

9. THE BLESSING

The Creator cares about all living creatures—those walking, crawling, swimming, and on the wing above the earth. We know that God blessed the water creatures and flying creatures because Moses made a note of it (*Genesis 1:22*). God was committing his power to making sure these species would reproduce their own kind for many generations to come (*Genesis 1:22*). A **blessing** from God is a big deal, even for tiny creatures. Imagine what would it mean if God blessed the crown of his creation! Read *Genesis 1:28*, ... just the first three words.

God's blessing of the two human creatures is different from the blessing he extended to the birds and fishes. When God blessed Adam and his partner, he was expressing his deep love for humankind. Like the three persons of the Trinity, the first humans longed for a loving relationship with each other and their Creator. But here we learn that God loved them first (*1 John 4:19*). He loved them in eternity, when they were still an idea in his divine heart. His love was expressed in a blessing that was rooted in action. Notice, too, Adam and Eve did not do anything to deserve this blessing. Yet, from that moment on, the door to the warehouse of God's **resources** was open (*John 16:23*). That is a big deal!

You and I are the **beneficiaries** of God's promise to keep meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of all human beings. At the top of the list of blessings is the gift of God's love. The outpouring of his blessings continued even after our first ancestors rebelled against God. This blessing marks the first time we hear about God's love for his human creatures. Now read *Matthew 5:1-12*. You might be surprised by what you discover.

If you have ever wondered how Jesus fits into the big picture of God's story, this text tells you a lot. In it, Jesus is asserting his relationship to the Triune God who spoke that first blessing. Did you count all the *blesseds*? Depending on how one counts them, there are either eight or nine specific blessings in all. They are called **The Beatitudes**. The word means, *blessed*, or happy.

This event happened at the very beginning of his ministry on earth—his first sermon. Picture Jesus—God's Son in a human body—sitting on a mountainside, speaking to his followers. Eight

blessings tumble from the rabbi's lips, echoing across the valley like the crack-crack-crack of a 21-gun salute. What a bold statement! With this handful of blessings, Jesus taught the simple truth that he is God. To emphasize his claim, Jesus blessed his people as God had done in the beginning, only he multiplied the one blessing in Genesis times eight (or nine).

The fountain of God's love is still pouring blessings out on us today. It has never stopped. Better yet, God gave his best blessing to us. That blessing is Jesus. Jesus is not distant or removed from our lives. He cares about us. The Son of God came to earth as a flesh-and-blood person, like you and me. Jesus came to prove his Father's love for sinful humankind by dying for us (*1 John 4:9*).

God is a spirit. It may be hard to picture the Creator blessing Adam and Eve. It is not hard to imagine the world's Savior, Jesus, stretching out his human arms on a bloody, wooden cross to show us how much he loves us (*2 Corinthians 5:15*). That image belongs in the art gallery of our hearts. It is the finest example of God's grace and compassion for his fallen human creatures.

END VIDEO. BEGIN CONVERSATIONS.

REMEMBER WHEN ...

Remember a special way that God blessed you in your life.

WORD POWER: **blessing; resources; beneficiaries; The Beatitudes**

FROM THE TOUR

Imagine (out loud) what kind of resources are stored in God's warehouse for us to use.

What was Jesus implying when he echoed God's first blessing for the first humans?

What comfort do you take in learning that God is actively engaged in our lives?

LEARN MORE

Read *John 15:1-17*. List five spiritual blessings that God gives to you every day.

Read *Matthew 6:33*. What priorities should we set when we are seeking God's blessings?

Read *Malachi 3:10*. What kind of response should we expect when we ask God for blessings?

TAKE-AWAYS

Invite each family member to think of one particular blessing for which to thank God.

In addition to thanking God for our blessings, what else should we do with our blessings?



Blessed is the one whose transgressions are
forgiven,
and whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not
count
and in whose spirit is no deceit.