

The Power of Blessing Our Children

By Stephen Judd

I have never been more surprised by a discovery in a text of Scripture.

Hebrews 11 is a chapter familiar to many, often read and frequently memorized, much like 1 Corinthians 13 or Psalm 23. It is affectionately known as the Gallery of Faith's Heroes—the Biblical Hall of Faith. The chapter mentions, either explicitly or implicitly, a couple of dozen personalities known for their faith.

Figures like Noah, who built an ark in a world that had never experienced rain, demonstrate remarkable faith. Sarah, at 90, had never had a child and had no reason to expect one, yet she miraculously conceived.

Abraham, another figure of profound faith, left Ur of the Chaldees and was even willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, believing God would raise him from the dead. Then there is Enoch, who was raptured, and Moses, who led a nation out of slavery—both acts of epic faith.

As we marvel at these examples, we often exclaim, "Wow, that's awesome faith!"

But a stunning realization comes when we read verses 20 and 21. Here, Isaac and Jacob are honored not for grandiose acts of great faith or miraculous interventions, but for simply blessing their children and grandchildren.

These verses place the simple act of blessing—Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau, and Jacob blessing Joseph's sons—on par with building arks, leading nations, and miraculous conceptions. This juxtaposition highlights an incredible truth: the act of blessing one's children is as significant in God's eyes as the most heroic deeds recorded in Scripture.

This revelation is a powerful reminder of the impact we can have through seemingly simple acts. By blessing our children and those around us, we engage in acts of faith that are as monumental as those by which the heroes of the Bible are remembered.

So, as we consider our roles as parents, grandparents, or influential figures in the lives of the young, remember the profound power of a blessing. It's a lesson that, once discovered, can profoundly change our perception of what it means to live a life of faith.

The Transformative Power of Touch

Gary Smalley and John Trent, through their seminars across the country and numerous counseling sessions, posed a significant question: "What is one specific way you knew that you had received your parent's blessing?" The 100 responses they gathered

illustrate the profound impact a parent's everyday actions and attitudes can have on their children.

These interactions underscore the importance of daily affirmations in building a sense of blessing in a person's life. It's often the smallest acts of love and encouragement that children and loved ones hold onto as defining moments of blessing.

From biblical insights, we learn that the word "blessing" in Hebrew relates to kneeling, a posture of reverence and imparting honor. This posture often included laying a hand on the head, symbolizing the hand of the Lord's presence and favor. In biblical narratives, meaningful touch is crucial, such as when Isaac embraced and kissed Jacob, and when Jacob placed his hands on Joseph's sons' heads, these acts of touch were central to communicating love, acceptance, and even spiritual favor.

Modern research supports the significance of touch, noting that it can increase hemoglobin levels in the bloodstream, thus enhancing oxygen supply to body tissues and promoting healing. A study at UCLA suggested that maintaining emotional and physical health requires eight to ten meaningful touches each day.

In *The Blessing*, by Smalley and Trent, the authors recount a moving example of the profound effect a simple touch can have through Marilyn Monroe's memories from her childhood. Although it was just a playful and fleeting touch from a foster parent, it profoundly impacted her, leaving a lasting impression of love and security. This story underscores how even brief, casual interactions can significantly influence a child's feelings of being loved and valued.

Neglecting meaningful touch can lead children to seek inappropriate sources to fulfill their need for physical and emotional closeness. Research has linked patterns of promiscuity and other behaviors to a lack of affectionate touch from parents, underscoring the role of touch in healthy development.

Drawing from the ultimate example of Jesus, who demonstrated the power of blessing through touch in Mark 10:13-15, we see that Jesus did not merely wave from a distance or speak from afar. He physically embraced the children brought to Him, placing His hands on them as a form of blessing. This wasn't just a spiritual lesson for the onlookers but a profound demonstration of understanding a child's need for physical affirmation.

The narrative and teachings of Jesus emphasize that a simple act of touch not only conveys love but also sanctifies and blesses. It is a powerful reminder to parents and caregivers of the significant role they play in nurturing and blessing their children through everyday gestures of affection.

The Dual Nature of Blessing: Touch and Spoken Words

As we delve further into understanding how to bless our children, let's explore the New Testament concept of "blessing" in the Greek language. The term used is the same

from which we derive "eulogy," implying good words spoken in praise or tribute, often at funerals to honor the deceased's virtues and achievements.

In Hebrew tradition, blessing emphasized physical touch, particularly the laying on of hands, symbolizing God's favor. Conversely, the Greek perspective focuses primarily on the spoken word, reinforcing the idea that blessing is conveyed both through meaningful touch and affirmative words.

The interplay of touch and speech forms the foundation of blessing our children. Both are equally important: touch connects on a physical level, while words impact emotionally and spiritually. Proverbs 18:21 underscores the profound influence of our words, stating, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." This biblical wisdom highlights the necessity for parents and grandparents to vocally express their blessings, as these words have immense power to uplift or harm.

The significance of spoken blessings is vividly illustrated in scripture. From creation, where God's words brought the universe to life, to the incarnation, described in John's gospel as the Word becoming flesh, God models the act of blessing through divine proclamation.

Similarly, the New Testament describes Simeon the priest blessing the infant Jesus. This act not only reflects a ritual of dedication but also demonstrates the broader role of believers under the New Covenant. According to 1 Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, all believers are called to be a royal priesthood, authorized to impart God's blessings. This priesthood is not just a formal office but an active, daily role where believers bless others, particularly their children, by speaking God's promises and truths over them.

This theological framework suggests that parents function as spiritual priests in their families, using both touch and spoken words to impart blessings. By embracing this dual approach, parents can fulfill a scriptural mandate to bless their children, fostering their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being.

The principle from Exodus 19:6, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation," extends this priestly duty to every believer. This command underscores the importance of speaking blessings that are not merely our words but those filled with the power of God's promises. It is through this divine power, not our own, that blessings carry their true strength. Thus, in the act of blessing our children, we are not just expressing hopes or wishes but activating God's living Word in their lives.

Conclusion: The Power of Blessing with Scriptural Words

In Numbers 6:23-26, Scripture provides a directive on the words we should use to bless our children, encapsulating a profound spiritual invocation:

"Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise you shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless you, and keep you. The LORD make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace."

This blessing encompasses a comprehensive wish for prosperity, protection, divine presence, grace, approval, and peace. It is a declaration that when spoken, places God's name and, inherently, His promises upon the children. This act of blessing is not merely a formality but an invocation of God's attributes, character, and the substance of what He desires to manifest in their lives.

The names of God in Scripture, such as Jehovah Jireh (The Lord's provision), Jehovah Shammah (The Lord is there), and others, encapsulate aspects of God's character and promises. These names convey the essence of God's interaction with us—provision, presence, victory, peace, guidance, righteousness, and healing.

In practice, the act of blessing involves more than just stating words; it's an enactment of faith that requires the blesser to engage actively. As parents and grandparents, we may feel compelled to bless our children directly, perhaps quoting directly from Numbers 6 to create a profound, holy moment. Such actions bring a tangible sense of God's presence, impacting not only the spiritual atmosphere but also the emotional and psychological well-being of our children.

A blessing, therefore, is more than words—it's a conduit of divine power. When parents and grandparents speak blessings, they are not merely expressing hopes; they are activating God's power in their children's lives. This activation manifests in tangible ways: enhanced self-perception, improved interactions with others, and an overall alignment with God's purposes.

Thus, the scriptural injunction to bless our children is a powerful tool handed down to us, one that carries the potential to shape futures and forge destinies through the spoken word. It is a divine strategy, ensuring that the blessings of God take root and flourish within the lives of the younger generation.