



**The Power & Importance of a
Father's Blessing**

by Billy O'Neal

<http://www.FathersBlessing.com>

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The Power and Importance of a Fathers Blessing
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Acknowledgments

Daniel Hulsey—A man whose love was so big for a woman that he married her, *knowing* she had four children (ages 8, 6, 4, and 2) while earning only \$100 a week, and then raised them all! “I hope I can be half the dad you didn’t have to be.”

My dad—We had a rocky start, but we tried to get it right.

My wife, Karen—You know every flaw and every weakness I have, but you love me anyway. Thanks for listening to this story over and over again and acting like you were interested in it every single time. I love you.

My son, Ryan—I am proud of the man of God you are becoming. You are blessed. You will succeed in whatever you choose to do.

My daughter, Rachel—I am in awe of your presence at such a young age. I pity anyone or anything that gets in the way of your objectives. I look forward to watching God move in a mighty way in your life.

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but so misunderstood, even by some in the Church, is very much appreciated.
Without you, I and millions like me would have never been set free.

Dedication

As I look back on my life and the events that led me to where I am today, I can't help but be in awe of the one person who was always been there for me—my mother. Through some very tough times, she never wavered from the number one priority in her life, the well-being of her children. I realize now, with two children of my own, how difficult it must have been to raise four children as a single mother.

Mom, you loved us, you provided for us, and you physically protected us from harm on many occasions. I want you to know that I love you for that. Thank you for protecting us. Thank you for never giving up on us. Thank you for speaking life into us. I am amazed at how you never spoke negatively about our father. In fact, you taught us to love him even more because he needed it so desperately.

What an example you are!

What a warrior you are!

What a woman you are!

You are my champion!

I love you.

I also dedicate this book to all of those who found the courage to share their most inner secrets, thinking that the most dark and ugly valleys of their lives would alienate them, only to find out that, by sharing, they helped set others free.

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Preface

After you read this book, your life will never be the same. That's a bold statement. But I absolutely believe it's true. In my experience, just about every person who learns about the power and importance of the father's blessing is changed forever. In the last seven years, since I first learned of the father's blessing, I have seen miracles of reconciliation happen, generational curses break, and lives turn around. Time and time again, I see God responding faithfully when people take action.

Children of all ages are walking around with holes in their hearts—holes in the shape of their fathers, holes that only the blessing of their fathers can fill. If you are a father, whether you are a billionaire or a broke man, only you can fill this hole in your children's hearts. Many very rich and successful men in this world would gladly give all of their earthly riches away if they could make a difference in their children's lives. I also know men who are of modest means, but who have a strong, loving connection with their children. My point is this, it doesn't matter whether he is rich or poor, black or white, young or old, a father wants to make a difference in the lives of his children. Fathers want to leave their children a legacy of blessing.

The beautiful thing about a father's blessing is that any dad can do it for his children at anytime, regardless of circumstances. No matter what we have gone through, it's never too late to speak a blessing. The truth is, we all want to make a difference! We all want to do something significant with our lives. Each one of us is given the opportunity to make a difference and do something of great significance with some of the most important people in our world—our children.

We must not let our children go through life with holes in their hearts. Rather, let's step up and be the men God has called us to be. Our children are counting on us!

Introduction

One of the Scriptures that most inspires me concerning the father's blessing is Malachi 4:5-6:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

This same verse inspired the producers of the movie, *Courageous*, which is about fathers standing up and being the men God has called them to be. As I write, this movie is about to be released, and I believe God is going to use it powerfully in this season. He is going to reveal how important of an issue this is to Him. I believe this movie is going to have a great impact on many in a way that people are not used to when dealing with biblical issues.

I was honored to attend the world premiere of *Courageous* and can tell you firsthand that the film is very powerful and will reach across cultural, religious, and economic lines, inspiring both Christians and non-Christian alike to stand up and be fathers in their homes. I also believe this book is going to participate in that movement, spurring many men to turn to their children and bless them.

Two Goals

I have two main goals for writing this book. The first one is to encourage you to give or receive your father's blessing. That may sound simple, but I believe that if you act on what you will learn in these pages, it will radically change your life.

My second goal is to encourage you to tell your story once you have received your father's blessing, because your testimony is what will touch people and make them take action in their own lives. Testimonies carry power, as the Book of Revelation teaches:

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony... (Revelation 12:11).

There's somebody whose story you need, and there's somebody who needs your story. As I have shared my testimony, I have seen incredible results. People responded to what I shared and subsequently sought their own father's blessing—with life-changing results.

For many of us, it is difficult to share our stories with others. It was for me when I first began sharing my testimony. Actually, I had to be asked to share, and it was very difficult for me because the experience was still so fresh. It was honestly a very emotional time for me! I could hardly get through the story because I was crying so much. And that was OK!

There were 50 to 60 people in the room that day, many of whom had not yet received their father's blessings, but who went home from that class, tracked down their fathers, and obtained a blessing! There were some incredible reunions, and life-changing experiences that resulted from my testimony. Several classmates

shared with me that they would have never taken action if I had not shared my story. I know firsthand the power of a testimony!

It's important for us to get our father's blessings and to share what God has done for us when we have the opportunity. We don't have to broadcast to the world the fact that we got your father's blessings, but God will give us special opportunities. If we're paying attention, we will recognize them. When the subject comes up or people begin sharing about their issues, we can gently step in and share our testimonies.

God goes before us whenever we share. The great thing about our testimonies is that we don't have to give a presentation or perform to impress anyone. We're simply telling our stories. God will do the rest! That's all we have to do. It's all I do, and over and over I've seen God do the rest.

Once I was talking to a friend of mine about how difficult it was for me to stand up and speak in front of a group of people. He said something very profound, and I have never forgotten it. He said, "Are you going to let your petty fears keep you from what

God has for you?" That made a great impact on me. I decided right then and there that I wasn't going to let myself be robbed of God's blessings because of my petty fears!

I am not suggesting we stand on the side of the road and become street-preachers (unless, of course, that is what God has called you to). I am asking that we would all do our part to share within our circle of influence when we have the opportunity. One easy way to do that is by giving this book.

There are several ways to spread your testimony. Pick one and go for it!

Father, I thank You for all the people who are reading this! I thank You for spreading Your message of the father's blessing throughout the world. Please put it into the hands of as many people as possible. Encourage them to take action on

*what they have learned and to stand up and be the fathers You want them to be.
Help them to bless and love their children as You have taught them to do, in Jesus'
name, amen.*

Section 1



The Father's Blessing



Chapter 1

Why a Father's Blessing?

What is a father's blessing? Many people may wonder. Where did it come from? Is it Biblical? Or is it just something that a well-meaning Christian leader made up or interpreted in the last few years?

The truth is, the history of the father's blessing extends back to our Heavenly Father, a truth that we will study in more depth in the chapters to come.

But before we dive further into the biblical basis for the father's blessing, let me define it by my experience. The father's blessing I received from my dad a few years ago radically changed my life. It set off a series of chain reactions, opening up an awareness of the father's blessings that I never knew was possible. I see the affects of receiving it, *or not receiving it*, as I meet and get to know people in my day-to-day life. When I sense various problems or issues in people's lives, I wonder what the root cause may be. Time after time, the answer points directly to the relationship that they have with their father.

Words Matter

Whoever taught us “sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never harm me”, lied. That fact is words are powerful. The Bible teaches us “life and death are in the power of the tongue”. We have the power to speak life into

people and we have the power to speak death as well. I'd say that's pretty powerful! When God spoke, the earth and everything in it came to be. In fact, you could argue that the spoken word might be one of the most powerful things in existence. So, it stands to reason that words people say matter. They are powerful. Is this why hearing words of blessing from one of the most important people in our lives, our father, have such a great impact on us?

How are father feels about us, what he thinks about us, and most importantly what he says to us, has a powerful impact. As I continue to research and ask *why* the father's blessing makes such a difference in our lives, I've asked a ton of questions to God. I mean a lot of questions. Why? I want to know why. Teach me why! I'm writing a book here! I've got to get to the bottom of this. *Why* is it *so* important? Is there a clear answer or do we just accept it in faith? After years of research I discovered the answer is...we do both. There is a supernatural aspect to the father's blessing that only God can fully comprehend and explain. The supernatural power of God is the only explanation to the miracles I have seen as a result of the Father's Blessing. Ok, I get that. I choose to believe in faith. But what about the part of the fathers blessing that we *can* understand with our limited minds? What about the part of the father's blessing that we *can* figure out based on the facts that are available?

After years of "professional pondering", it hit me. When you strip everything away from our lives and focus in on our most basic, foundational needs, what's most important? When you strip *everything* away and drill down to the center of our soul, what do we crave the most? My answer is...to be loved. I thought about what is the most important, most valuable, most critical "thing" that I need. After some thought it came down to... love. I want to love others and I want to be loved. Love. That's it. The answer is Love. (I feel a song coming on...)

Now, if I had a choice, who would I prefer to be loved by? I can *show* love to anyone. But who are the most important people for *me* to love? Answer: I want to *love* my family, and I *want to be loved* by them as well. It all goes back to our

families. No surprise right? Stay with me here...

So for my father, one of the most important people in my life, speaking words that communicate he loves me (my most basic need), is the most important and powerful thing a person can do.

I believe the reason why the father's blessing is so powerful is because it's the most important person in my life, fulfilling the most critical need in my life, by employing the most powerful force in universe, the spoken word.

It's Not Just a Christian Need

The father's blessing does not only apply to Christians. People from all walks of life desperately seek this blessing because God put inside each of us a fundamental need to be loved, to be accepted, to be forgiven, to be wanted, and to belong. It's in our DNA. It's not just a Christian need; it's a human need. When these basic needs—these fundamental, foundational needs—are not met, life itself becomes a journey of finding the counterfeit fulfillment of these needs. Sadly, that journey can, and often does, go in many destructive directions.

For many women, the journey leads to promiscuity, pornography, bouncing from man to man, and so forth, looking for what she didn't get from her father. Men void of their father's blessing many times pour themselves into their work, seeking to be recognized, acknowledged, and given worth. This often appears natural. Yet they search their whole lives trying to fill the void that only a father's love can fill. For many children who lack their father's blessing, gangs can be appealing. In every nation, every city, every neighborhood, there are children who will do just about anything to have someone, anyone, tell them "We love you. You're special to us. You belong to us."

When people's basic, fundamental needs are met through the blessing, a whole new level of pure and healthy relational life opens up to them. No longer are they relying on others to fulfill their basic need for a father's love.

Many marriages are doomed to fail because so many people expect the gaping holes in their souls to be filled by a spouse. When reality sets in—the impossibility of any husband or wife fulfilling this need—a couple either splits up, lives together in an unhealthy relationship, or goes on a quest to find out what the real issue is. On the contrary, people who have their father's blessing don't look to a spouse to fulfill this need, and therefore, they have a much better chance of a

long and happy marriage.

When people understand and receive a father's blessing, their lives vastly improve. But people who don't receive a father's blessing spend their entire lives chasing after that need for acceptance, confirmation, and love. Such people are not able to excel in life to the degree that they could otherwise. They're stuck "looking for love in all the wrong places," as the old song goes. However, people who receive a father's blessing already have what they need to be successful in life. They are secure, not needy. And they have a strong foundation.

The father's blessing also has a supernatural element to it. The supernatural part of the blessing is something that can't be explained, at least not by me. The Bible contains many examples of a father giving a blessing, after which the recipient is supernaturally transformed (you will see these examples later in the book).

Sadly, the father's blessing has not been given much attention in the Christian community in recent years. Why have so many believers forgotten about it? Why don't we practice it anymore? Honestly, I don't know. But the father's blessing and all it entails must be revealed again. The time has come. As the pages of this book will testify, this teaching is not another fad, "flash in the pan" antidote, or scam. Rather, the father's blessing started with our Heavenly Father, was practiced by the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, and is still spoken to this day by many who are aware of its significance.

While I don't understand why so many have lost the revelation of the father's blessing, what I do know is that the supernatural power and importance of a father's blessing will change your life, whether you have a growing relationship with your Heavenly Father or you feel like little more than a spiritual orphan. No more will you have to strive to find love. Love will find you! No more will invisible force fields keep you from getting to the next level in your life. No more

will you self-sabotage your success. No more will you suffer under generational curses.

Instead, get ready to leave a legacy of blessings that will flow through you, your children, and your children's children! Please read this book with an open mind and an open heart. Don't prejudge it. Test it out and see for yourself that—as you apply the Biblical principles expounded on in this book—your life will radically transform. I know mine did.



Chapter 2

Getting Saved is Just the Beginning

I discovered the father's blessing at a prayer and deliverance class at my church. At the time, I knew nothing about it. But one Sunday at church I was introduced to a lady named Rhonda. I had previously seen her in passing, but this time she spoke to me and invited me to join this "awesome" class to grow my walk with the Lord. I loved the way she said that, and my interest was piqued. Rhonda is one of those people who can motivate you to do what God is calling you to do, even though you may not feel you are ready! So I signed up for the class, not really knowing what was in store, but looking forward to it.

I will never forget seeing all of the people in my class for the first time—about 50 to 60 total. I felt encouraged that so many others wanted to work on their "stuff" as well. We were split into small groups of five or six, men with men and women with women. The ground rules were explained: no sharing about anything spoken in the group and no talking about anybody else's issues (no gossip). Period! Our motto was "what happens in group stays in group."

In this prayer and deliverance class for people who had accepted the Lord as their Savior and were prepared to work on their baggage, we were taught, "salvation is just the beginning of the journey."

I am the type of person who is usually willing to be open and communicate about my issues, unlike many men. I was "gung ho" for anything that brought me

closer to God. I wanted to heal and to process some of the things that I had experienced over the years so that I could move forward. Some Examples of the topics taught in the class included “How we see God,” “Spiritual House Cleaning,” “Parental Inversion,” and, of course, “The Father’s Blessing.”

Many times when a topic was introduced, I would think to myself that the subject didn’t really apply to me! I quickly discovered, however, by being still and listening to the Holy Spirit, that I would discern whether or not I *really* had an issue in the particular area. Often my prejudgment of the topic turned out to be wrong, and later I would discover that I *did* have an issue. Then I was able to pray through and deal with many areas of wounding in my life. The process fascinated me; I was getting breakthroughs in a lot of areas.

I learned that I needed to act quickly when the Holy Spirit revealed an issue because I only had a week before the next class, which covered another lesson on a different topic. So I learned to respond quickly to the direction of the Holy Spirit. I prayed, and if there was any action to be taken, I did it immediately. “Ready, Fire, Aim” became my motto. By acting quickly, I was ready to deal with the next issue as it arose. I trusted my table mates, my group leader, and especially the Holy Spirit to lead me in these issues, and I tried not to “reason” my way out of being set free, healed, or released.



Chapter 3

Leaders Need to Lead

In my healing and deliverance class, we used materials by John Sanford. The ministry he founded, called Elijah House, was way ahead of its time. Truly, John pioneered in the area of biblical inner healing ministry. I was honored to meet him later in his life when he visited a church in Georgia.

Each week our class would learn about a particular subject by watching a video of John Sanford or another person in his ministry teaching on a subject. We would then split up into groups and have a discussion. Some amazing breakthroughs happened in these group settings as people opened up and shared as they felt led. Certainly not every person had an issue with every subject. Something wonderful happens in an atmosphere where people allow the Holy Spirit to move freely. People felt free to share their struggles and secrets. As we received anointed teaching that dealt with many common issues among Christians, and then openly shared in our groups, many of us experienced amazing results.

It was life-changing for me, and I was able to work through my “stuff” and become a better person as a result of attending this class. I am a better Christian, father, and husband because of it. Does it mean I am perfect? Absolutely not! Salvation is just the beginning of our life transformation. At salvation, we become aware that we have a Lord in our lives who loves us and wants us to be the best we can be. However, this does not automatically change us and free us from all of our

former struggles and imperfections. I quickly learned that I could wallow in all of my issues or deal with them! I thank God for the class because it was a vehicle for me to deal with my “issues” in a loving and caring environment.

Each group had a leader who would keep order and facilitate the discussion so that no-one would dominate the conversation. Later on, I became a leader and teacher and helped with some of the group discussions. Some of the people who were very instrumental in changing my life were Cathy Jones, Rhonda Dameron, and Al and Kathy Sears. These gentlemen and ladies heard my secrets and did not judge me, but prayed through healing and deliverance on certain issues. We became very close. Depending on which subject was being dealt with, different people would speak and pour their hearts out on different subjects. If I didn't want to share, I didn't have to. But each and every week, the level of trust rose in our group and in our class. Every week people were healed and delivered. It was a beautiful thing to participate in!

I believe some of the church staff did not want to attend because it would require that they face certain issues in their life. Isn't that the way we all are? We will minimize or invalidate a ministry because we don't understand it, or because we don't want to deal with our own issues. Privacy concerns may have played a part in this for some – there were things in their lives they needed to deal with but didn't know how to do it without people knowing about it. We have done a disservice to those in leadership. We have placed them on a pedestal, expecting them to be more perfect than we are. Yes, often those in leadership don't want to deal with their own issues - and that greatly affects the congregation. But, the standard we place on them doesn't encourage them to get the help they need.

Privacy, or the lack of it, is another hurdle for many leaders, but it didn't bother me. I was so glad to deal with my issues and to be set free! I didn't care what anybody thought, but then again, I didn't have a leadership position. I wasn't afraid that, if I revealed a deep, dark secret, someone would spread a rumor about

me. To my knowledge, this never actually happened, but it is a common fear that people have.

Bottom line: It was very interesting to see a movement helping so many people while particular leaders refused to participate in it! Sometimes dealing with the root of an issue will “ruffle some feathers.” However, I believe leaders should be the first ones to sign up for classes like this, setting a precedent for the entire church. What good is it for the entire church body to get set free if the leaders refuse or are too scared to deal with their own issues! It’s time for leaders to step up and lead! Nobody expects them to be perfect. What people want is leaders who are honest, transparent, and real. God forgive us for placing our leaders on a pedestal of perfection.

Endnote

1. Check out John Stanford’s Website, <http://www.elijahhouse.org/>.



Chapter 4

“If You Build It, He Will Come”

As I mentioned before, the father’s blessing is not just a Christian need, but a human need. We all have the need for the father’s blessing. It’s in our DNA, something we are all born with. It’s not something we start to desire only once we become Christians, although as believers we realize the supernatural effect that is tied to it. Believers and non-believers alike yearn for a father’s blessing because God made us that way!

Lately God has been pointing out to me instances of the effect of the father’s blessing in everyday life. When you buy a new car, you suddenly begin to notice all the cars on the road just like yours, whereas before you never noticed them. It’s that way with me, only not with a car, but with the father-child relationship.

One day, I was watching a movie on television. The film I was watching was *Field of Dreams*. It’s one of those movies that draws me in! I can’t help but watch it to the end, no matter at what part of the movie I start watching. It’s mesmerizing! Why? For starters, it has three Academy Award nominations and is classified in the top five best movies of all time in the fantasy genre. It is also considered the best baseball movie of all time—which of course is a big deal to most men.

But there is something else special about this movie, something not quite as tangible as awards, but more impactful. I have personally watched big burly, strong, rough, grown men break down in tears at the end of this film—not just a little whimper, but full-out sobbing. And ironically, though *Field of Dreams* is classified the best baseball movie of all time, it isn't even about baseball! It contains not one dramatic home run or strike out in the whole movie! Baseball is just the backdrop for the real drama of a father and a son reconciling and even—in my opinion—a father's blessing. I am convinced that the incredible draw of this movie for so many men worldwide is not the baseball, but the father-son relationship. The powerful reconciliation of father and son speaks to that inner need within us all and affects us so deeply that we become emotional.

As many know, throughout the movie a soft voice whispers one of the most misquoted movie lines of all time—"If you build it, he will come." Most people quote it, "If you build it, *they* will come" and use this line as a marketing tool to build whatever project they are pitching. However, the voice actually says, "If you build it, *he* will come." The *he* is the father.

The main character, Ray Concella, hears this "whispering voice"—depicted as reflection his subconscious or conscience in the movie—whispering through the cornfield, "If you build it, he will come." We find out later in the movie that Ray had no real relationship with his father but desperately longed for it. Surprise, surprise!

The whispering voice also instructs Ray, "Ease his pain." The viewer learns that Ray must reconcile with his father so that he can spend time with him. The plot line develops so that Ray must build this baseball field for his father to "ease his pain." Obviously, the ballpark doesn't "ease his pain," but meeting and spending time with his son sure does!

The third famous line from the whispering voice is, "Go the distance." Go the distance means "follow through with the plan even though just about everyone thinks you're crazy." Sometimes we may have to do choose to "go the distance"

with a project or idea that others believe is crazy. I was bawling like a baby by the end of the film when Ray met his father and introduced him to his wife and daughter. If you were holding your emotions together up to that point you probably lost it when he says, “Hey dad, you want to have a catch?” This scene can reduce even the toughest guys to a puddle of tears. Bottom line, it is the story of a man on a journey to reconcile with his father, who he didn’t have a good relationship with. That’s a recipe for the father’s blessing!

In everyday life, many people are yearning for their father’s blessing. The genius of this film is that it wraps the subject of baseball around the root issue of father-son reconciliation. This “double whammy” makes it irresistible to most men and a lot of women, too. Even people who are not living for Christ have the same need for their father’s blessing! The powerful emotions that *Field of Dreams* evokes in believers and unbelievers alike is proof. Think you can watch this final scene without getting a little misty?

Give it a try:

<http://fathersblessing.com/is-the-famous-field-of-dreams-movie-about-a-father%E2%80%99s-blessing/#more-162>

“In the Living Years”

“I just wish I could have told him in the living years.”

—Mike and the Mechanics

Another example of the Father’s Blessing as a universal need is found in the secular song “In the Living Years” by Mike and the Mechanics. This song was nominated for Song of the Year in America in 1989. It was number one on the charts in the USA, Canada, and Australia. When I heard this song recently, the Holy Spirit just grabbed my heart. So I went to YouTube and watched the video, after which I cried like a baby!

This is not a Christian song, but the message in it—a son wishing he had told his father that he loved him while he was alive—is universal. The subject of the song wishes he had had a relationship with his father before it was too late. When I first listened to the song, I thought my emotional reaction to it was just because of my own experience with my father. However, as I started reading the comments on the screen below the song, I saw comments written by people who were pouring their hearts out about their fathers. People from all over the world told powerful memories and talked of missing their fathers or wishing they had said, “I love you.” I was amazed by the way people were sharing their hearts because they had the safety of being anonymous on YouTube. I really believe this song touches on a universal need in all of us—the desperate desire for a father’s blessing.

Endnote

1. Check out “In the Living Years” here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGDA0Hecw1k>



Chapter 5

Prison Statistics Speak

“So you are not comfortable hugging your children?”

Fine, you can hug them in prison”

—Bill Glass

Bill Glass, a four-time All Pro NFL star, founded Champions for Life, a prison ministry that visits over 400 prisons a year. He jokes that he has been in prison so much since retiring from football that he could rob a bank and not serve any time because he’s already done it!

His experience has shown him that men who are violent criminals usually had weak, abusive, or absentee fathers. The fathers cursed their own sons into a life of crime. By comparison, Jewish prisoners are hard to find. Why? Jewish fathers continue the Old Testament tradition of blessing their children.

Years ago Bill Glass was in Florida and asked prison officials, “How many prisoners are Jewish?” The answer was *thirteen*. This is how Bill tells it:

More than 60,000 inmates in prison in Florida at that time, and only thirteen were Jewish? As of 2004, there were 585 Jewish inmates incarcerated in Florida. With a total prison population in Florida of 72,000, the Jewish inmates were still less than 1 percent, and Florida does have a significant Jewish population. Why do so few Jews end up in jail? It’s because many of the old Jewish fathers from the beginning of time followed the tradition of blessing their

sons and daughters. Isaac wasn't the only one. It went down through the generations, and to this day, the Jewish father at the bar mitzvahs blesses his son or daughter. That's why you don't see many Jews in prisons anywhere in the world. You see a lot of Gentiles, but few Jews. The old Jewish fathers know how to gather their sons and daughters close to them and hug them and kiss them and bless them! Many of us need to learn the practice. There are a lot of Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Catholics and all denominations in prisons-but very few Jews.

We were conducting a Weekend of Champions in Chicago at the Cook County Jail where 13,000 inmates are housed, and eighteen of them were still children, not yet teenagers. We asked those boys age's nine to twelve, "How many of you have carried a gun?"

All eighteen!

"How many of you have used drugs?"

All eighteen!

"How many of you are in a gang?"

All eighteen!

"How many of you have been sexually active?"

All eighteen!

How many of you have a father that lives at home with you?"

Zero!

Do you wonder why they were in “lockup” for committing crimes? It was because they had no father blessing them.

As you can see, the father’s blessing plays a huge role in our lives. *Why aren’t we taught about it more? Why are we just finding out about this powerful principle? When did we stop teaching our children about it?* So many questions are stirred up in my mind.

Endnotes

1. Bill Glass, *Champions for Life* (Deerfield Beach, FL, Health Communications, Inc, 2005)



Chapter 6

The Roots of the Father's Blessing

I am not a Bible scholar. I am just a regular person who struggles to read the Bible everyday for more than five minutes. But I have studied the materials of several teachers on this subject and applied the Biblical principles to my life. The results were miraculous. The principles discussed in the following chapters on the Biblical history of the fathers blessing were not discovered by me. For that matter, they were not discovered by any of us. I want to acknowledge John Sanford, Frank D. Hammond, and Bill Glass for their insights and teachings on many of the facts in these next few chapters. I appreciate and honor their hard work.

Let's look at what the Bible teaches us about the father's blessing. But first, I want to ask you a question.

Do you feel like you are doing everything you know to do, yet it still isn't enough? No matter how hard you try, do you feel like you can't get to the next level financially, spiritually, relationally, physically, and in every other area of your life?

If this resonates with you, I have another question.

Have you ever considered that you could be living under a curse?

Many people hear the word *curse* and start thinking about witches, warlocks, and Harry Potter. That's largely because some in Hollywood are trying

to pass off witchcraft as harmless. They create movies and TV shows aimed at our children to brainwash them into believing it is mainstream, popular, and harmless. Ever heard of the Disney Channel show “Witches of Waverly Place?”, “Harry Potter?”, “Lord of the Rings?” I could go on and on.

But curses are not a joke. The Bible is a book of both blessings and curses. The opposite of a curse is a blessing. The opposite of a blessing is a curse. To be in God’s favor is to be blessed. To be outside of God’s favor is to be cursed. It’s that simple.

Those who don’t believe curses are real, don’t truly believe in the Bible. That may sound harsh, but it’s true. I know people who are God-fearing, Bible-believing men and women, yet they simply choose not to believe this truth. These same people expose their children to all kinds of media depicting witchcraft and pass it off as harmless. Such people act ignorantly to their own peril.

God, and the patriarchs in the Bible, clearly spoke of blessings and curses and the power and importance of them. Those who choose to ignore it, ignore a principle of God and the Bible. However, whether we acknowledge this truth or not, it is both real and relevant, and it applies to us, our children, and our children’s children. Many people pick and choose certain aspects of Scripture to believe while assigning others as suspect. We must not do this with the issue of blessings and curses.

Some people think they can’t break through to the next level of success in their lives simply due to bad luck. Many people self-sabotage their success because deep down inside they think they can’t handle it. Others find themselves so close to success—the finish line is just ahead—only to have it yanked out from under them at the last minute. Some feel as though they stand by in a fog as people all around them get promoted and gain success in an area of business or life. Many have accepted the fact that their pattern in life is set at a certain level and that they’re just not meant to succeed. But this is a lie!

God only wants the best for us! He wants to bless our lives. A blessing is the opposite of a curse. The *absence* of blessing makes the way for the curse to lay hold. The Bible tells us that no curse ever happens without a cause. “*..Like a flying swallow, so a curse without a cause shall not alight*” (Prov. 26:2).

In other words, ***the cause of curses in a person’s life may be due to the failure of the father to fulfill his responsibility to bless his child.*** Think about this powerful statement.

Fathers, it is *our* responsibility to bless our children! Only we can release that blessing to them. Our children’s wellbeing is dependent on our choice to act, to speak, to bless! The blessing *must* be *spoken!* Now is not the time to become timid and shy. We must stand up and speak words of life into our children— blessing them and encouraging them daily. Our children are depending on us!

The benefits of the father’s blessing are far-reaching and make the difference between success and failure, victory and defeat, happiness and misery in an individual’s life! Our blessings make the difference in our children’s lives! Thus, we must take our responsibility to bless our children seriously and take action.

As Proverbs 18:21 says, “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*” What we say is of the utmost importance. We all have a choice. We can speak death into our children’s lives, or we can speak life. Let us choose life!

Supernatural, demonic powers gain entrance through evil, negative words spoken by one person over another. For instance, many mothers and fathers say things like this to their children:

“You are a problem child.”

“You’re stupid!”

“You never do anything right.”

“I wish you had never been born.”

These are curses! Speaking negative and critical words like this to our children gives the curse a right to alight upon our children. In other words, when parents curse their children with negative, harmful, or hateful words, they are plowing a landing strip for a curse in their children’s lives.

We have the power in our words to speak death or to speak life! What will it be, dads? What will it be, moms? What will we choose?

Some people attempt to cancel the power of a curse with another curse or by sending a curse back to where it came from. The Old Covenant law required, “..*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*” (Matt. 5:38). But the New Covenant way to deal with those who curse us is to *bless* them. Jesus taught:

*You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, love your enemies, **bless those who curse you**, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5:43-44).*

Many people have never even thought to bless their enemies. But this is God’s way of *protecting us* from curses spoken against us by others. If, on the other hand, we have bitterness, unforgiveness, hatred, and anger in our hearts toward an antagonist, *we are creating a landing strip for the curse to alight in our lives!* I know this from personal experience. I had unforgiveness in my heart toward my own father, which created fertile soil for a curse to take root.

Check yourself right now. Do you have unforgiveness, hatred, or bitterness in your heart? If you do, let it go now. Choose to forgive. There is no other way to enter into blessing.

The power of a blessing is supernatural! It is the presence of the Holy Spirit producing joy, peace, prosperity, and fruitfulness and providing health, success, and protection. To be blessed is to be in God’s favor and to have His face shining upon us.



Chapter 7

Why Did We Stop?

Some may wonder, *Why did we stop practicing the father's blessing?* *Where in history did the trail go stale?* It's hard to say for sure. Perhaps, considering all of the crazing teachings we are exposed to, confusion set in and distracted us. Satan is the author of confusion, and he would love nothing more than to convince us that the father's blessing is a useless myth, another fad, a hoax!

When I think back to Biblical times and the lives those people led, I am amazed. They didn't have the distractions that we do today. Abraham, while I'm sure having his plate full, didn't worry about his children being abducted at the mall or whether they were being exposed to porn on the Internet. No, he had a completely different set of priorities and problems to focus on. My point is: Life as we know it is much different than it was in the Old Testament.

That is a no-brainer. Yet it may also be why we don't practice the father's blessing. Back in biblical times, instead of watching television for five hours a day, children would spend more time interacting with their families and their fathers. Today we are bombarded with all kinds of distractions—television, radio, Internet, video games, cell phones, texting, Facebook, Twitter, and more. We are constantly being drawn from one thing to the next. It's a wonder we all don't have ADD (attention deficit disorder)! Very few parents that I know take the time to

slow things down and regularly connect with their extended families and their children. We have become addicted to action. We have to fight to slow down and connect.

It's hard to imagine Abraham telling Isaac to turn the television down or Isaac asking Jacob to stop texting so much and rejoin civilization. No, those dads had a more simple life with presumably less issues to deal with. But one thing they had much more of was an *audience* with their children.

I can imagine sitting around a fire at night trying to stay warm with my parents, brothers, and sisters. There were no televisions, no radios, no cell phones, no iPads, no video games, and no addictions. What did they have? They had each other. Imagine the bond that they must have developed with their families after spending this much time with them!

Some may quip that our modern families probably would try to kill each other in such a setting. It's hard for many of us to get our children to sit still for ten minutes without scratching each other's eyes out. But such was not the case back then. Their focus and their understanding of family was different. Their entire existence depended on every person doing his or her part and pulling the proper amount of weight. The family unit, rather than the individual, was the focus. Because of this, I believe a bond was developed in many of those families that most of us are not able to attain in today's world.

Perhaps this is also why a father's blessing meant so much more to children back then. Family was all they knew! In Biblical times, all families talked to each other. There was no chance of the children hearing or seeing any trash on television or the internet to distract or poison their minds and hearts. Moms and dads were much more active in their children's lives. They had no choice! Children back then couldn't get mad and stomp off in a huff to their rooms, slam the door, and turn on the television. No, *if* they lived in a house it probably only had one room! Others, like Abraham and Isaac, were nomads who lived in large

tents. They were forced to bond. They had no choice but to connect. Their survival depended on it.

Nowadays, family life looks a lot different. Often, both parents are working, and the kids keep busy with school, extracurricular activities like sports and music lessons, and entertainment—television, Facebook, the Internet, video games, and the like. The time we spend with our children is very different, if not non-existent.

We live in a different time, a different world with different challenges. It's important not to use this as an excuse. Rather, more than every before, it's critical that we *make* the time with our children to give them what they desperately need. In biblical times, a strong father-child relationship was a given. Today, a strong and healthy father-child relationship seems to be more of the exception. God help us!

The good news is, it's not too late. We have the power to reverse this trend.



Chapter 8

The Precedent Is Set

The Heavenly Father has set the example and precedent for the father's blessing. The patriarchs of the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, clearly understood the power of the father's blessing and practiced it!

Adam and Eve

There are several vital principles that guide us to pronounce a father's blessing. The first example we find is the Heavenly Father blessing Adam and Eve. Genesis 1 tells us that as soon as they were created, God blessed them and said,

Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28).

Adam and Eve were fruitful and had dominion because God *spoke* a blessing over them. Blessings must be spoken because, as I mentioned before, life is in the power of the tongue (see Prov. 18:21). As Bill Glass says, "A bell is not a bell until it's rung, and a blessing is not a blessing until it's spoken."¹ <#ch5note> It's amazing that, by a simple act of faith in speaking blessing over another person, we can activate the power of God. This doesn't apply only to fathers

speaking blessings over their children. Everyone has the power to speak blessings over others in the name of the Lord! What are we waiting for? Let's speak life!

In this passage, we see that the father's blessing is for *fruitfulness* and *dominion*. *Fruitfulness* means bearing children, but it extends farther than that. A father will do well to extend the blessing of fruitfulness, found in Psalm 1:3, to his children: "*He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*"

God Blesses Abraham and Isaac

The second example of a father's blessing in the Bible is when God blesses Abram (Abraham). In Genesis 12:1-3, God calls Abraham and blesses him.

*Now the LORD said to Abram, "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation. **I will bless you** and make your name great; and you **shall be a blessing**. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

God not only wants to bless us, but to make us a blessing to others! We must not only receive life-giving words, but speak them over others!

Another example of a father's blessing occurs when God blesses Isaac after the death of Abraham. "*And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi*" (Gen. 25:11). Isaac then, when he was a father, passed this blessing along to his sons.

Isaac Blesses His Sons

The first father-son blessing recorded in the Bible happens when Isaac blesses his sons. His story relates the importance of the first-born son's blessing. It meant so much that Jacob stole Esau's blessing (see Gen. 27).

Before Isaac blessed his son Jacob (who was posing as the eldest, Esau), Isaac said, "*Come near now and kiss me, my son*" (Gen. 27:26). Isaac smelled his clothing, and then he blessed him. I find this very insightful. We don't have to stop showing affection to our children when they grow up. Sometimes people say I am a "sap" because I show affection to my son and daughter. I don't do it in public necessarily, but I love them, and I will continue to appropriately hug and kiss them until the day I die. I want to bless them with my hands as long as I walk this Earth. Those who don't like it can take it up with Isaac, not me!

A father's blessing is extremely important. It opens Heaven's windows of God's favor in people's lives. When Isaac discovered that he had been deceived and had not blessed his first-born son, Esau, as he had thought, the Bible tells us he "*trembled exceedingly*" (Gen. 27:33). When Esau discovered that his blessing had been stolen, he was furious and cried with "*an exceeding great and bitter cry*" (Gen. 27:34). He begged his father to bless him as well. Esau's desperate plea for his father's blessing shows us how vitally important it is. His entire future welfare rested on his blessing. So he asked if Isaac had only one blessing. "*Have you not reserved a blessing for me?*" (Gen. 27:36).

The father's blessing is a vitally important occurrence and has been so since the beginning of time. We can see this illustrated in this story. Jacob wouldn't have gone to such lengths to steal his brother's blessing if it wasn't so critically important. A spoken blessing has power. People in Biblical times knew this and desperately craved it.

The good news is that we don't have to steal it. All we have to do is ask. As a dad, I know it would fill my heart with joy if my children cared so much about my opinion that they wanted me to bless them. I would feel honored that my blessing was so critical to their wellbeing that they couldn't do without it. All we

need to do is ask.

Endnote

Frank D. Hammond, *The Father's Blessing* (Plainview, TX, The Children's Bread Ministry, 2001)



Chapter 9

Bless the Grandchildren

The blessing is not just for the children, but for the children’s children—the grandchildren. An example of the father’s blessing upon the grandchildren happens when Jacob blesses his grandsons. Upon request, Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh. “*And Joseph said to his father, ‘They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place.’ And he [Jacob] said, ‘Please bring them to me, and I will bless them’*” (Gen 48:9).

This is ideal—for the children’s father requests the blessing of the grandfather for the grandchildren, just as Joseph did. When this is not possible, the grandfather should take the initiative. This is pertinent in today’s society because many grandparents *raise* their grandchildren and actually become surrogate parents, which makes them qualified to pronounce a father’s blessing over them.

Even those playing traditional grandparent roles should be given permission by the father of the children to bless them. At family gatherings, it can be a powerful intergenerational act to call all the children round the grandparents and have the grandparents bless them. This will really make a difference in children’s lives, especially in families that don’t get together frequently. The pronounced blessing of a grandfather will make a lasting impression on a child.

According to the most recent Census Bureau Statistics, there are 3.9 million (6 percent) children in the United States living in a grandparent’s home, *up 76*

percent from the 2.2 million (3 percent) who did so in 1970. One-half of grandchildren living in a grandparent's home are younger than 6.

All of the grandpas and grandmas who have stepped up and raised their grandchildren are absolute heroes! In the majority of these cases, it is not the grandparents' first choice, yet they choose what is best for their grandchildren. Often grandparents are put in this situation because of poor choices by the parents of the children. Most of these grandparents had raised their own children and were ready for the next phase of life, but found themselves thrust back into the parenting role.

If you are one of these grandparents, I say thank you for sacrificing to do what is best for those babies! You now have the full right and responsibility to pronounce a father's blessing on those children, just as if you were their father. Jacob did it! So should you!

Endnote

1. 2010 United States Census



Chapter 10

God Blesses His Son

Probably the most important example a father's blessing is God blessing of His own son. At the time of Jesus' baptism and inauguration into the ministry, the Heavenly Father blessed Him:

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

Once again, the Heavenly Father speaks words of approval and blessing. Jesus was blessed with the anointing of approval and blessing. Jesus was blessed with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, equipping Him for the ministry and the sacrificial death that lay ahead.

It is very interesting to note that Jesus had not yet performed a miracle or delivered a sermon. He had not yet done anything spectacular. Yet He was blessed as a Son because of *who He was* rather than for what He had done.

Here is another example for us to follow. We should, like God, bless our children for *who they are*, not for what they do. They are our children, and we should love them unconditionally. Let's bless them unconditionally. Blessing

should flow from us before any evidence of our children's talents or accomplishments manifests. We must bless them regardless—whether they are the most or least talented in any endeavor.

Let us not miss this opportunity to speak into our children's lives when they need it the most—before they even know who they are or what they are passionate about. God didn't wait on Jesus to do anything before He spoke a father's blessing. We shouldn't either!

It's an Act of Faith!

The writer of Hebrews gives us a pertinent insight into Isaac's blessing. We are told that it was spoken in faith and received by faith (see Heb. 11:20). I follow this precedent when I speak into my children. I say:

You are going to have everything God has prepared for you. You are going to be a bold and mighty man/woman of God. God is going to give you the desires of your heart. You are going to be a leader and bring people to Christ. You are going to be happy. You are going to have a fruitful life, and God will bring your soul-mate, who was designed for you since the beginning of time. Everything you are going to put your hand to will prosper.

All of these things have not happened yet, but are spoken in faith and received in faith. Many parents have children who are not making the best decisions or have pretty bad attitudes. It may seem strange to bless these children, even when their actions may not warrant it, but it is absolutely crucial because our words release life to them.

In faith, we are to speak blessing over our children, speaking what we want to see happen in their lives, whether they are living it now or not. We speak it in faith! We must bless our children for who they are, not what they do. We cannot afford to wait for something to happen before we bless them. We must bless them

now, bless them often, and bless them in faith!

It's an Act of Worship

This may surprise some, but the truth is that a father's blessing can be an act of worship! Hebrews 11:21 says, "*By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*" God is glorified when we bless our children.

We can bless in the midst of worship, because it is what we were created to do. When we pronounce blessing over our children, we can worship at the same time. And when we are worshipping, we can throw in a blessing for our children! The two run hand-in-hand.

We were created to worship. The fact that we can bless and worship at the same time is awesome. I can envision a worship service where fathers are exalting God and openly blessing their children at the same time. Worshipping and blessing at the same time? Why not! Jacob did it!



Chapter 11

Modern Family

We live in an interesting time, to say the least. Many families are made up of people who are not even related to each other! And many people do not feel loved by their birth families. I have become a “father figure” to many children who don’t have a father in their lives or who have a father who is not engaged with them. It’s sad but true. Children yearn for a father and are drawn to men who have the courage to be one. When other children see how I interact with my son and daughter, they look at us with that “I wish my dad treated me like that” or “I wish I had a dad” look.

Those who are paying attention will notice because, sadly, it happens all the time. Many children live in one parent households with no dad in their lives. Others live with a father who is not standing up and being the real father God has called him to be. It’s an epidemic. Here are some stats to prove it:

- 26.3 percent of all children in America (21.8 million) live in a one-parent home.
- 82.6 percent of these kids live with the mom.
- 18 million children in America don’t live with their father.

Even Hollywood has capitalized on the fact that the number of traditional families is shrinking, while the number of “modern families” (families comprised of people other than a traditional mom and dad and children) are on the rise. Sadly, their definition and portrayal of a “modern family” is based on a political and social agenda with a goal to normalize abnormal behavior. In other words, it’s propaganda for the homosexual lifestyle.

More typically, in today’s world it is not uncommon for people to have others living with them who are not you’re their children—perhaps nieces, nephews, or even friends of their children. In today’s economy, some people even have entire other families living under their roof. Many families are living together to save on expenses or out of necessity.

When families are so fragmented in today’s world, how do we make sense of it? Let’s look at the Biblical precedent—David. David blessed his entire household!

*And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts. And he gave out among all the people, among all the multitude of Israel, to the women as well as men, to each one a cake of bread and one raisin-cake. And all the people departed each one to his house. And **David returned to bless his household...** (2 Samuel 6:18-20).*

Blessings are not limited to children, but include the members of a man’s household. Thus, this principle of the father’s blessing applies to all men who have people living in their household, whether they are immediate family or not. David set a precedent for us to bless our household and everything in it! The father’s blessing is intended for his wife, his children, his extended family, and all who are within his house. These blessings are to be continual, daily expressions of love’s covering.

Endnote

1. 2010 United States Census



Chapter 12

R U Blessin UR Kids? LOL

The word *bless* in both Hebrew and Greek means “to declare happy.” Happy indeed is the family whose husband and father makes it a practice to speak a daily blessing over his wife and children! Not only do I speak blessings, but I also text blessings to my children.

The technology we have today allows us many more ways to communicate; this goes for our children as well. While I advocate face-to-face, eye-to-eye, hands-on interaction, sometimes that’s not possible. I have taken advantage of technology and applied it to blessing my children. Most kids old enough to have cell phones love to send and receive texts and to record and watch videos. I’ve chosen not fight this trend, but embrace it! I use these same tools to edify, encourage, and bless my children! I’ve learned this makes a significant impact on them.

I discovered the power of this technology to encourage and bless, when I started texting my son and daughter, along with a niece and nephew, short messages of encouragement and blessing each morning as they started their school day. These messages would read something like:

Good morning! Make this a great day. Mind your teachers and learn, learn, learn. You are blessed in everything you lay your hands to. You have favor with your teachers and administrators. You are a leader! Act like it! Call or text me if

you need me. I love you!

Each day would be a little different text, and sometimes I would cater the message to a particular child, if God-led, but it was nothing fancy.

The impact of a short message like this is powerful.¹ <#ch14note> We can never tell our children enough how much we love them and how much God loves them. Also, our messages may be the inspiration they need in those moments. We don't have any idea what may be happening, who they are speaking to, what they are thinking about or dealing with, what issue is on their minds or hearts. Just like us, they need to hear encouragement and blessing often. Our words of blessing could make the difference in a decision they are about to make or something they are about to say or do. I have found that my kids save some of these messages and read them over again and again. How awesome is that! I find it incredible to imagine my children going through tough spots at school and pulling up these messages of love, hope, and blessing from their father!

I use texts, e-mail, and videos to give a blessing *that keeps on blessing forever!* Ha! Take that devil! Some parents may be skeptical about whether this type of communication is really that important and meaningful to them. But I have proof that it is. After several days of sending these text messages out, I became distracted one morning and forgot to send one. Soon I started getting messages from my kids “where’s my morning text?” and “sup, did you forget our morning text?” Our kids may not tell us how important such a daily blessing is to them, but *they love it!* They need it! They deserve it!

Another benefit of sending the daily blessing to my children is this—they bless me back! When I send a text message, most of the time, I get a response message. What dad doesn't love that! And sometimes, every once in a while, I'll even get a message that says more than the typical response “love you too.” Yes! Thank You, God!

For me, there is *nothing* better in this world than being blessed by my own children. I have some text messages I will save forever! If my 12-year-old daughter texts me, “you’re the best dad ever!” or my 18-year-old texts, “thanks for all you do, I love you,” I am on cloud nine for the rest of the day! Technology is a powerful tool that can be used for many different things. But one of its best uses is to edify, encourage, and bless others, especially our children!

Sign up for daily blessings at: <http://www.Twitter.com/FathersBlessing>

Section 2



My Testimony

*“There’s somebody whose story you need,
and there’s somebody who needs your story.”*

—Pastor Mike Linch



Chapter 13

“Ready, Fire, Aim”

Sitting in the class room, learning all about the father’s blessing, blew my mind! My first thought was that I had nothing to deal with because my step-father, Danny, had raised me, and I considered him my *real* father. In my eyes, *he was my father*. I’m sure many who have step-fathers feel the same way. As we so often do, I tried to think my way out of the issue before I listened to that still small voice inside that speaks truth. It wasn’t long before the Holy Spirit clarified the issue for me. Here’s how.

I realized that, when it comes to step-fathers, the Bible doesn’t say “honor your *step-father* and mother.” It doesn’t say, “Honor *that guy your mom’s shacking up with* and your mother” No, the Bible reads, “*Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you...*” (Deut. 5:6).

Sometimes it would be much easier for many of us to honor a man in our lives *other* than our biological father. It would have been much easier for me! My father wasn’t a very nice person, and the last thing I wanted to do was to think about him, much less get his blessing. In that moment of revelation, the Holy Spirit began to speak to my heart and reveal truth to me. And that truth was that my biological father was definitely the first person I needed to get my blessing

from. I love my step-father, and he means the world to me. But I realized that the blessing I needed had to come from my biological father, a man I had not seen or spoken to in over 15 years!

I asked a godly man to step into my father's place and bless me that day in class. For those whose fathers are not living or for whom it is impossible to receive a blessing from their biological father, it is permissible to have a spiritual father bless them in his place.

But I knew that if my real father was alive, I wanted and needed to get his blessing. I was not going to settle for anything less, unless I had no choice. If he was alive and he was willing, I was going to get it. The next day I made a few phone calls and was able to find out exactly where my father lived.

It turns out that he had moved to a retirement home in the north Georgia Mountains, about a three hour drive from where I lived in the Atlanta area. Because my motto is "Ready, Fire, Aim," I set out the next day on a journey to find my biological father and to get my father's blessing. I thought this was going to be an important day, but I had no idea how this event would radically change my life.

The next morning I started out headed up I-575 North with nothing on my mind but to get there—fast. I really didn't have a plan other than to find my dad. The rest was up to God. I wasn't worried about the details because I knew from other times in my class that when I took action, God would go before me to prepare the way. I was counting on Him.

As the initial excitement of the trip wore off, I realized that I had a few hours on my hands. I began to think back on my life and how I had arrived at this moment in time. What happened next amazes me to this very day. Right there in the cab of my truck, my whole life began to play like a movie against the windshield in front of me. I relived my whole life like I was watching a movie, and the movie screen was the windshield of my truck.

What you are about to read may remind you of your own life in many ways. Some of you have had a pretty good childhood, some not so good. It really doesn't matter.

What matters is that you use my experience to bolster enough faith to take action of your own and to do what God is calling you to do.



Chapter 14

Warrior Mama

From the early days of my childhood, my relationship with my father wasn't good. My dad was an alcoholic. He beat my mother, and he beat me and the other kids. I'm not talking about spanking; I'm talking about beating. Our home would often be very tense when my dad would come home from drinking. I would hear him screaming and yelling at my mother while throwing things in the house. I remember acting like I was asleep so he wouldn't know I could hear what was going on. Many times, however, he would actually wake us kids up just to whip us. He turned into a monster when he drank. Looking back, it is obvious that he had some deep-seated anger issues. But as a 6-year-old boy, all I knew was that I was trying to survive. It seemed like my life would go from happy-go-lucky childhood to hell in the blink of an eye. And you never knew what would set him off.

My mother, the bravest woman I know, would step in front of my father and defend us. She physically paid a price for standing between her children and the animal who wanted to hurt them for no reason. I do have some good memories of playing ball with my brothers, riding bikes, and enjoying cookouts in the backyard with friends and family. But in an instant, happy moments would come crashing down in my father's fit of rage, all for no apparent reason. Anyone who has lived with an alcoholic knows what I'm talking about. It was hard to relax

because we never knew when our dad would change into a monster. Not surprisingly, this was very difficult for my mother.

One night in the summertime, when I was about 6 years old, my dad came home in a drunken rage and was marching from one end of our home to the other screaming at the top of his lungs. He was having another angry drunken episode, and as usual, we were all going to pay for it in one way or another. My brothers and I were getting mentally prepared to tote another hearty butt whooping. We would sometimes jump up and quickly and quietly put on every pair of underwear in our drawer to soften the blow. I can remember putting on seven, eight, and nine pairs of underwear and then pulling up my PJs over them to hide the bulge.

That night would be different. My mother had taken all she could. She had seen her children beaten for no reason, and she wasn't going to stand by and watch it another night. She quickly gathered my two brothers, my sister, and I and snuck us out the back door. We escaped like prisoners into the night. But where does one go with four small children in the middle of the night?

We escaped to the backyard swing, a swing so far back from the house that my dad couldn't see us. I can see in my mind's eye like it was yesterday—my dad marching back and forth through the house screaming and yelling like a madman. We could see him, but he couldn't see us. It was like God was protecting us with an invisible force field. In our pajamas, we sat on the back yard swing in the middle of the night watching this mad dad like you watch a drive-in movie.

I could hear my dad's muffled ranting mixed with the sounds of the summer insects. We rocked back and forth slowly so as to not draw any attention from movement or sound. Finally, after a minute or two, my mother began to sing softly. She sang nursery rhyme songs to us like she was rocking us to sleep. We just rocked away like we didn't have a care in the world. I remember looking up at the night sky and seeing all the stars. It was beautiful and horrible at the same time. My mother later told me that, once my dad had passed out, she snuck us back into the house and tucked us in bed.



Chapter 15

The Final Straw

I really don't know how my mother put up with all of the anxiety of living with a drunk who was physically, mentally, and emotionally abusive, not only to her, but also her four children. Considering that I have such vivid memories of the ugly details of my life as a young 6-year-old boy, it had to be even worse for my mother knowing that at anytime this monster would appear.

My mother just recently told me what the final straw was that lead to her divorce my father. I was surprised to learn something new about my childhood, thinking we had discussed just about everything you could about it in the last forty years. I was visiting with her the other day, and the subject of our old house came up. We began talking about some of the old days, and she became very emotional. I told her not to speak of it any more because I didn't want her to get upset. But she insisted on telling me this story. She said she needed to get it out.

My mother was bathing all of us kids in the bath tub at the same time one day when my little brother slipped and fell and hit his chin on the bathtub. He wasn't bleeding or anything, but it hurt him pretty badly, and he began to cry. All of a sudden, my dad busted the door open with a belt to give us all a whipping because my brother was crying and we were making a lot of noise. He fully intended to whip all of his naked children with a belt.

My mother did what came naturally to her; she protected her children. She stood up to him and refused to let him lay another finger on us. But instead of walking away, he took that belt and began to beat *my mother* with it. My mother had taken many beatings from my father in the past, but this would be the last. The next day she filed for divorce and had him removed from the home.

As my mother recalled the details of this terrible time in our lives, she became overwhelmed with emotion. It's hard to see your momma cry, period. It's really hard to watch her cry over something that happened over 40 years ago. This had really hurt her, and it showed. It was hard to listen to.

She told me that there was knock on the door one day shortly after my dad was forced to leave. He had only made one payment to her for support. She took that money and made a house payment and used the rest of the money for food and other expenses. He never told her that there was a second mortgage on the house—a mortgage that he had quit paying.

The knock on the door was from a man telling her that the house had been foreclosed on and sold on the courthouse steps. This was the first she knew about it. She was devastated, then and now. I held my mother as she cried, reliving this horrible time in her life. While I had lived through this mess, I never knew the details about this particular time until that day.

After the house was foreclosed on, we had no money, no where to live, no job—nothing. My dad left her with nothing but shelter, and then took that away too. As my wife, daughter, niece, and I listened to my momma cry and tell this story, I held her in my arms and thanked her for everything she had done for all of us.



Chapter 16

Government Cheese and IHOP

With three days notice, broke and devastated, my mom picked up her four children and moved, without a penny to her name, to a small apartment. I have no idea where she got the money for a deposit. To add insult to injury, my dad was a very successful car salesman. In fact, in 1969, he sold more cars than anyone in Georgia and won a trip to Florida for our family. My dad could have easily afforded to pay child support; he just wouldn't.

I remember eating the government food we received as assistance. It was in generic brown containers and would just have the word of the food on the side of the box or container, like "Cheese." As a kid, I don't remember caring a whole lot about where or how we got our food. But I'm sure my mother had very strong feelings about having to accept government assistance because our dad was a deadbeat. Even in all this, my mother never spoke negatively about our father to us children, though she had full right to. What a woman! She always put the needs of her children first. I don't know if I could have bitten my tongue like she did.

She told me later that she didn't want to turn us away from our father because he had no one else in this world to love or that loved him. After all he had done to us, my mother was able to look at the big picture of the whole ordeal, and show him compassion.

Looking back now I am amazed how my mother tried to protect us from holding anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness against our dad by not speaking negatively about him, even though it would have been the truth.

We went from living well, to government assistance. We ate so much government cheese that we ran out of ways to prepare it! The cheese we ate came in a container like a brick of Velveeta. It probably *was* Velveeta cheese, only without the retail packaging. We ate grilled cheese sandwiches. We ate cheese and crackers. We ate cheese by itself. Looking back, I am upset that we didn't know about nachos! If we had only known about nachos, we could have created some mammoth concoctions and enjoyed a new and different culinary delight. But most of all, we would have found another way to eat all of that cheese!

My mother didn't sit around and just collect a check from the government to raise her children. She got a job at the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) and worked as a waitress. I don't know how she paid the bills from just working as a waitress, but she refused to sit around waiting for someone else to take care of her children. The older I get, the more I admire her for that.

Often we would ride our bikes over to see her working and to eat. We would eat at a table with our mother as our waitress. I don't think we tipped her very well. Come to think of it, we didn't tip her at all! After eating, we would head back to our apartment. One night, my older brother, Jimmy, my younger brother, Chris, and I road a banana seat bicycle across Highway 41 to get home after eating dinner at IHOP. My brother Jimmy drove, I sat behind him on the seat, and my little brother sat on the handle bars as we crossed five-lane State Highway 41. It's a miracle we are still alive. But by the grace of God and a strong momma warrior, we survived.



Chapter 17

Half the Dad He Didn't Have to Be

"I hope I can be half the dad he didn't have to be."

—Brad Paisley

After living single for a while, my mother met a man named Daniel Hulsey. They had dated for two weeks when he asked her to marry him! Two weeks! This man was marrying a woman with four children, the oldest being 8 years old! To this day, that blows my mind, and I joke with my mother that “she must have put something on him that AJAX wouldn't get off!” Not only did he marry her, but he began to raise us as his own children. When I look back today, I am reminded of how amazing he is!

I don't know how the term *step-father* originated, but in our case, it fit perfectly because this man “stepped up” when someone else had stepped out. He loved and provided for us, raising all four of us as his own. I will never forget what he has done for my momma and us kids. He was an electrician who earned only \$100 a week. I can hardly imagine supporting a wife and four children on that little! But we managed, and God provided for us. We never lacked any of the necessities.

My brothers and I were quite athletic and good at sports. I remember my mother telling the baseball and football coaches that we couldn't afford to pay the

initiation fee. However, we were so good that they would waive this fee and give us scholarships because they wanted us on the teams.

I also recall begging my dad and mom to take us to McDonald's, promising that we would not spend more than \$1. (Back then, you could get a hamburger, French fries, and a coke for less than \$1!) It amuses me to compare the life my children have in comparison to my own childhood. I would beg to go to McDonald's, but now when my family pulls up to a restaurant, my daughter says, "Oh no, not Longhorns again!" In those moments I think to myself, *My, how times have changed!*

It took my step-dad, whom we called Danny, about a year to get a grip on his new family. He went from being a bachelor to the father of four in one day! What a guy! I can't imagine what a transition that must have been! He took it all in his stride. Danny is the most loving, caring, easy-going man I have ever met.

We quickly fell in love with him as we saw how a real dad was supposed to act. He was a real father to us.

He was so kind! We were a tough bunch of kids. Some people would call us *wild*, though I prefer as the term *rambunctious*. Either way, we were very active and loved to push the limit, as kids will do. The fact is, for the first year we owned the man. He didn't know what hit him! It was a good year before he felt comfortable enough to spank us. Looking back now, I realize that he probably knew about our history with spankings and didn't want to go there with us too quickly. Once he did though, all the shenanigans ceased, and we settled into a relatively normal life.

Remembering all that my step-father did for us reminds me of that country song, "He didn't have to be" by Brad Paisley. My prayer is that I can be half the dad he didn't have to be! I love you, Dad!

If you have a step father who stepped up and means the world to you, then you know how I feel.

Here is a link to “He didn’t have to be” by Brad Paisley

<http://youtu.be/BjO1F6oCab8>



Chapter 18

The Curse

In the years after my mom took us kids and left, my dad continued to be very manipulative. He was angry and bitter and tried to make us children feel guilty every time he would pick us up to spend the weekend with him. He would make fun of my step-dad and degrade him. I assume it's because he was angry that someone else was stepping in to raise his children. I can't imagine how it would feel to have another man raising my children. Looking back now, I can understand that it must have been very difficult for him, but the truth was that he brought it all on himself.

In spite of his own part in the state of affairs, he continued coming up with never-ending reasons for his discontent, and he took it out on us. He hated my step-dad and paid no child support, doing everything he could to make our family fail. And I judged him for that. As a teenager, I couldn't understand how he could be so bad and so ugly to his own family. He was a successful salesman and businessman. *How can he make good money, but not support his own children?* I wondered.

My relationship with him continued "on and off" through the years. I met and married my wife, Karen. I drew a "line in the sand" with my dad during the time Karen and I were making wedding plans. I had told my father that we were planning to have my step-dad at the wedding, and he got very angry. At this point, I finally I had had enough. I realized that I was a grown man and did not have to put up with his intimidation any more. I told him that, if he was going to continue

to try to control me with guilt-trips because of his own anger and bitterness, he would no longer be a part of my life.

After this confrontation, I didn't see or talk to my biological dad for over 15 years. Every once in a while, he would try to call me. I would hear a message on my answering machine, but I would never return the call. Every few years, I would receive a letter from him in which he would try to reach out, but I didn't want to dig the past up, mainly because I really didn't know how to handle it. Therefore, I chose not to handle it at all.

This is where a curse came into play in my life. Because I judged my dad in my heart, all of my unforgiveness and bitterness caused a landing strip for a curse in my life. For 15 years, my life continued without any contact with my dad.

Fast forward a few years. The year 1992 was both a good and bad year for me. I was a real estate developer and had bought some land and developed a subdivision. However, it all went belly up, and we were going through a tough time financially. I eventually had to file for bankruptcy.

During this time, my son Ryan was due to be born. I will never forget the day of his birth. We were at the hospital, Karen was in labor, and I was getting phone calls from the "repo" man because they were trying to repossess our car (they had been hounding me for a while, but of all days, this was the day they wanted the car back).

They called me repeatedly that day, and I was sick of it. I was in the delivery room with Karen as they called again and again. I finally said, "If you want the car so badly, just come and get it" and told them where I was. I told them to call me when they arrived and I would come out with the keys. A couple of hours later, I got their phone call. I excused myself from the delivery room, walked outside, handed them the keys, and went back in to the room where Karen was in labor. A short time later my son Ryan was born.

(As a side note, this is a sure-fire way to see your stock drop with your in-laws. Imagine getting a call from your son-in-law saying, "I have good news, and I

have bad news. The good news is you have a bouncing baby grandson. The bad news is we need a ride home from the hospital!”)

Some time later, in 1998, my daughter Rachel was born. At that time, we were living with no direction, from paycheck to paycheck. (I now know that God desires so much more for us spiritually, personally, and financially.) I was working in construction at the time, and I injured my back. Many years previously, I had injured my back, and after that, every few years I would hurt it in the same area again. However, this time I injured it so badly that it wouldn't heal on its own.

I was in so much pain that I couldn't eat, couldn't sleep, and couldn't work. All I could do was take pain medication and try to find a comfortable position as I sat around the house. Week after week, I went to orthopedic doctors, chiropractors, and many other people in the know to try to get help. Finally, I had an MRI which showed two disks bulging so badly that it looked like snow dripping off the side of a house! This was the spinal fluid dripping out of my spinal column and pressing on the nerves, thus causing the intense pain. Traditional remedies would not help at all.

Thus, I was forced to undergo back surgery. I was scared to death because it was the last thing I wanted, having heard so many horror stories of unsuccessful back operations. All kinds of nightmares went through my mind. Fortunately, I was very blessed to be connected to a doctor who explained to me that this could be a very noninvasive surgery. He cut a 1 inch spot in my back and, using a microscope, went around my nerves and got down to the place where the disc was bulged out and scraped and shaved it down and sucked out the excess. I went from months of pain, being almost addicted to pain medication, to waking out pain-free after the operation. And I have never had a problem since! How very thankful I am for that!



Chapter 19

Is This All There Is?

After the operation, as I sat recuperating on the couch, I reviewed my life—here I was 39 years old and married with two kids, yet I was broke. I had worked hard for 20 years. I am a smart, honest, good-hearted, and godly man. But if I couldn't get up and go to work in the morning, I wouldn't be able to support my family! It was an eye-opener to realize that I had worked hard for all my life, yet I nothing monetarily to show for it. I remember thinking, *If this is all there is, I am pretty ticked off. There has to be a better way to make money or create wealth!* Something had to change, because what I was doing wasn't working.

Becoming temporarily disabled made me realize that if I didn't start doing things differently, I would be in the same condition in another 20 years! I was never taught anything in school about creating wealth. They teach you about arithmetic, but not about how money works. As a matter of fact, I never took one class in school, even in college, about how to invest or create wealth. Of course, there were classes about accounting and tax law and such. But if those classes taught people how to be rich, wouldn't all of the accountants and attorneys be rich? They're not. They just have good-paying jobs.

My parents never taught me anything about money other than to work hard and save it. They are good, hard-working people. They were not wealthy. Hard work doesn't make you rich. I have a father, grandfather, aunts, and uncles on both

sides of my family who are some of the hardest working people I have ever known. But they aren't rich. I began to pray that God would show me a new way to earn money and create wealth. I knew how to work hard; I needed to know how to work smart.

It was this realization that started a radical change in my life. God put a book into my hands, a book called *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki. This book changed my life.

Rich Dad, Poor Dad opened my eyes to a new way to look at money. It was truly a revelation. I took the concepts from the book and quickly applied them to my life.

I began to invest in real estate while still working my construction business. I found out quickly that I was pretty good at it too. As it turns out, I discovered I had been training my whole life to buy and sell houses!

God had used what would have been a tragedy in life, to get my attention and show me a better way to make money and create wealth.

I believe He did it for one simple reason...because I asked.

To learn more about Rich Dad Poor Dad and Investing in real estate go to <http://www.fathersblessing.com/bonuschapters>



Chapter 20

God Goes Ahead

Being a full-time investor gave me the freedom to take a day off on spur of the moment and go find my dad. As I was winding my way through the mountains of North Georgia, God showed me that He had prepared the way for me see my dad. Six months before this trip, I had gone camping with some friends, and I accidentally made a wrong turn and ended up driving all the way to Clayton. I actually turned around about half a mile from where I eventually found my dad! So this territory was very familiar to me. I believe God cleared the way for me to find my dad by creating a “practice run” to where he lived.

One of the things that stood out in my mind as I drove along was the way my dad must have felt to be estranged from his four children. I am a dad myself, and not having a relationship with my children was just unthinkable. So my heart was softened as I thought about this, and I could empathize a bit more with the way he was feeling. It made me want to reconcile with him even more.

When I drove up to the place where my dad was living, it reminded me of the old hospital in the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. It was an older facility built in the '50s or '60s, and while it looked clean, the colors were drab and the style was old. I didn't know where he was or even *if* he was still there, but I walked right through the doors and up to the reception area. There were two

nurses behind the counter. One of them slid the glass partition open, and I introduced myself, “Hello, I am Billy O’Neal, and I am here to see my dad.”

Instantly one of the nurses smiled. I could see in her eyes that this was a big deal. She must have heard my dad talking about his children, or she somehow instinctively knew that this was really important. She pointed down the hall and showed me the way to his room. I saw all the people in their rooms as I walked down the corridor. The place was old, out-dated, and depressing. The equipment in the hallways and the dark drab architecture made it clear that this was actually a hospital converted to an old-age home.

I stopped at the door and looked inside the room. I thanked the nurse for her help, and she walked back down the hall. It was hospital quiet. I realized that they had crammed so many people into the limited space that there were three people living in each room separated by curtains. Suddenly, it hit me that I was about to see my dad for the first time in 15 years. I wondered what his reaction would be. Would he be happy to see me—or angry and bitter? I began to pray under my breath.



Chapter 21

I Want my Father's Blessing!

I walked into my dad's room slowly, immediately looking to the left where the first bed sat. It was empty. I was shocked at such a small living area. How they could crowd three people in one small hospital room was beyond me. I walked past the first curtain and into the second tiny living space and saw a man sleeping on his side. Even though I had not laid eyes on him in over 15 years, I knew immediately that he was my father. He was older, in poor health, and wearing an oxygen mask. Lying in a twin bed that was much too small for him, he was facing the wall with his back to me.

His oxygen mask whistled like the sound of a leak from a small air hose. The sun tried to peek in from the only window in the room, but the second curtain blocked most of the light. Everything he had left to his name was stacked in his small area. He had a dresser drawer with papers, photo albums, and other keepsakes that were important to him. There were pictures of all of his kids on the dresser. They were older pictures that had begun to fade over time. I scanned the faces for mine and finally locked on an old school picture from many years ago. He hadn't had a chance to collect newer ones, so I guess this would have to do. Maybe these pictures were from a time in his life that brought back good or at least better memories. Seeing pictures of my brothers and sister brought back memories of when we were children.

I began to think back to the good times we had as kids. I began to remember when I actually lived with my father. It seemed like several lifetimes ago. Although my dad was an alcoholic and was abusive to my mother and us kids, I still can remember some good times, too. Even with all the bad things he had done to us, I knew at one time he loved us very much. So much has changed since I was a kid. It seemed like such a long time ago.

My life was so different now. I was married with two wonderful children of my own. As I stood there, it was hard for me to fathom the reality that everything he once had was gone. His wife, his children, his possessions, his way of life—gone. Everything my dad owned in life was reduced down to fit into an 8 x 12 room, a space he shared with two other men, separated only by curtains. I couldn't imagine losing everything I held near and dear to my heart and being alone.

As I looked at my dad lying there, God spoke to me and told me to get him out of this nursing home. I had been buying houses and investing in real estate, and it was really hard to see my dad living in such a place, stacked three to a room, which looked like some kind of mental facility. I bought houses as often as some people bought groceries, and here was my dad lying in this mess.

Finally, after 15 years, I had driven all this way and was going to see and talk to my dad. There was nothing that could prepare me for what was about to happen.

I reached down and put my hand on his shoulder and softly said, "Wake up, dad." He woke up and turned over to look at me, but didn't recognize me at first. The look on his face when he first laid eyes on me was like he was seeing an angel, or a ghost. I don't know if his eyesight was blurred from the nap or if I had changed so much in 15 years. He took a second to try to focus what he was seeing. It was like he was thinking, *Is this real or just a dream.*

Then he said, "Billy, is that you?"

I said, “Yes, sir.”

I stepped toward him, and he pulled me down to him, and we hugged. He began to cry and thank God for answering his prayer. The tears flowed. I began to cry because, even after all of the crazy things I had been through in my life, I suddenly realized how much I loved and missed my dad. I wasn't sure that bed was strong enough to hold us both, but I didn't really care. If it collapsed under the weight of us, who cared? I wasn't letting go of him.

It felt good to hug my dad. It reminded me of when I was 5 or 6 years old. He loved to hug me. And I loved it too. He would rub my head and tell me how much he loved me. I missed that. I never realized how much I missed that touch from my father until now—his hands, his smell, the way he would rub my back when I was little until I would fall asleep. It felt good to hug him back. His face, his touch, his smell, all brought back a flood of memories that overloaded my senses at once. It was surreal. This was happening. I had found my dad!

That was a big day for me, but it was also a critically important day for my dad as well. He told me later that he had given up that day. He had told God, as he went to sleep, that if something didn't change, he didn't want to live any more. Can you imagine telling God that life wasn't worth living and then falling asleep, only to wake up and see your son whom you hadn't seen for 15 years!?! Our God is so good! Not only did He make a way for me to get my blessing, but He answered my dad's prayers as well.

After we wiped the tears, snot, and slobber away, I helped him up, and we sat and talked in his room. I could tell he was embarrassed by his “home” so I didn't focus on it. Instead, I suggested we go outside and take a walk around to enjoy the weather. I wanted to do anything to get us out of that room. As I helped him get onto his motorized wheelchair, I realized that my dad was not in good health. He could barely walk. The years of drinking and smoking had definitely caught up with him.

We went out to the lobby where we sat for a while, catching up. I began to see shades of my old dad as he introduced me to everyone who walked by. Every nurse, administrator, resident, or worker was formally introduced to his son. He was a proud dad. I knew what that feels like, having had two kids of my own since I'd last seen him. I let him have his fill introducing me to all of these folks. There is not a better feeling in the world than showing off your children. He came to life as he bragged on me to his friends.

I asked him if he wanted to go and get something to eat, and he remarked wryly that "he was in a hospital, not in prison!" I had a good laugh. It was good to see that he still had his sense of humor.

I pointed out my truck to him and helped him into the passenger side. I really didn't know what to do or say. Emotions were very high between us as we just drove around through the mountainous roads on that beautiful day. The man whom I hadn't seen for over 15 years was less than a foot from me in my truck. *Am I really driving around with my dad?* I thought in wonder.

I don't think he could really believe it either because he kept touching my hand and forearm on the console in-between us. He would feel my hand over and over, making sure I was real, because it seemed like a dream to him. He held, rubbed, and patted my hand and forearm as I drove, almost as though he was catching up on loving on me. The touch of his hand on mine brought back good memories. I see now where I get my "touchy-feely" personality from. I am the type of person who doesn't mind a good hug, especially from my family. I tell people I'm kinesthetic. I enjoy laying my hands on you. That day I was reminded that I got this from my dad.

Finally, I had said as much as I could as far as chit-chat was concerned, and because my desperate need for my blessing continued to rise inside of me, I pulled over on the side of the road and parked the truck. I turned and looked him square in the eyes.

As I began to cry, I said, “Dad, I love you, but I have come up here for a specific reason.”

He said, “What is it, son?”

I blurted out, “I forgive you for everything you have done to me and my family. I know you did the best you could.”

Tears rolled down his cheeks. I guess he needed to hear that.

“Please forgive me for judging you and for all the things that I have done,” I continued.

“I forgive you, I forgive you,” he said, hanging on to my forearm.

“Dad,” I gathered myself as much as I could to say this with clarity and conviction. “I want my father’s blessing. Please bless me.”

He responded immediately, “I bless you son! I bless you! I love you. I have always loved you.”

We sat there in the truck and hugged each other for what seemed like forever. No more words were needed. After a couple of minutes sitting there in a healing embrace, I put the truck back into drive, and we went to get hamburgers.

At last we could sit and catch up on the missing 15 years. I shared with him pictures of his grandchildren, who he had never met. He was thrilled. I showed him updated pictures of my wife, Karen, who he hadn’t seen in a very long time. It was one of the best days of my life!



Chapter 22

Unintended Consequences

Unknown and hidden consequences accompany the father's blessing, consequences we might not expect. I will use my story to explain this in more detail.

When my father and I were getting to know each other again, a funny thing happened. Some of the same issues that were a problem when I was a child began to resurface. It seemed that my dad would use similar manipulation techniques to try and get his way, the very same "techniques" he employed when I was a child. When I first noticed this, I was disheartened, and I felt hurt about it. I couldn't believe we were going through the same things again! I thought, *Forty years later and we are back to this! You have to be kidding me!*

However, I needed to remember that even though *I* had matured and grown to a different level; even though God had given *me* revelation and *I* was at a place where I could handle certain things, my father had not moved on or matured at all! In a sense, that is where my dad was. He was still stuck in the 1960s, trying the same stuff he used back then (quite effectively, I might add). But, even though he hadn't matured or evolved in many ways, I had. I wasn't 6 years old any longer. So even though he reverted back to some of his old tricks when something didn't quite go his way (similar to a child), the difference was how I responded and dealt

with it.

Instead of being a child, I now had the tools and the wisdom to handle the situation. I just recognized it for what it was and chose not to participate in it. That may sound cold, but it is the truth. If we engage in old behavior patterns, we will spiral down into the same level of relationship we had before. I didn't want to do that. I refused to fight, argue, or be a pawn and get caught up in petty manipulation games. I was a grown man and wanted to act like it. So I did.

In these situations, we must remember to guard our hearts. We must be careful not to get our hopes up *so* high that we think everything is going to be perfect. The reality is, *everything* might not be. And that's OK! As long as we know it going in, there will be no major let downs, at least not by us. We must hope for the best, but be aware that it could take some time to work through some issues. Old behaviors from previous years may manifest. Guarding our hearts and choosing not to be too disappointed if our dads have not made any progress are critically important. Using wisdom and allowing God to bring change will allow for a smoother transition into the next phase of our relationships with our fathers.

Once my dad realized that I was not going to play the same old games, we were able to make progress on our new relationship. We don't have to be cold or mean. I wasn't. I was just firm, kind, loving, and unmoved. I didn't want to come across as disrespectful, but it was almost like dealing with a child with a bad attitude who tries every trick in the book to get his way. It may sound silly, but it's true.

We must not let this potential issue stop us from enjoying the bigger picture. We must use wisdom, discernment, and go into it with our eyes open, enjoying and savoring the occasion, but not assuming life is going to be perfect, like *Leave it to Beaver*, because it might not be.

Knowing this now would I have done anything differently? The answer is *yes*; I would have done it sooner!



Chapter 23

Results of the Blessing

The results of a father's blessing were nothing less than extraordinary! Relationally, I was able to reconnect with my father, whom I had been estranged from for so long. Spiritually, it released me to be more open, giving my testimony to others and ministering to others instead of living a life of selfishness and seclusion—concerned only with “my four and no more.” I began to see how my story could help other people. I have watched with my own eyes as people have been set free by taking action on this issue *because* they heard my story.

I also experienced a ripple effect of my father's blessing. People, including members of my own family, watched me as I went through the process of finding my dad. When I stepped out in faith and received my blessing, and then told my story, something amazing happened. My brothers and sister, who had not seen my father in a very long time, also reconciled with him. Praise God! People on both my side of the family and my wife's side of the family were reconciled with people they were having issues with.

Of course, when I came back to my prayer and deliverance class the next week and told my teacher, Ronda, what had happened, she *made* me give my testimony to the whole class. Even though I was sharing this for the first time, many people were inspired to take the step, reconcile with their fathers, and get their blessings. It was very difficult emotionally for me to give my testimony the

first time, but when I saw the blessing it was to so many and witnessed the breakthrough in their lives, I knew I had to keep doing it. The impact of my father's blessing was tangible, and it spread far and wide.

Of course, there are also as yet unknown benefits that I know we will see in my children's lives as the curse has been broken off them as well. As a father, I have no words to express how that makes me feel! Generational curses have been broken so my children's children will live in freedom and blessing.

God also restored my dad's relationship with *his* children. I can't put a price tag on that. My dad went from telling God that he didn't want to live any more to living with all of his children. I've seen the proof. Throughout both sides of my family, in the lives of many friends and classmates, and of course, in the yet-to-come fruit in the lives of those reading this book—the verdict is in. Getting my father's blessing was a good thing, and the fruit of it will continue to manifest for many years to come.

Financially, this blessing released me to become financially free, and I quickly built a net worth of over one million dollars. I became an expert investor, purchasing over \$20 million worth of real estate using none of my own money or credit! I even co-wrote a book on investing in real estate with a Christian perspective, along with creating a Home Study System to help others get started investing. From that a Coaching/Mentoring Program was birthed to help others one on one.1 <#ch28note>

I have also been blessed to speak and teach on follow topics:

- Breaking Financial Strongholds
- Embracing Kingdom Wealth Principles
- Investing in Real Estate
- And of course, The Father's Blessing2

In so many ways, receiving my father's blessing released breakthrough and blessing in the various arenas of my life. The same has been true for so many others as well. We must always remember that God goes before us, setting things up on our behalf, when we take steps of faith. It's not just about us—the ripple effect of these steps of faith will eternally impact others as well.

Endnotes

1. If you would like to get more information on investing in real estate or to get a copy of my book, visit <http://webuyhousesbook.com/>.
2. You can also learn more at <http://www.unlimitedvessels.com/>



Chapter 24

The Day After Christmas

After our reunion, my father came to live in a senior community near me, and we spent some really good years together. He was also able to spend quality time with his grandchildren, get reacquainted with family and friends, and even make some new friends. Unfortunately, he was suffering from an advanced case of lung disease, which continued to get worse. Every six months or so, he would have to go to the hospital for a period of time to receive treatment. A couple of years after our reunion, he was hospitalized again, but this time he was not able to quickly recover from the infection.

My dad had a nurse friend who visited often with him and who helped him organize a living will that stated that he did not want to be kept alive by machines, should he ever get that sick. I didn't know this until the situation became very serious that particular Christmas.

What started as another stint in the hospital turned out to be something much worse. My dad was in and out of hospitals a good bit because of his poor health. It almost became a regular thing—so much so that I didn't even consider the possibility that one day he might not make it out alive. I thought I was just making another visit to the hospital and that my dad would get better. It turned out to be the last time I ever saw him.

It was the day after Christmas. It was hard to enjoy the holiday, knowing my dad wasn't doing well. Those who have had this experience of watching one of their parents die will understand how I felt. Even now, looking back, I still wonder whether we handled it the right way. I think about that day a lot. I can't get it out of my head.

My father knew he was dying. A whole team of doctors, nurses, and family surrounded him. We had prayed and agonized for days and eventually acceded to his wishes not to be kept alive by machines. As I looked at him, I could see that he did not look good. His eyes looked at me intently as we gathered round his bed and spoke to him for the last time, two of us on one side and two on the other side. A machine was breathing for him. He had tubes down his throat and was very uncomfortable. He had been spitting up horrible stuff. He was weak. His lungs had taken all they could. He had been in the ICU for weeks, and the doctors, along with his personal nurse, told us what we had feared—except for a miracle from God, he wasn't going to make it through this one.

After watching him struggle to exist for many days—with all the medicines and the tubes down his throat—we knew that we had to honor his wishes. He hated being in the hospital. He didn't want to be kept alive indefinitely by machines. It was his choice, and I felt like we were bound to honor it, no matter how difficult it might be to do so. On the day after Christmas, the time had come.

The doctors dialed back his medicine on purpose so he would wake up. Up until now, when he *would* wake up on his own, he would be in so much pain that they would quickly give him more medicine, and he would go back under. He couldn't stay awake for long because the pain medicine kept him out. It was a very difficult thing to watch.

He had been unconscious for so long. I didn't know if he would be able to open his eyes. Standing there in front of my dad, my mind went back to what had happened over the last two years. I began recalling his whole life, both the good and the bad times. His life flashed before my eyes. As my dad woke up, the drugs

wearing off more and more, he began to realize where he was. I could tell he was scared. Fear and panic were in his eyes, almost like he knew what was happening.

The seriousness of the moment began to sink in on me. I realized that this was the last time I would communicate with my dad on Earth. The next time I saw him, he would have a new body. It was the only thought that comforted me. As I stood there, I prayed that God would give me the right words to say to him. He could see me. He could hear me. And he would be gone soon. Time was running out.

I tried to hold back my tears, but I couldn't. I told him again that I forgave him. I told him how much I loved him and appreciated him. I thanked him for forgiving me. I thanked him for the last two precious years we had spent together. I know he understood what I was saying. I could see it in his eyes. He began to cry. I held his hand like he did mine that day in the truck when he gave me his blessing.

I rubbed his hand, and I kept repeating that I loved him and that it was going to be OK. I wanted him to hear those words until he saw God's face. He was too weak to squeeze my hand back. The doctor turned off that machine, and we watched him go. It didn't take more than a few minutes because he was so weak. The memory of his face in that moment won't leave my mind. In some way, I felt as if I had killed him. I knew he was already dying, but we expedited it. God forgive me.

To this day I struggle with the decision of that day. I have to remind myself that he got two bonus years with his children and grandchildren. He would not have had those years if I hadn't taken that three hour trip to the mountains. Even though it was very difficult to be a part of his death, at least we were there with him at the end and he didn't die alone. He died knowing that he was loved, and he was leaving us in a better place than we had been a few years ago. The truth is, I'm still not over it. But I am thankful that I reconciled with him "in the living years."

Epilogue

I have told you my story for one simple reason—so you will take action. Please take this opportunity right now to reach out to your dad. Fathers, speak a blessing over your children. If your dad isn't the type who will act right away, don't sweat it! Give him this book or the blessing below or send him to FathersBlessing.com and let God work on him. Remember, if you take action, God will go before you to set things up. Just do it!

Please do me a favor and send me a comment, picture, or video of your story that I can use on fathersblessing.com. *Your* testimony could be the one to touch a heart and spur action. Somebody out there needs *your* story.

I would appreciate your help in spreading the word. Would you take a second right now and post <http://www.fathersblessing.com> on your Facebook wall or tweet it out to your list? Thank you in advance.

I believe this year is going to be a big year concerning the father's blessing! I am working to get the word out as much as possible—multiplying healing and freedom to as many people around the world as I know how. And you can help! Check out my Website, <http://www.fathersblessing.com>, where you can sign up for our free newsletter and get a free fathers blessing download. I am amazed at God's favor on this Website. It consistently ranks number one on Google when I search "father's blessing." The site gets thousands of visitors each month, without spending any money on marketing, and I believe this figure will go up exponentially as God reveals this message to the world. Site visitors are from more than one hundred countries, and more than half don't even speak English! One of my next projects is getting this book translated into other languages, as well.

I would like to also ask you to pray that I am able to accomplish what God wants me to with this message that He has placed on my heart. I believe that God has put me in this unique position for a reason, and I want to be faithful with the responsibility of spreading this message. I thank you in advance for your prayers and support.

If you would like to contact me, please e-mail me at info@fathersblessing.com I look forward to hearing from you. Until then, *I call you blessed!*



Your “Father’s Blessing”

My child, I love you! You are special. You are a gift from God. I thank God for allowing me to be a father to you. I bless you with the healing of all wounds of rejection, neglect, and abuse that you have suffered. I bless you with overflowing peace, the peace that only the Prince of Peace can give, a peace beyond comprehension. I bless your life with fruitfulness—good fruit, much fruit, and fruit that remains. I bless you with success. You are the head and not the tail; you are above and not beneath. I bless you with health and strength of body, soul, and spirit. I bless you with overflowing prosperity, enabling you to be a blessing to others. I bless you with spiritual influence, for you are the light of the world and the salt of the Earth. You are like a tree planted by rivers of water. You will prosper in all your ways. I bless you with a depth of spiritual understanding and a close walk with your Lord. You will not stumble or falter, for the Word of God will be a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path. I bless you with pure and edifying relationships in life. You have favor with God and people. I bless you with abounding love. You will minister God’s comforting grace to others. You are blessed, my child! You are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Amen!

Pictures



My step-dad Danny, brother Daniel, brother Chris, Dad, and me.



My brother Chris, Me, and Dad on Thanksgiving Day



My two dads. Amazingly, my stepfather forgave my dad for everything he had done or said and invited him to spend Thanksgiving with us. What an example he is!



My brother Chris with our dad



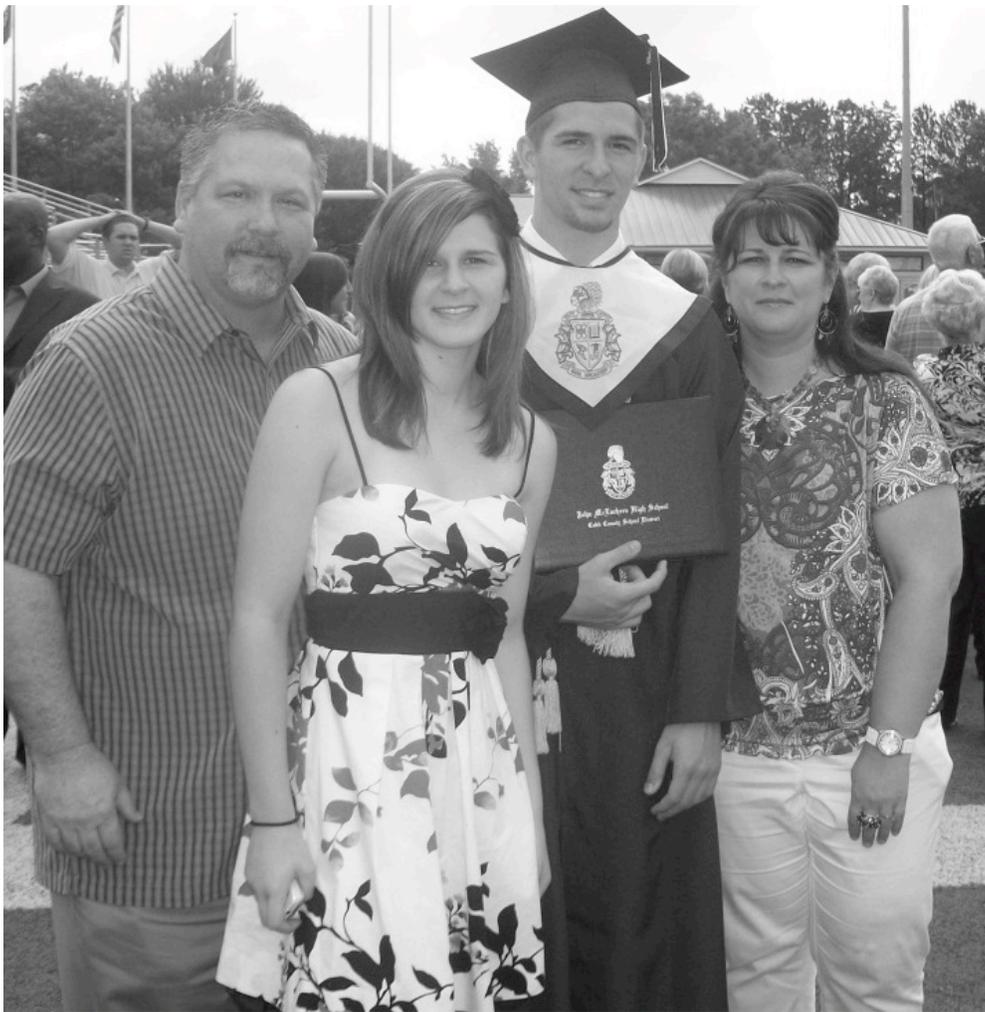
My sister Kelly with our dad



My daughter Rachel with her grandfather



My daughter Rachel and niece Amber with their grandfather



My beautiful wife and family!

About Billy O'Neal

Billy O'Neal is an author of multiple books, a sought-after speaker, and an accomplished entrepreneur who is currently being viewed in over 100 nations around the world. To discuss having Billy speak at your next service, event, retreat, or meeting, contact:

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