

Bestowing the Promise of Blessings

You Are a Promise

(Children's Song by the Gaithers)

You are a promise, you are a possibility,
You are a promise, with a capital 'P'
You are a great big bundle of potentiality!
And if you're listnin', you can hear God's voice
And if you're tryin', He'll help you make the right choice,
You are a promise of God—
Everything He wants you to be!

Hope

(Poem by Emily Dickinson)

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.

'promise' Defined:

promise (n.) [*L. promissum, from promitto, to send before or forward; pro and mitto, to send.*] 1. A declaration, written or verbal, made by one person to another, which binds the person who makes it, either in honor, conscience or law, to do or forbear a certain act specified. 2. **Hope; expectation**, or that which affords expectation of future distinction; as a youth of great promise. 3. **In Scripture, the promise of God is the declaration or assurance which God has given in his word of bestowing blessings on his people.** Such assurance resting on the perfect justice, power, benevolence and immutable veracity of God, cannot fail of performance. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promises (2 Peter 3:9).* [Webster's 1828 Dictionary]

promise (v.t.) To make a declaration to another, which binds the promiser in honor, conscience or law, to do some act such as, to pledge or bestow. (v.i.) To assure one by a promise or binding declaration. To afford hope or expectation; to give ground to expect good.

'promise' in the Scriptures:

Hebrew, *'omer*: Utterance, speech, word, saying, promise, command: **spoken promise in word; an oath; dabar: To speak; to utter.**

Greek, *epaggelia*: 1. Announcement 2. Promise: the act of promising, a promise given or to be given; a **promised good** or **blessing**.

1. *And in you (Jacob) and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be **blessed**. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have **promised** you (Genesis 28:14-15).*
2. *O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do (it,) that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has **promised** you, (in) a **land** flowing with milk and honey (Deuteronomy 6:3).*
3. *The Lord your God, He will thrust them out from before you and drive them from before you; and you will possess their **land**, just as the Lord your God **promised** you (Joshua 23:5).*
4. *Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He **promised**; not one word has failed of all His good **promise**, which He **promised** through Moses His servant (1 Kings 8:56).*
5. *Then they said, "We will give it back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say." So I called the priests and took an oath from them that they would do according to this **promise**. I also shook out the front of my garment and said, "Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this **promise**; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said, "Amen!" And they praised the Lord. Then the people did according to this **promise** (Nehemiah 5:12-13).*
6. *As for the **promise** which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!" (Haggai 2:5).*
7. *Now when they heard (this,) they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the **promise** is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." And with many other words he solemnly*

testified kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (Acts 2:37-40) (the birth of the Church)

8. And we preach to you the good news of the **promise** made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this **promise** to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten You" (Acts 13:32-33).
9. For the **promise** to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:13).
10. Yet, with respect to the **promise** of God, he (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had **promised**, He was able also to perform (Romans 4:20-21).
11. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the **children of the promise** are regarded as descendants (Romans 9:8).
12. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the **promise**. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a **promise**; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a **promise**. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the **promise** had been made (Galatians 3:17-19).
13. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the **promise** by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe (Galatians 3:22).
14. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to **promise** (Galatians 3:29).
15. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the **promise** (Galatians 4:23).
16. And you brethren, like Isaac, are **children of promise** (Galatians 4:28).
17. . . . the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the **promise** in Christ Jesus through the gospel (Ephesians 3:6).
18. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a **promise**), (Ephesians 6:2).
19. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the **promise** of life in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 1:1).
20. In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, **promised** long ages ago (Titus 1:2).
21. This is the **promise** which He Himself made to us: eternal life (1 John 2:25).

The Blessing

The concept of blessing is a biblical one, initiated from the father-heart of God to His children.

'blessing' Defined:

bless (v.t.) [Sax. a gift, a favor, a blessing.] 1. To pronounce a wish of happiness to one; to express a wish or desire of happiness. *And Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Gen. 28.* 2. To make happy; to make successful; to prosper in temporal concerns; as, we are blest with peace and plenty. *The Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thou doest. Deut. 15.* 3. To make happy in a future life. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Rev. 14.* 4. To set apart or consecrate to holy purposes; to make and pronounce holy. *And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Gen. 2.* 5. To consecrate by prayer; to invoke a blessing upon. *And Jesus took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed them. Luke 9.* 6. To praise; to glorify, for benefits received. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Ps. 103.* 7. To praise; to magnify; to extol, for excellencies. *Ps. 104.* 8. To esteem or account happy; with the reciprocal pronoun. *The nations shall bless themselves in him. Jer. 4.* 9. To pronounce a solemn prophetic benediction upon. *Gen. 27. Deut. 33.*

Hebrew, *ba rak'*: To salute; honor; praise; congratulate; kneel. To affirm the value of a thing or the dignity or worth of a person. When we bless another, we are, in effect, saying 'you have value.'

blessing (n.) Benediction; a wish of happiness pronounced; a prayer imploring happiness upon another. 1. A solemn prophetic benediction, in which happiness is desired, invoked or foretold. *This is the blessing wherewith Moses—blessed the children of Israel. Deut. 33.* 2. Any means of happiness; a gift, benefit or advantage; that which promotes temporal prosperity and welfare, or secures immortal felicity. A just and pious magistrate is a public blessing. The divine favor is the greatest blessing. 3. Among the Jews, a present; a gift; either because it was attended with kind wishes for the welfare of the giver, or because it was the means of increasing happiness. *Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee. Gen. 33.*

There are 467 references in the Bible to bless and blessing; 67 references in the book of Genesis.

curse (n.) To esteem lightly. (It has the opposite meaning of blessing.)

Biblical Purposes for Blessing:

1. To empower the next generation. It's supernatural. It makes the impossible possible! Enables! The gift of power; prophetic; defining; life-giving. It provides an inner strength of soul and happiness!

All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman" (Ruth 4:11-12).

From the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel of the Lord:

Then he [the angel] said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (Genesis 32:26).

2. To recognize entering manhood/womanhood.

Two Kinds of Blessings:

1. **Salvation:**

For Abraham: *Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).*

For Sarah: *"I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her" (Genesis 17:16).*

2. **Relational:**

"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing" (1 Peter 3:8-9).

Principles of the Blessing:

1. **Originates in the heart of God:** The blessing involves words, wealth, and spiritual heritage:

God blessed mankind	Genesis 1:22
God blessed Noah	Genesis 9:1
God blessed the sons of Noah	Genesis 9:1
God blessed Abraham	Genesis 12
God blessed Isaac	Genesis 26
God blessed Jacob	Genesis 28 and 32
God blessed Joseph	Genesis 39

In Christ, born-again believers are the 'blessed of God!':

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us: – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” – in order that **in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith** (Galatians 3:13-14).*

Being unbled is to live restlessly and inadequately with an inner poverty! Many of God's children go unbled. Jacob is the prototype. He stole his brother's blessing, which did not give him a sense of well being as he hoped. Not until Peniel (Genesis 32) did he receive wholeness. He cried out for all mankind: "I will not let you go until you bless me!" Afterwards, he said, "I have seen the face of God!" Finally, he was blessed!

From Peniel, Jacob blessed Pharaoh (Genesis 47:5) and his son Joseph (Genesis 49:22-27). His life ended in blessing his grandchildren (Genesis 48:9-11; 16).

2. **Verbal:** The blessing must be spoken. The theology of words is to create, to be saved, and to bless:

God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son.” So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed; now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine; may peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you” (Genesis 27:26-29).

3. **We bless by our lifestyle** as we relate to our children and our grandchildren in the following ways:

The words that we speak into their lives!
The way we discern their unique individuality in God.
The way we look into their eyes when we talk to them.
The way we really listen when they talk.
The way we gently lay our hands upon them.
The way we speak to them about their future destiny in God.
Every time we read to them.
Every time we pray with them.
All training; all correction; all discipline!
All education!
All provisions materially and spiritually!

4. **By faith:** Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5) Jesus saw the potential and spoke the blessing.

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:13).

5. **Intentional:** Each generation must bless their children

6. **Involves touch:** Laying on of hands

7. **Irrevocable:** The blessing can be refused but not revoked!

The stolen blessing (Jacob and Esau):

Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" (Genesis 27:32-34).

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:29).

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

8. **Exponential:** The story of Joseph's brothers coming to live in the land of Goshen (Genesis 47). The story of Jacob blessing Joseph's sons:

He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh (Genesis 47:15-19).

The story of Jacob blessing Joseph:

Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; its branches run over a wall. The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot at him and harassed him; but his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), from the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers (Genesis 49:22-26).

Jacob's Family Tree: The blessed family! (Compare it with the Herod family.)

The blessedness began with God blessing mankind at Creation. (Genesis 1:22)

The fall of man brought a curse from God on mankind. (Genesis 3)

The heart of God is to bless and the blessing was renewed with Abraham:

God blessed Abraham:	Genesis 12 and 15
Abraham blessed Isaac:	Genesis 24:7; 25:5
Isaac blessed Jacob:	Genesis 27:27-29
Jacob blessed Joseph:	Genesis 49:22-27
Jacob blessed his grandsons:	Genesis 48:9-11; 16

Resources for Parents and Teachers:

1. *Bless Your Children Every Day* by Mary Ruth Swope, Swope Enterprises, 1-800-447-9772
2. *The Blessing* by Gary Smalley and John Trent, Thomas Nelson Publishers