

## ***Blessing Them to Take Ownership***

### **KICK-START WITH ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS**

The best influence on your child growing up into a faith of their own is seeing you live a faith of your own. Perfect stories are not needed, just personal ones.

Try to avoid “fill-in-the-blank” faith conversations with your 7th grader after you give your Blessing. As our kids take ownership of their personal faith, it’s good for them to ask searching questions and wrestle through to an answer.

Remember that Blessings of maturity in Scripture and in recent history typically celebrated a young person entering adulthood around 13 or 14. It’s quite possible that our modern culture has not given early teens enough credit for what they are truly capable of. This is a chance to let them rise to a fuller potential, even in middle school.

Take some time to remember someone who unleashed a Blessing on you. What impact did it have? If you never experienced a Blessing, what kind of Blessing would have made a difference?

### **FRAMING UP OUR PURPOSE**

During this Family Experience, unleashing your Blessing is a powerful way to help your child claim God’s redemptive story as their own.

This is also your opportunity to help your teen experience the adventure of following God with all their heart, all their mind, and all their strength. Here are some scriptural truths to help you shape and communicate your Blessing. Feel free to find these scriptures in a translation that works best for you.

#### ***Blessings show up everywhere in God’s story.***

There are over 700 references to Blessings in Scripture. God’s original design was for the family to be the primary source for telling

His story, and the Blessing was the vehicle for releasing the next generation to live in that story. As you begin to frame your own Blessing, take some time to read a few Blessing stories in Scripture:

- Genesis 1:22: The first Blessing
- Genesis 27: A Blessing that did not go as planned but a Blessing that God still used
- Genesis 12: A Blessing with a challenge
- Genesis 37: Jacob blesses Joseph with a coat (another example of an imperfect Blessing that God uses)
- Luke 2:25-38: Jesus is blessed by Simeon
- Blessings are about spiritual inheritance.



*"It seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus; that you might know the certainty concerning the things in which you were instructed." --Luke 1:3-4 (WEB)*

*"...but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." --John 20:31 (WEB)*

*"You, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Yahweh searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you." --I Chronicles 28:9*

The people of Israel depended on oral traditions to pass on God's truth to the next generation. There weren't any videos, books, or powerpoints to make use of--only sharing the stories verbally. In the New Testament, first-hand stories were written down, but their purpose echoes that of Old Testament Blessings: God wants every generation to know the promises He has made and kept so that they can be sure of the faith they embrace. So take time to think through how you want to give your child an inheritance of God's promises. Be ready to share with them where God's imprint is already evident in their life and offer joyful anticipation for His handiwork in the future.

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*"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things." --1 Corinthians 13:11 (WEB)*

*"The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom. The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied. The years of your life will be increased." --Proverbs 9:11-12 (WEB)*

*"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.'" --Matthew 16:15-16 (WEB)*

Eugene Peterson, in his book *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, talks about doing the "next right thing" on our faith journey. That really gets to the heart of what Paul is saying in I Corinthians. One chapter is ending, and another is beginning. This new chapter has greater challenges and rewards. It will require growth and discomfort sometimes. But seeking out what it looks like to follow hard after God in each new chapter is a simple description of Christian maturity.

Consider what it's going to look like for your child to grow up in their faith over the next few years. Make a list of ways you can help them celebrate the chapters they have finished and enthusiastically anticipate the next chapter. How can your blessing help them do the next right thing? Where might you need to get out of the way and let them figure a few things out?

## **IDEAS FOR UNLEASHING AND CONTINUING BLESSINGS**

Be available and mentally present for late-night conversations. It seems like the later it is, the more teens are ready to talk! A lot of really good conversations can happen just before bedtime.

Experience a family Seder (Passover) meal. Do your own at home or ask your church to organize one. There are Messianic Seder meal guides online. The meal is full of symbols and reminders of God's Blessing.

Set aside two hours a month to serve meals to the homeless or meet the needs of hurting people. You'll be blessed to be a blessing.

Enjoy a movie-thon with either J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy or C.S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. Make sure you sneak in little tidbits about the author's faith story and reason for creating these adventures. Both were great friends and devoted followers of Christ. Their stories are meant to reflect God's story and enduring truth in a fantastic fictional setting. Both used young, adolescent-aged heroes and heroines to do great things, and both sets of movies have fatherly figures administering Blessings.

Add an H to their name. In Hebrew, the sound of an H represents the breath of God. Give them a plaque or card or pillow with an H discreetly embedded somewhere in their name, so that when they hear breath, they'll remember they are filled with the breath of God.