

Discussion Guide: Bless You

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.
Titus 3:1-2 (NIV)

November 9, 2003: "Bless You" by Rich Vincent - Pastor Singles Ministries CPC. Today's sermon is on our participating in, "God's intention to bless the world." In Psalm 67 we learn the reason we have been blessed by God is so we can be a reason to live...to be a blessing to others. But before we get into the Psalm, let's take a look at some background scriptures.

Background: With our Christmas offering in view, let us consider the word "blessing." It has almost become a cliché in our Christian experience. The truth is God chooses to bless us, not for our own comfort or gain, but so that we will be in a position to bless others.

Question 1: What sorts of things do we typically think of as a blessing?

Note to Facilitator: When it focuses on the material object (health, wealth, feelings, finances), rather than the Blessor, then it falls short of what God intends we would be most focused on, and may even be an unbiblical way of thinking of what God's blessing is.

Read Numbers 6:22-26. (Point out that each line expands on previous thought: "bless" is further clarified by "shine"; "shine" further developed by "give peace")

Question 2: What is God's chief blessing?

Question 3: What is our response?

Note to Facilitator: His chief blessing is Himself. And having received Him, our response is to go and share Him with others (who have not received Him as well as those who have.)

The first thing God does after creating the world (Gen 1:27) is bless everything in it. Then there was the Fall, then the Flood, after which God re-establishes Creation (Gen 9:1) and again, blesses it. When sin prevails again, God's blessing shifts from being to all creation generally to one man specifically (Gen. 12:1-3) and God's plan is to bless the world *through* the one man. He promises to bless Abraham so *that* Abraham can bless others (God decides to bless others *through* Abraham.)

Read Matt. 5:3 and Galatians 3:8. Believers receive the blessing promised through Abraham. Just like God's chosen people of the O.T., we have received blessing and therefore are suppose to bless others.

Question 4: Why has God blessed us?

Note to Facilitator: So that we can be set loose in the world to fulfill his eternal purposes. Also, it is not that we bless others out of our *own* resources, but we are used by God as a conduit for His blessing to others *through* us.

Read Psalm 67. O.T. Jews would sing this at Harvest time. Notice: nothing is said about the food, very little said about the blessing, but more about what the blessing is meant to *do*! This is similar to the passage in Numbers, with 2 differences: "Elohim" (Creator of Nations) rather than "Yahweh" (Intimate Covenant Keeper). Other difference is "bless us" instead of "bless you." These show that Psalm 67 is a prayer that the God of all nations would be glorified by His blessing in all nations.

Question 5: Why should God bless us?

Note to Facilitator: So we can give the same things He has given us... and so we can bless in the same way we have been blessed... grace, kindness, acceptance, and love.

Significance:

1. We (the Church), like Abraham and the Nation of Israel, has been blessed (chosen) for the sake of the less-blessed (those outside the Church). So the worst thing to do is huddle up, consume or hoard our blessings and not reach out. Christian Individualism which says "it is just me and Jesus" leads to Christian Consumerism which says "I need a church that will meet my needs" which leads to Christian Narcissism which says "my needs are the important thing." Rather than be this way, Christ calls us to be servants—to be more concerned about others than ourselves.
2. When we bless others, we attract those outside of His Family. See II Tim. 2:24-26 and Titus 3:1-5.

Final Question: How are you doing with this call? Are you being convicted about your lack of reaching out to people less fortunate... or to the Lost? Is there a person/persons God wants me to bless

Note to Facilitator: Have a short time of silent prayer where you consider the above questions, then, after an appropriate time, ask this one final question: Lord, what do you want us (me) to do to be a blessing to other as you have blessed us (me)?

Tools for Application:

- Have everyone share one person that came to mind during the time you were asking them to pray silently. Then come up with one concrete thing they plan to do between now and next meeting. Have them write it down on a notecard you provide and stick it somewhere they will see it later this week.
- Pray about making a sacrificial offering to this year's Christmas Offering.
- Plan to bring bag(s) of groceries next Sunday and leave at your bumper for Wheeler.
- Pray Psalm 67 for all people every day.
- Pray that God will make you a channel through which he blesses others.
- Pray the Prayer of St. Francis:

"O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, harmony;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light, and
Where there is sorrow, joy.
Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand; to be loved
as to love; for it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life."