Every member of your family needs to experience what the scriptures call "the Blessing" at home. This guide can help you begin the process with your child, spouse, grandchild, parents or others by imparting a gift only you can give.

WHO SHOULD YOU BLESS?

Identify those who need to receive the blessing from you.

- ❑ Children
- ❑ Grandchildren
- ❑ Spouse
- ❑ Parents
- ❑ Others _____

BECOMING MORE INTENTIONAL

Assess how well you have given each element of the blessing in order to determine where you need to be more intentional with your loved ones.

BE COMMITTED: What level of commitment do I demonstrate?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Very Low — Very High

LOVINGLY TOUCH: Do I give appropriate, meaningful touch?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seldom — Often

EXPRESS VALUE: Do I attach "high value" to them as a person?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Low Value — High Value

SEE POTENTIAL: Have I pictured a special future for their life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seldom — Often

SAY IT: Do I speak and write them words of blessing?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seldom — Often

GIVING BETTER THAN YOU RECEIVED

Many fail to pass on the blessing because they never received it themselves. The gospel is about the hope of new beginnings. If you never received the blessing in your family, you can break the cycle by giving it to those God has placed in your home today. Pray this simple prayer:

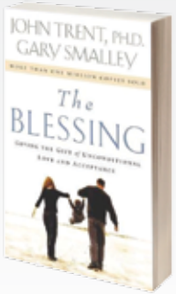
"Father in heaven, I commit myself to moving beyond any negative history or patterns in my experience so that I can start the process of giving my loved ones the blessing they need and deserve! Amen."

Going further

Use these recommended resources to become even more intentional about giving the gift of the Blessing in your home.

The Blessing

by John Trent, Ph.D., and Gary Smalley
describes the meaning and process of giving all five elements of the blessing as well as explores the impact in a person's life when missed. Available at **amazon.com** or **strongfamilies.com**



Bedtime Blessings

by John Trent, Ph.D.
is an easy-to-use bedside resource creating meaningful moments of blessing between a parent or grandparent and younger children. Available at **amazon.com** or **strongfamilies.com**

Blessing Your Husband

by Debra Evans
provides practical suggestions for women who want to affirm and bless their husbands. Available at **amazon.com** or **family.org**

Giving The Blessing:

Listen to a portion of Dr. John Trent's seminar including an overview of the five elements of The Blessing. Pick up a FREE CD copy at the HomeLife Center or visit **stmichaels-westend.com** to link to iTunes.

For other Faith@Home ideas visit the HomeLife Center before or after any service or go to **stmichaels-westend.com**

the blessing @home

affirming your loved one's value

HomeLife™
Building Strong Families

UNDERSTANDING THE BLESSING

The power and importance of this gift is explained in the book titled The Blessing by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Ph.D., where they further answer...

WHAT IS IT? The blessing is a powerful tool with which we communicate acceptance and genuine commitment to a child or loved one. The word comes from the ancient practice of weighing coins on a scale to determine value. Blessing others "adds value" to his or her life.

WHO NEEDS IT? Everyone needs to experience unconditional love and acceptance from his or her parents. When they don't, they can spend their entire life trying to fill the void missed at home.

WHO CAN GIVE IT? Anyone can give the blessing, but the most important and powerful comes from parents to their children. Those who don't receive it from mom and dad feel the loss deeply—even when they don't realize what they've missed. An example of this dynamic is recorded in Genesis chapter 28 in the story of Jacob's two sons.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GIVE IT? You can take advantage of special occasions and scheduled events to give the blessing in an intentional manner, as well as capture informal, more spontaneous moments.

GIVING THE BLESSING

There are five basic elements of the blessing that, combined, have tremendous impact.

B - BE COMMITTED
The blessing is not a fleeting moment or mere symbolic event. It includes an active, long-term commitment to the person's well-being and accepting responsibility to help them become all God intends them to be.

L - LOVINGLY TOUCH
The power of a hug or touching a hand to affirm someone creates important physical connection and communicates warmth, acceptance and relational health.

E - EXPRESS VALUE
Just like we add value to someone's pocket by handing them a coin, we add to their life when we use words that attach high value to them as a person.

S - SEE POTENTIAL
Parents and other family members best see a person's natural strengths and foresee possibilities for their future. Giving the blessing includes picturing a special future and cheering them toward achieving their potential.

S - SAY IT
An effective blessing must be put it into words, whether spoken, written or both. Simply being present is not enough to communicate the blessing. Words of affirmation are necessary to know we are appreciated and accepted.

Simple Ways to Give the Blessing

There are many ways to bless your family. Here are just a few ideas to spark your creativity.

BLESSING A SPOUSE

Special Moment Blessings: Speak works of blessing to your spouse while on a date, in a hand-written note, or by sharing something positive about him/her in front of other people. Finish one or more of the following statements to your spouse while holding his/her hand...

» I am so thankful for you because...
» You are an amazing wife/husband because...
» You are a terrific mom/dad because...
» If I had it to do over again, I would choose you again because...
» "God has gifted you to (describe his/her strengths) and I love how He uses you in the lives of others by (describe) and in my life by (describe)."

BLESSING A YOUNG CHILD

On-The-Go Blessings: Speak words of blessing to your child while driving to school, tucking into bed, celebrating an accomplishment or good effort, or write them a note to place in their lunch. Finish one or more of the following statements...

» I was so proud of you when I saw you...
» I think God is going to use you in the future to...
» God has gifted you with a unique ability to...

Bedtime Blessing Prayer: Select a special scripture to pray over your child each evening such as "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26) Lay your hand gently on your child's arm or shoulder while praying to reassure him/her with loving touch.

BLESSING A TEEN

Mealtime Blessing: If you use the mealtime "High Low" routine where each person shares the high point and low point of his/her day, when it is your turn put a hand on your teen's shoulder and affirm the strengths you see that could be used in the future by saying something like this: "The high part of my day was when I caught a glimpse of how God may use (teen's name) in the future while he/she (describe activity revealing a strength)."

Blessing Trip: Schedule a day-trip with your teen that includes driving to a fun destination such as an amusement park, wilderness hike, sporting event, shopping spree, etc. During the drive, intentionally bless your son or daughter by describing several moments in his or her life that revealed a strength, talent, passion or personality bent that you think God will use in the future. You can also ask questions that will open a dialogue about the child's dreams and aspirations providing an opportunity to affirm his or her potential.

BLESSING A CHILD OF ANY AGE

Blessing Surprise: Everyone loves surprises. Imagine the impact of sending a special package to a child, grandchild, niece or nephew that contains a gift tied to the child's unique interests or abilities along with a note that says "This made me think of you. I bet God will use your (describe the interest or strength) to impact others in the future!" Examples...

Interest/Strength	Potential Gift
Music	An iTunes Gift Card
Fashion	Sewing Lessons with Grandma
Athletics	Jersey of favorite team
Writing	Leather-bound journal
Sense of Humor	Clean joke book

BLESSING AN ADULT

Blessing Note: Drop a card in the mail in which you tell your adult child or someone you know who never received the Blessing that you are proud of them for what they've accomplished, who they have become, the fact they are striving to turn things around or whatever their situation warrants. Even as adults we yearn to hear that mom, dad and others who have had an influence in our lives are proud of us.

BLESSING A PARENT

Blessing Card: On the extra space provided in your annual Mother's Day, Father's Day or Birthday card, add a note to your parent that shares specific ways you value the investment he/she made in your life. You may want to share how you are a different person today because of the ways they invested in your life—perhaps listing several positive character traits that you fostered thanks to their example. Examples...

"Mom, when I was a child you created a wonderful environment that made it a joy to walk into our home and gave me a sense of security to this day. Thank you for that!"

"Dad, when I was a kid I complained about your strict rules, but I am so grateful you cared enough to protect me from my own immaturity and to help me learn discipline."

BLESSING A SIBLING OR RELATIVE

Blessing Request: A great way to affirm your brother, sister or other relative is to ask them to help you in an area in which he or she is particularly gifted—such as a specific homework subject, improving your golf stroke, cooking a special meal or fixing a broken fence. Nothing feels better than knowing others respect your opinion, knowledge, abilities or strengths—especially if that person is younger or someone with whom you have experienced some rivalry.

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