Please read that definition again and let it sink deep into your **so**ul****.

To **ble**ss**** the Lord is to **bend our knees-- to kneel down-- and adore, celebrate, and salute Him**. That amps things up a bit, doesn't it? This isn't just about putting a smile on God's face. The application to our lives goes much further. Psalms 103 & 104 toss another dimension into the mix.

***Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits...***
Psalm 103:1-2

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
*O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty.
Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!*
Psalm 104:1, 35b

As I stumbled upon these well-known verses this week, I couldn't help but revisit the Hebrew root word for **so**ul****. It is nephesh, and its meaning can be summed up as follows:

***The activity of the mind, will or emotions;
includes appetite, desire, emotion, character, and passions***

This definition is a game changer.

Understanding what the word **so**ul**** means takes the idea of **ble**ssing** God** infinitely beyond singing out loud or making a list of things for which we are thankful. It even goes farther than choosing to obey Him. *It is from our **so**ul**** that we are to **ble**ss** Him**.*

What does this look like?

Let's merge the definitions of **ble**ss**** and **so**ul**** in order to capture a poignant picture.

Kneeling before Him in our **appetites**.
Adoring Him in the midst of our **emotions**.
Paying homage to Him-- **saluting** Him-- in our **passions** and **desires**.
Being willing to **break down** in His presence and be real in relationship with Him.
Letting our entire **mind, will,** and **emotions bow before Him in reverence**.
Laying low our very **character** before Him and
surrendering our **entire being** to His lordship.
Celebrating the fact that He is God and we are not.
Intentionally, deliberately **bending the knee of our soul** to King Jesus.

This is what it means to **bless** the Lord.

Challenge

The Lord **blesses** us.

We in turn **bless** Him.

And, there's a third aspect to **blessings** not yet mentioned.

Did you know the Bible states that God Himself *IS blessed*?

He *IS blessed*. It's inherent to His state of being.

Think of it like a holy math equation. God = **blessed**.

One of the many verses that declares this is Psalm 118:26, which says,
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Does this verse sound familiar? If so, it's probably because it is echoed multiple times in the New Testament. The first time it appears after Psalm 118 is during Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

*The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast,
when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,
took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:
"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"*

The King of Israel!"

John 12:12-13

Jesus later quoted the same verse. In each occurrence, "*He who comes in the name of the Lord*" refers to Jesus Himself, being recognized as the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior of the world.

What does this mean to you and me?

Everything.

Jesus came to earth as a humble child.

Blessed is He.

Jesus walked with humanity and showed us the love of the Father.

Blessed is He.

Jesus poured out His blood on the Cross to pay the penalty for sin and death.

Blessed is He.

Jesus rose again from the dead to give us eternal life.

Blessed is He.

Jesus ascended to heaven and sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within those who surrender to Him..

Blessed is He.

The Word and Spirit of Christ within us now sanctifies our **souls**.

Blessed is He.

Jesus will come back again soon.

Blessed is He!

I mustn't conclude without acknowledging something special.

As previously mentioned, this writing covers the 330 verses in which the word **ble^ss** was derived from the Hebrew root word, barak. Yes, that means what you think it means:

Barak is used when spoken of us **ble^ssing** God,
and it's the same word used when spoken of God **ble^ssing** us.

How can that be? God doesn't worship or praise us. He doesn't salute or kneel before us. Of course He doesn't. Then how does He 'barak' us-- how does He **ble^ss** us, if it's the same word used for us **ble^ssing** Him?

When we come upon this kind of dilemma while studying the Bible, we are to take into consideration the whole counsel of God, letting Scripture interpret Scripture. ([Here is a link to an excellent article that explains this.](#)) What do I believe the Lord wants us to learn today about how He **ble^sses** us in a barak kind of way?

Through
His absolute and pure
love and **ad^oration** for humanity,
our magnificent and glorious God
humbly bowed Himself down to earth,
knelt low to commune with and serve each of us,
laid down His life for us (for the **celebration** and joy set before Him),
and completely **surrendered** His entire being to be **broken down** on the Cross.
King Jesus intentionally, deliberately **bent the knee of His soul**
for our salvation.

This is how God **ble^sses** us.
He */S* our **ble^ssing**.

How humbling it is to be **ble^ssed** by our Father,
whose heart intimately adores each of us.

He invites us to partake in a divine gift exchange:
one that never ends and keeps on giving.
Receive His **blessings**, and **bless** Him back.
Then He **blesses** us again, and we **bless** Him back!

Blessed are we.
Now go, bless the Lord, O my soul.

Want to study more? Enjoy the links below.

When God **blesses** us, we are left **abundantly provided for and supremely happy, as we walk according to His guidance**. This truth captures not only the definition of the other Hebrew root words for **blessed** in the Old Testament, but also the primary Greek root word for **blessed** in the New Testament. Discover a snippet of this with a fresh perspective of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. Notice how each Beatitude-- the attitudes we are called to 'be'-- is a reflection of Christ's character. Then merge that together with the insights in this blog. Pretty exciting stuff!

I've also included a link to a live recording of the well known, modern worship song, 10,000 Reasons, written 12 years ago by Matt Redman. It came out after that conference I attended many years ago, providing a wonderful application of **blessing** the Lord from the **soul**.

Matthew 5: Beatitudes/Sermon on the Mount

10,000 Reasons: Bless the Lord, O My Soul