

The Spiritual Practice of Blessing One Another

One of the most significant spiritual acts a parent can perform for and with their child is to regularly bless them. To bless another person in God's name means:

- to invoke divine favor upon them;
- to honor them as holy;
- to indicate both God's and our acceptance and approval of them;
- to convey God's favor to them for their wellbeing and prosperity

In other words, every time we bless another person we are calling forth divine favor upon them, honoring the presence of God in and with them, validating who they are, and conveying God's power into their lives to work good in and for them. That is powerful stuff!

The value and importance of verbal blessings is expressed throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, there are many examples of God declaring blessing to his people, and of people blessing others in God's name (e.g. Gen. 24:60, 27:27-29, 47:7; Exod. 39:43; Leviticus 9:22-23; Numbers 6:23-24; Joshua 22:6-7; Ruth 3:10; 2 Sam. 2:4-6; Psalm 128:5-6, 134:3). And in the New Testament, God gives us direct instruction to bless those who curse and revile us (Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12).

A personal blessing is made up of three powerful forces: God's name, words, and touch. Use of **God's name** invokes his presence and conveys God's power to what is taking place. The **words** we say in God's name then are more than merely our words, they are also God's words. When God speaks, his words are power-filled and creative: they "do" what they say. When we **touch**, we concretely convey the blessing so that it is physically known, experienced and received by the person being blessed.

It is crucial that our children taste and see the goodness of the Lord. Simple blessings serve to do this —a hand on the forehead and a "God be with you," as they head out for school in the morning; a tracing of the Sign of the Cross and a "God keep you," before they sleep.

Never let a day slip by where we don't, in some small way, bring God's presence and blessing into the lives of our children in a personal way!



May the Lord bless you with peace,
Close your eyes in restful sleep,
And wake you with joy in the morning.

Lie down in peace;
Let sleep come at once.
For the Lord watches over you
And keeps you safe (*Psalm 4:8*)
And the Blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be with you now and always.
(*make a cross on the child's forehead*)

May the Lord protect you when you are
awake,
(*make a cross on the child's forehead*)
And watch over you when you sleep,
(*make a cross on the child's eyes*)
That awake you may keep watch with Christ,
And asleep, rest in his peace.
(*make cross over the child's heart*)

Lord, look down from heaven above
And touch this special child with love.
Protect and guide this little one
'Till each and every day is done.
Remind us often that it's true:
This little life is a gift from you.

A miracle You've sent our way!
Lord, bless this little child today.

The Lord bless you and protect you.
The Lord show you kindness and be gracious
to you.
The Lord bestow favor upon you and grant
you peace.

May God give you...
For every storm, a rainbow,
For every tear, a smile,
For every care, a promise,
And a blessing in each trial.
For every problem life sends,
A faithful friend to share,
For every sigh, a sweet song,
And an answer for each prayer.

May the raindrops
Fall lightly on your brow.
May the soft winds
Freshen your spirit.
May the sunshine
Brighten your heart.
May the burdens of the day
Rest lightly upon you,
And may God enfold you
In the mantle of His love.



'And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them' (Mark 10:16)