

The Blessing

Welcoming Your Child Into Adulthood

By
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Introduction

For tens of thousands of years, in many countries and cultures throughout the world, rites of passage have been an important part of human culture. A rite of passage is a ritual or ceremony that marks a change in a person's social status. There are ceremonies in many cultures that memorialize the birth of a child, puberty, graduation, engagement, marriage, death, and other stages of life.

In our western culture, while we still celebrate marriage through a wedding ceremony and observe death through a funeral, we lack a generally accepted rite of passage from childhood into adulthood. This rite of passage that occurs around the time of puberty is sometimes called a "blessing."

What is a blessing?

The Hebrew word for "to bless" is baruch. Baruch means "a good word." When we bless our child, we are placing our "seal of approval" upon them and giving them power to prosper in many areas of life, including in marriage, with children, in finances, health and career.

Why do children need the blessing of their parents?

A ceremonial blessing is an act of the parents recognizing the passage of a son or daughter emotionally and spiritually into manhood or womanhood. It helps to establish their identity and purpose as an adult. Establishing identity answers the question, "Who am I?" Establishing purpose answers the question, "What am I here for?" Additionally, when we release our children into this new season in life, we are also releasing them to take on more responsibility and decision-making.

There is something inside every child that makes him crave for a blessing from his parents. And without that blessing, many people spend a lifetime searching for identity and purpose in life. They are always trying to prove themselves worthy to their mom or dad. They are constantly seeking attention, affirmation, and acceptance--in all of the wrong places. They are often striving to prove their manhood or womanhood to themselves and to others through their sexual encounters, the way they dress, their work, the money they make, or by attempting daring feats.

Is it right to bless a rebellious, misbehaving child?

Yes. We need to separate identity and behavior. Remember, when we bless a child, we are giving them power to prosper in life, not condoning rebellion and disobedience. We are blessing them for who they are--a child of God created with infinite value, dignity and worth--not for what they do.

When does the parental blessing occur?

It should probably occur sometime between the ages of 12 and 15, depending on the emotional maturity of the child. One sign will be when the child starts to take an interest in the opposite sex and begins to lose an interest in childish things. Another clear sign is when a child reaches puberty.

How does a parent bless his child?

Weddings. Graduations. Award banquets. We remember those occasions, in part, because they were sealed by a ceremony and a celebration. Ceremonies often drive a stake in the ground memorializing a season or time in one's life. Memorable ceremonies do three things:

- 1. Ascribe Value.** They say to the person being honored, "You are important." "This occasion is important."
- 2. Employ Symbols.** A ring, a pen, a necklace, a plaque, a certificate all provide recognition of the significance of an event.
- 3. Launch a New Season in Life.** They say, in essence, "from this day forward, things are going to be different." And they do it with celebration.

What should be the format of the ceremony?

The ceremony for the blessing can come in all shapes and sizes. It can be conducted in a home, church or even a private room in a restaurant. Invite family members, pastor, and friends you wish to come.

Here is an example that you can use to create your own ceremony for your child.

The Blessing of [child's full name]

1. Welcome and invocation by the mother, father, or minister.
2. Introduction by mother or father. What is a blessing and what is it for?
3. Mother prays for her child.
4. Father (grandfather, Uncle, mentor) blesses the child **[See Sample Blessing]**.
5. Father presents the ring or necklace to the child as a symbol of the blessing.
6. Other family members and friends present speak about the child.
7. Celebration feast!

What should a blessing say?

You can say anything you'd like that imparts a "good word" to your child. Here is just one sample.

The Blessing of [child's full name]

[Child's name], you are my [daughter, son], whom I love; with you I am well pleased. You are no longer a little [girl, boy] You are now a [woman, man]. You are well equipped with everything you need to fulfill your destiny as a [woman, man] of God.

Before the foundation of the earth, God Almighty planned for your life and planned for you to be a [woman, man]. Psalm 139 says that He created your inmost being. He knit you together in your mother's womb. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. All the days ordained for you were written by God even before you were born. There is nothing that you will ever need to do to become a [woman, man] because God has made you one. Tonight, we are simply recognizing publicly what God has done in you.

[Child's name], [Here, name all of the wonderful attributes and character traits of your child. For example, for your daughter you might say something like, "God has made you intelligent--you have a strong mind. God has made you beautiful. I've also noticed since the time you were a little girl that our Lord has given you a great ability to understand right and wrong, good and evil. You are able to quickly read and understand people. You get along with everyone and are well-respected and well thought of by others, young and old alike. You are a leader and have used your leadership skills to make wise decisions concerning your friends and in many other areas of your life."]

I am beyond joyful that God has given you to our family as a gift. You are a wonderful [daughter, son]. I love you and bless you with the promises of God. You are His and have been set apart from the world for his Holy purposes. I bless you with God's everlasting love, wisdom, peace, and joy. I bless you with sexual purity, marital fidelity, and many children of your own. May God continue to keep His hand of favor and prosper you in all that you do, and may you serve our Lord Jesus Christ all the days of your life. Amen.

[Present ring, bracelet, necklace or other symbol of the blessing.]

[Start celebration and feast!]

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