

D. 2 dangers

1. Not do anything- _____ hours without action = “just a good talk”
2. Trying to do too much- friends, family, coworkers, neighborhood- most have...
 - 5 special friends- lifelong, intimate, often spouse, family
 - 15 close friends- trust, hang out, look to for sympathy, your small group
 - 50 friends- invite to a wedding, your closer church, work, neighbor friends
 - 150 casual friends- invite to a big, big party, your clan, whole church
 - 500 acquaintances- know by name, remember how you met, your community
3. Solution – pray and pick one context, neighbors usually are 5-8- beside, in front, and behind (except rural)

TAKING IT HOME- B.L.E.S.S. EVERYDAY- begin with PRAYER- get a JOURNAL

1. Each day, write BLESS, then the names of your 5-8 friends, family, coworkers, and/or neighbors who need Jesus
2. Take 3-5 minutes to pray for each- listen as you pray- write any insights
3. Draw a line and ask God to show you what you should do (if anything) and then go do it
4. Throughout the day- keep open to the leading of God’s Word & Spirit- to be a blessing
5. A sample blessing prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, you love _____. You died for them. You want them in heaven with you forever and you want them to bring heaven down too. You spent your mornings in prayer Lord Jesus, and commanded me to pray for everyone. So please, bless them. Make your face shine on them. Be gracious to them. Give them peace. Help them to know the depth of Jesus’ love for them. Bless them Relationally (family, friends, work)... Physically (health, finances, sleep)... Mentally (worry, anger, wrong thoughts) ... Spiritually (hunger for God, 10 commandments, faith)Give me opportunities to love them, serve them and share with them. I now wait for you Holy Spirit, to lead me to pray..... I hear you telling me to Thank you, Lord Jesus, for blessing my friend. Now make me a blessing by...

- Based upon Priests’ Blessing, Num 6:23-24, The Lord’s Prayer, Mt 6:9-13, Jesus’ example & command, Mk 1:35-39, I Tim 2:1-6, Jesus’s love- Jn 3:16, Rom 5:8, Eph 3:14-21, Jesus’ blessing, Lk 2:52, I Thess 5:23, Ex 20; Paul’s prayer for boldness & opportunity, Col 4:2-6, Eph 6:18-20, the Holy Spirit’s power, Acts 1:8, 2:4, 4:31, blessed to be a blessing- I Pe 3:9
 - For more info see B.L.E.S.S. (book), and www.bless-book.org- do you want the book?
- ❖ ____ Yes, I Pledge To Pray For My “Neighbors” For The Next 5 Weeks- Till Easter (4/17).

GETTING OUR FEET WET- the story of Bethany Cell Church

DIVINING INTO SCRIPTURE

I. GOD WANTS TO BLESS US

- Gen 1²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” 9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.
- Gen 12 The LORD had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
- Num 6²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: 24 ““The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”’
- Ps 29¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.
- Mt 5³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- Mk 10⁴ He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.
- Lk 24⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” 50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

II. OUR GOAL- 5 EVERYDAY WAYS TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR & CHANGE THE WORLD

A. OUR FAITH

1. 96% of Christians believe that meeting Jesus is the best thing that could happen to a person
2. 96% of Christians believe that being a witness for Jesus is part of their faith.

B. OUR PRACTICE- ____% of Christians actively share their faith.

C. THE RESULT

1. Personally- fear→ guilt→blame→rationalization→s_____ = comfort zone
2. Families & churches- ____% of our kids, ____% of our churches
3. Society- more fracture, dysfunction, pushing each other away, eternity in

D. GOD'S ANSWER- for the e_____ rhythm of life

- **B**- Begin with Prayer
- **L**- Listen
- **E**- Eat
- **S**- Serve
- **S**- Share your Story

III. WHAT DOES BLESSING MEAN?

A. Definition- literally- to bend the knee, to bestow good, make full (almost 500x in the Bible)

- To bend the knee- ____ is the source, bestowing good is our deep d_____

B. Blessing is associated with-

1. Peace-shalom-prosperity, health, wholeness
2. Grace- kindness, love, fondness, delight
3. Abundance- multiply, fruitfulness, filling
4. God's big acts & purpose - creation, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Priests, David, Jesus, Christians

C. Synonyms

1. Abundance, approval, appreciate, accomplish goals, advocate, authority
2. Benefit, beseech, build up, beautify, bounty
3. Encouraged, endurance, enriched, equipped
4. Fruitful, full, flourish, favor, fertile, family, faithful, fellowship, fun, fondness, God's face shining
5. Grace, good, godly, glad, growth, glory, gain
6. Holy, happy, healthy, whole, hope
7. Peace, prosperity, protection, purpose, power, perseverance, praise, prayer, God's presence
8. Satisfied, sanctified, successful, strength, salvation

D. Opposite of curse- belittle, battle, call for destruction, diminishment, disaster, disease, fear, terror, tear down, punishment, weary, worn out, madness- Dt 28

IV. WHO SHOULD WE BLESS?

A. God is blessed (full, complete, happy) & blesses people & creation (especially poor, His people, children)

B. We are made to bless God, people, & creation – especially God's people, the needy, & lost

C. Even our enemies??

- Lk 6²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.
- ³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.
- I Pet 3⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

D. A lifestyle- do people feel b_____ when they are around me?

V. HOW CAN WE BLESS THEM?

A. Begin with Prayer- to bless means to bow the knee, beseech God for others

B. The great examples

1. Jesus- how He began His ministry (Mt 4), started his day, (Mk 1), called the 12 (Lk 6), prepared for the crucifixion (Lk 22), sent the 12 (Lk 24)
2. Disciples - how they began- Pentecost, taking the Gospel to hostile Jerusalem, the Gentiles, the world, planting churches, Athens (Acts 2, 4, 10, 13, 14, 17)

C. The high command, privilege & promise

1. Pray for everyone- for God wants all saved- I Tim 2:1-6
2. For ourselves- & other believers- pray for opportunities & boldness, Col 4:2-6