



LIFEC H A N G E B O O K S

THE POWER
OF SPOKEN
BLESSINGS

BILL GOTHARD

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Multnomah Books

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Chapter 1



EVIDENCE OF POWER

After fourteen years, their marriage had hit a flat spot.

It wasn't as though they'd been arguing or fighting or ignoring one another. They were still a deeply devoted couple. And yet...after fourteen years, they had expected and hoped for something more. Where was that higher, deeper level of spiritual bonding between them? It simply wasn't there, and both of them knew it.

So they tried something new.

They began to bless each other—actually speaking aloud words of blessing to one another—at the beginning of each day.

That was more than a quarter-century ago. Today, Bill and Dorothy Jean will tell you that by blessing each other

daily, they've developed an extraordinary intimacy of heart, soul, and mind. Their morning discussions are rich and inspiring, and God's power becomes evident to them throughout each day, based on the blessings they gave and received at sunrise.

Offering this kind of spoken blessing to someone is something many of us probably can't quite picture ourselves doing. The situation (as we imagine it) would be awkward at best. Besides, if we decided to try, would we even know how? Just the thought of coming up with the right words is enough of a challenge to hold us back.

But what are the consequences of "holding back"? What might we be missing? What if we could tap into a heavenly reservoir of power, encouragement, and lasting joy—for ourselves, our loved ones, and even for our adversaries?

In fact, we can.

A FIRST BLESSING

At the close of a recent ministry seminar, a teenager came up and asked to speak with me. Under court supervision, she'd had several brushes with the law. I counseled and prayed with her.

Later she wrote me this note:

"You helped me see my need to give God my will, but then you also prayed, and in your prayer you

blessed me. That was the first time I had ever been blessed. That blessing has exhorted me to live up to what you said. My life has taken a drastic 180-degree turn! I am amazed by what God actually said in His Word. I have never had understanding like I have now when it comes to reading His Word.”

She concluded: “The blessing you gave me started all this, and I don’t know how to thank you!”

Our ministry offices receive letter after letter with stories just like this one. Lives, marriages, and whole families are experiencing deepening relationships and spiritual encouragement as we continue to teach the importance of spoken blessings. On an even deeper level, we’ve been receiving accounts of how spoken blessings have overturned the tormenting memories and oppression of verbal abuse from the past.

A GRANDFATHER’S CURSE

Every time Alicia thought about her grandfather, a violent and painful scene flashed through her mind. Ten years old, she had been trying to comfort her mother, who had been severely burned in a house fire. Her grandfather came into the room and gave Alicia a glare filled with hate and disgust. He walked over to her, jerked her up from the bed, and threw her across the room onto a couch.

Still in shock from this assault, Alicia then felt the lash of his bitter words: “You’ll never be good for anything but to be a—” They were words a ten-year-old mind couldn’t comprehend, but there was no mistaking the hatred and contempt.

Why would a grandfather spew out such deadly venom toward his ten-year-old granddaughter? Because to him, she represented the shame his daughter had brought upon the family by giving birth out of wedlock. On top of that, Alicia’s father was from another ethnic group—a fact that was obvious from the young girl’s physical features.

Throughout her childhood and teenage years, Alicia continued to bear the curses of shame from her mother’s immorality. Each time she was taunted or ridiculed, her grandfather’s painful words blared again in her memory. Tortured with fears of further rejection, anxieties about her future began to consume every waking thought. When she finally married, Alicia brought her emotional turmoil into this new relationship, often finding herself angry and frustrated with her husband and children.

Then one day she learned a way to resolve the pain and rejection of those many past years. It was so simple that she marveled she hadn’t learned about it sooner. It amazed her husband, too. He noticed that her tone of voice became more upbeat, and she was no longer harsh with the children.

What did Alicia do? She gave a verbal blessing to that

grandfather who had wounded her so deeply and to the others who had “cursed” her over the years. And just that quickly, the awful pain faded from her heart.

A few days later, Alicia had the opportunity to experience something similar with someone else—this time her husband’s father. She and her husband were talking on the phone with him, seeking counsel over a situation in their lives. In the course of the conversation, he responded to their need with unkind words and names, which devastated her. Alicia’s hands trembled as she hung up the phone. All the old feelings of hatred and rejection began to well up in her heart again.

Then she remembered her newfound secret. She lifted her hand and gave her father-in-law a spoken blessing. Immediately her trembling stopped, and peace crept back into her troubled heart.

ON THE RECEIVING END

Besides the positive return for those who speak a blessing, many also testify of remarkable effects in the lives of those who receive such words.

A single mother had run out of answers on how to deal with her rebellious teenage son. He tested her patience beyond its limits and, in the process, stirred up negative attitudes in the rest of her children.

She saw no end to the confusion and tension. She tried

to reason with him and asked others to counsel him. She sent him to camps and conferences. But nothing worked.

When she was reminded afresh of the critical need children have to receive praise, she obtained a book that identifies and explains several basic character qualities. Searching through its pages, she couldn't find a single quality that she could honestly say was evident in her son's life. What she did see in the book, however, were many qualities that she believed God wanted to develop within him.

Then she learned about the power of spoken blessings. One day when her children were battling one another again, she interrupted them and said to her combative son, "I want to give you a blessing." He immediately reacted, stating, "I don't want you to bless me." That did not stop her. She recalled some of the qualities that she believed God wanted to cultivate in his life, then said these words in a spoken blessing: "*O Father, would You bless my son with wisdom and understanding, and with kindness and compassion? Would You cause him to know Your love and Your peace and Your joy, in the name of Jesus?*"

There was no mockery or sarcastic comeback. The son only mumbled a response.

At appropriate times, she continued to bless him—and each of her other children as well. Within a few weeks, her son's entire attitude changed—as did the atmosphere in her home.

These remarkable changes in attitude and peace of mind simply fulfilled the words of the verbal blessing. Do spoken blessings really make that much difference? And if they do...*why* are they so powerful?

That's what this book is about.

MAKE THE DECISION

What expectations do you have for this book? What exactly do you want God to do for you as you read it? Most likely you're eager for Him to help you become someone whose life regularly brings words of blessing to others.

If that's true, decide right now to express it in a sincere prayer to the Lord. Ask Him to put His Holy Spirit fully in charge of this learning experience for you and to bring about exactly what He wants to accomplish in your life through this book.