

God's greatest gift to us this Christmas!

BY ANDRÉ & JENNY ROEBERT

It's true that Christmas is the season for giving! And what a glorious time of year it is, with families and friends joining together to share love and warmth and goodwill. The truth is, no matter how people perceive or experience Christmas, as far as God is concerned, there is a gift that matches no other that is readily available and accessible to everyone who is willing and ready to receive it!

That gift is living in the centre of God's BLESSING! One way of viewing the BLESSING, is seeing it as the grace of being able to hear the heart of our gracious, Heavenly Father so that we can walk in the light of His wisdom, while being completely surrounded by the safety of His presence. It's living without lack or fear but rather in an overflow of God's goodness and favour. And all along, being empowered to be a significant source of life and love to those around us.

To receive this gift, the BLESSING, is to firstly, receive the giver of the gift Himself. A heart that surrenders to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, receives the full gift of righteousness. This is a position of being completely in right standing with God, washed clean by the blood of His Son, rendering us pure and blameless before Him. It's also a gift that rightfully positions us to receive the Blessing God originally gave to Adam at creation (which he forfeited through sin) and to Abraham who received it by faith. It's an inheritance we have in Christ, readily available for us to enjoy today. (Genesis 12:2,3;13:2 and Galatians 3:7-9;13-14;26;29).

The key to walking in the fullness of this powerful gift, is to tune our hearts and minds into the frequency where the BLESSING of God continuously flows. This reminds me of a true story I once read about a family that set out on their sailing boat to cross the ocean. During their voyage, their boat was capsized by a pod of whales, leaving them without most of their supplies and at the mercy of the elements. Their only hope of survival was to hook a prevailing trade wind that would fill their make-shift sails, and push them into a main stream shipping channel where another vessel would spot and rescue them. Being a seasoned sailor, the father of the family had enough knowledge to understand the flow of the currents and his general whereabouts to somehow steer their broken, lopsided boat in the right direction. Without a deliberate effort to catch the right current and trade wind, they would be left stranded, going nowhere for too long, losing all hope of survival.

Just like that small boat in a gigantic ocean, unless we deliberately choose to keep our hearts and minds connected to the source of our new life and freedom, we can lose our way and hope in a world where we are surrounded by trouble. Keeping ourselves in the centre of the current and flow of God's life source, will prevent us from wondering around aimlessly, at the mercy of our circumstances and the storms of life. In other words, being ignorant of God's grace and truth will keep us from being in the centre flow of His mercy and BLESSING, and will prevent us from living in His continuous supernatural flow of abundant life.

So, to hook up with the current or wind that ensures this vital connection and appropriates the BLESSING of God in our lives, there is a strategy that is simple and clear. It begins at the source of all beginnings - the Word of God!

To quote Kenneth Copeland, from his book *"The Blessing of the Lord Makes Rich and Adds No Sorrow with It"*, he writes, *"God's WORD will take you from living outside that BLESSING—where storms, disasters and hard times tear up and destroy things, to living inside it, appropriating THE BLESSING in your own life and replenishing the earth around you with it..."*

The trouble is, we don't spend enough time in God's Word. And we can only blame ourselves for that. Somehow we always prioritise everything else above digging into the truth and mysteries of God's wonderful truth and wisdom. So the first part of our strategy is to drop all those things that would hinder or steal our time from being with the Lord in His Word.

Why is the Word so important to appropriating the BLESSING in our lives? Because the Word, when received into our hearts, produces faith! And just as it was for Abraham, the BLESSING is powered by our faith! Unless we believe and perceive this gift in our spirits first, we will never see it materialised in our natural lives. So, when we choose to purposefully and diligently put aside time to make the Word our priority, and draw ourselves near to the Lord this way, His response is immediate! James 4:8 says, as we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us! That's how the BLESSING works!

Remember, attention always precedes desire. So, as we delight ourselves in God's Word, giving it the attention it deserves, our desire for the things of God begins to increase. Feeding our spirits with the Word, and delighting



in its truth and hope, increases our understanding of Who God is to us, His marvellous ways and His promises concerning us.

Now, watch how the BLESSING goes to work! While we are filling our hearts and minds with the truth of God's Word, by His Spirit that indwells us, at the very same time, His presence encamps around us! Psalm 34:7, says, *"The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him [who revere and worship Him with awe] and each of them He delivers. O taste and see that the Lord [our God] is good! Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man who trusts and takes refuge in Him."*

I recently read a friends blog on this very scripture. That word encamp is a military term meaning to settle. So, because we choose to settle into the Word of God, with a heart of love and respect for Him, He surrounds us, with His fortress of protection and peace! This, my dear friend, is part of the BLESSING! We are placed in the centre of His settlement, the safest place there is! You see, while we are centred on the Word of God, the enemy cannot infiltrate our minds with thoughts or fear or discouragement or failure! Psalms 32:7 says that He becomes our hiding place and surrounds us with songs of deliverance! That's what happens when we are completely surrounded by the Lord!

Now, watch how this works: Through the day, while we are going about our areas of responsibility, because we have invested our time in God's Word, it is first and foremost on our minds and in our hearts. So we find ourselves constantly meditating on its wisdom and perspective, which begins to influence the way we think, the words we speak, our attitudes and our actions. Do you want to know what the BLESSING is doing while this takes place? The Word of God says in Psalm 5:12, that the Lord surrounds us as a shield! But this shield isn't just a form of protection. The word says, *"... as with a shield, the Lord surrounds us with goodwill - which is pleasure and favour!"* (Amplified version).

How does this work? Well, when our minds are filled with the thoughts and purposes of God, from our time spent delighting in His Word, we begin to respond to circumstances from that state of mind. Our first response becomes God's response and when we stick to that response, the BLESSING goes to work and brings supernatural pleasure and favour every time.

What about the times we miss it, when our emotions and frustrations get the better of us and we don't respond from the wisdom of God's Word? Like Adam, do we forfeit the BLESSING too? Absolutely not! Jesus secured the BLESSING for us with His blood. It's ours to appropriate and enjoy. How-

ever, when we choose to not walk in it, it doesn't remove itself from us, we simply walk away from it. But there is nothing stopping us from realising our error, turning around, and walking straight back into it again! That's called repentance - it simply means to deliberately change our minds and go in a different direction from where we were heading. God's mercy has secured that freedom for us! And Psalm 32:10 says that God's mercy surrounds us too! So all we need to do is repent and direct our thoughts and attitudes right back to the Word of God again. That's the BLESSING!

So far we've learnt that in The BLESSING, the Lord Himself protectively encamps around us, His favour and goodness and mercy surround us, but that's not all! when we choose to make spending time in God's word a priority, and allow His wisdom to influence and transform our lives, Psalms 125:2 says that as the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people! Just like those mountains, God Himself is an ever present, immovable strength and fortress around our lives. He is our protector, our provider, our comfort and our strength!

Renewing our minds to the Word of God is not a retreat from our problems or an escape from reality! It's choosing to place ourselves in a state of mind where we perceive our circumstance as God does, and respond to them from a perspective of faith and victory, rather than hopelessness and defeat. It's being aware of the supernatural BLESSING we have received from being in Him, more than being aware of the limited, natural circumstances that surround us.

Once we have decided to receive God's gift of love and have chosen to make spending time in His Word a priority, so that our hearts and minds are in tune with His ways - He is completely and intricately involved in our journey through life. His BLESSING empowers us in all we do and enables us to influence the world around us with His power. That's the greatest gift we could ever dream of, a life filled and overflowing in the grace of His BLESSING! 📌

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