

**LOVE**  
**Without Hypocrisy**  
 (in the book of Romans)  
**31 – The issue of "Blessing" others**

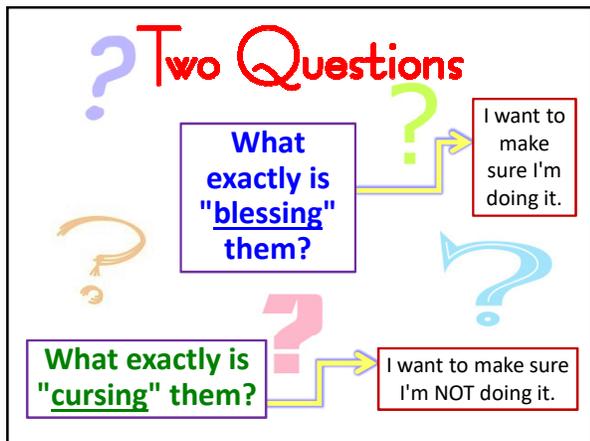
Bless those who persecute you; **bless** and do not curse.  
 Romans 12:14 (NIV)

**"Have you done so this week?"**

★ With a desire that they really do get blessed? ★

**This is part of what it means to "follow" Jesus.**

A willingness to do this distinguishes between saved and unsaved.



**IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...**

There are TWO groups of words translated as "**BLESS, BLESSING, ETC.**"

There are TWO groups of words translated as "**CURSE, CURSING, ETC.**"

**KNOWING THE DIFFERENCES WILL HELP US TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE TO DO!**

Today, we look at the concept of "blessing."

**"BLESSING" #1**  
 A favorable state of being.

**"BLESSING" #2**  
 Speaking well of something.

**"BLESSING" #1**  
 A favorable state of being:  
 OFTEN TRANSLATED AS:  
 "Blessed" or "happy."  
**WORD USED:** To describe a *condition* we may experience. (A statement of a fact, not a command.)

## "BLESSING" #1 "BLESSED" OR "HAPPY."

- This is the word used in the "Sermon on the Mount," to describe the Christian's situation, *regardless of external circumstances.*
- This word is difficult to translate... but it's *not* because we don't know the translation!

 The problem is that we tend to view "happiness" only in terms of feelings or external circumstances!

 Scripture views this "happiness" in terms of the whole situation!

When we look at the whole situation...

- Beyond just the external circumstances or feelings.

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God's people discover that they are blessed!

- Recipients of God's favor and all that comes with it!

**Blessing #1 = "A favorable state of being"**  
The favorable condition we are in, regardless of feelings or external circumstances. In Christ Jesus, we are blessed!

## "BLESSING" #2 Speaking well of something:

**OFTEN TRANSLATED AS:** "Blessing" or "thanks" or "praise" (depending on context).

**WORD USED:** To describe a condition we may experience, or an activity we may do. (May be a statement of fact, an action, or a command.)

## "BLESSING" #2 "SPEAKING WELL (OF SOMETHING)."

- This word is used in a variety of ways, when "speaking well" of something.
  - > "Praise" given to God. ("Blessed be the Lord!")
  - > "Thanks" (to God) for something. ("We blessed the food.")
  - > "Blessing" given to people (by God or by other people) – speaking well of them, or desiring good for them.

- This is the word used in Romans 12:14, to show us how to respond to persecution.

Bless those who persecute you;  
bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:14 (NIV)

- This is our duty, even if they aren't "speaking well" of us!

**Blessing #2 = "Speaking well of [something]"**  
They may say "bad words" to you... ["curse"]  
You need to say "good words" to them. ["bless"]

## One Question

In that case...

If I want to "bless" them ...

How do I "desire good for" them?

How do I "speak well of" someone who is hurting me?

What am I supposed to do?

### HOW TO RESPOND TO THOSE WHO HURT YOU...

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.  
Romans 12:14 (NIV)

**You BLESS them**  
– by what you say and what you do.

< YOU EXPRESS **LOVE** IN WORD AND IN DEED. >

Expressing **LOVE** in word and in deed. → **THIS LOVE IS ACTIVE, NOT MERELY PASSIVE.**

YOU DON'T SIMPLY:

- ✓ **ABSTAIN** from retaliation, or
- ✓ **QUIETLY ENDURE** the persecution.

→ LOVE WILL EXPRESS ITSELF IN:

- ✓ **YOUR ATTITUDE** - a kind disposition toward them.
- ✓ This will determine **YOUR ACTIONS** toward them.

### OUT WITH THE "BAD"

- We need to do the opposite of what comes natural! (Our natural tendency is to respond in ways that go along with the word "curse.")
  - ┆ If **THEY** do wrong to you, do the opposite to them!
  - ┆ If **WE** are tempted to do wrong, do the opposite!

### IN WITH THE "GOOD"

- Respond the way you would for someone who did good things to you!
  - ┆ We've seen in the past that God has promised to turn their evil into good. So we're simply responding with **GOOD** to something that God is turning into **GOOD!**

### YOUR SINFUL NATURE WILL TEMPT YOU TO "PAY THEM BACK" FOR THEIR WRONGS

- The sinful nature that we were born with wants to do what is **hurtful**.
- The Spirit of God, who resides in all saved people, wants to do what is **healing**.

**DON'T TRY TO DO BOTH!**

From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

James 3:10-12 (ESV)

### NEED EXAMPLES OF THINGS TO DO?

**SPECIFIC ACTIONS WILL VARY**

- They depend on the circumstances and the individuals involved.

**BASIC CONCEPTS OR PRINCIPLES CAN GUIDE US**

- These can be grouped into three categories:
  - ✓ Your attitude and desires.
  - ✓ Your talk.
  - ✓ Your actions toward them.

### Start with Yourself!

**YOUR ATTITUDE AND DESIRES ... (& EXAMPLES)**

- Love them the way Jesus did.
- Forgive them; don't hold it against them.
- Want them to be saved. (This is the ultimate good you can wish for them!)
- Pray for them. (Especially for their repentance and salvation.)

(EXAMPLES)

"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you ..."  
Matthew 5:44 (NASB)

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.  
Romans 10:1 (NIV)

And [Stephen] fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died.  
Acts 7:60 (NLT)

(EXAMPLES)

Paul replied, ... "I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am [= saved], except for these chains."  
Acts 26:29 (NLT)

"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."  
Luke 6:27-28 (NASB)

**FOR MANY OF US, HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE IS A LOT MORE DIFFICULT THAN HAVING THE RIGHT ACTIONS!**

<p><b>IF:</b> Our <b>ATTITUDE</b> changes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓ ↓ ↓</p> <p><b>THEN:</b> Our minds will be open to opportunities for <b>ACTION</b>.</p>	<p><b>The SPIRIT uses God's Word:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To make <b>CHANGE</b> possible.</li> <li>To open our eyes to <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>.</li> </ul>
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**YOUR TALK ... (& EXAMPLES)**

- A gentle response when they verbally abuse you. – The opposite of insulting or reviling them.
- Saying good things about them (when possible). – The opposite of backbiting and gossip.

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger.  
Proverbs 15:1 (NLT)

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.  
Proverbs 10:12 (ESV)

(EXAMPLES)

Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. However, do this with gentleness and respect, ...  
1 Peter 3:15b-16a (HCSB)

- BE AWARE:** Sometimes, in faithfulness to God, you may have to say things they don't want to hear.

At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him.  
Acts 7:57-58a (NIV)

**STOP TELLING ME THE TRUTH!**

**YOUR ACTIONS TOWARD THEM ... (& EXAMPLES)**

- Put their good ahead of your own.
- Build them up; do good to/for them.
- Inspire them to do what is good.
- Encourage them if they are experiencing hurt.

Whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to **everyone**, especially to our Christian brothers and sisters.  
Galatians 6:10 (NLT)

Persecutors are included in **"EVERYONE."**

(EXAMPLES)

Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God-- even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

1 Cor. 10:32-33 (NIV)

Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink; ...

Romans 12:20a (WEB)

**GROWING, guided by God's WORD!**

- **As we learn God's Word:**
  - ✓ We will learn principles for interacting with others.
  - ✓ The Spirit can use the Word to change our values.
- **As we apply God's Word to our specific situations:**
  - ✓ We will discover specific things we can do.

**The KEY to all of this:**  
 God's Word must have residence in our heart!



**Your Mission...**

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:14 (NIV)

**BLESS THEM ... FOR THE GLORY OF GOD!**

... **whatever** you do, do it all for the glory of God.

1 Cor. 10:31 (NIV)

**"WHATEVER" includes interaction with our persecutors!**

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# Your Mission...

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."

Romans 12:14

**THE WORD "BLESSING" IS USED TWO DIFFERENT WAYS IN THE N. T.**

(2 different N.T. Greek word groups)

## Blessings - "Type 1"

A happiness related to favorable circumstances (though the focus is not always on *external* circumstances, which may vary greatly).

### **BLESSED IN ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO/WITH GOD.**

- Those who are aware of their spiritual weakness and their need for God - Matthew 5:3-6; Luke 6:20-21.
- Those who love God, who trust him and remain faithful to him, accept his Word, etc. - Matthew 11:6; 13:16; Luke 11:27-28; John 20:29; Romans 4:6-8; James 1:25; Revelation 1:3.

### **BLESSED IN ONE'S RELATIONSHIP TO/WITH PEOPLE.**

- Those who pursue love for neighbor, who try to interact with people in a way that honors God - Matthew 5:7-9; 24:45-46; Luke 12:37-38; John 13:13-17; Acts 20:35.
- Those who are hated by the world, because of their faithfulness to God; those enduring trials - Matthew 5:10-12; Luke 6:22; James 1:12; 5:11; 1 Peter 3:14-15; 4:14.

## Bless; blessing - "Type 2"

Speaking well of someone/something; asking God do bestow his favor on someone (to "bless" them); the good that is spoken (the "blessing"); the one who is spoken of (the one who is "blessed"); blessing expressed in the form of a gift or an inheritance.

### **BLESSING AS EXPRESSIONS OF PRAISE AND THANKS.**

- Expressions of praise (and thanks) to God - Luke 1:64, 68; 24:53; Romans 1:25; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Revelation 5:12-13.
- Expressions of thanks (for something) - Matthew 14:19; Matthew 26:26; Luke 9:16; 24:30; 1 Corinthians 10:16.

### **PEOPLE WHO ARE DESCRIBED AS "BLESSED."**

- God/Jesus speaking well of people; pronouncing a good "verdict" on those who are saved; people being a recipient of *eternal* blessing - Matthew 25:34; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:8-9, 14; Hebrews 6:7; 1 Peter 3:9b.
- People "blessing" other people - Luke 2:34.
- Jesus, as king (and human) - Matthew 21:9; 23:39; Luke 19:38.

### **OUR OBLIGATION TO "BLESS" OTHERS.**

- Our general way of life - James 3:9-10 (*not* to include cursing).
- The way we are to respond to persecutors - Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Peter 3:9a.

### **A "BLESSING" EXPRESSED BY TANGIBLE GIFTS.**

- Giving offspring the "blessing" of an inheritance - Hebrews 11:20-21; 12:17 (didn't receive it).
- A gift to needy Christians; generosity - 2 Corinthians 9:5-6.