

## Blessed to be a Blessing *by Glenda Malmin*

In Genesis 1:28 we find God's first mandate to mankind, "...Be fruitful..." However, prior to that mandate is the statement, "God blessed them..." God clearly blessed the man and the woman that He created before He gave them a mandate to be a blessing.

Just as He did at the beginning of time, so He does today. God blesses us simply because He enjoys blessing His kids, but He also blesses us with a specific purpose in mind. God blesses us and then charges us to be a blessing.

You have been uniquely placed in a family, an ethnic group, a geographic region and a church by the design of the Lord. He has even uniquely designed your physical features and personality-type for His purposes. He desires for you to use all of these characteristics for His good intentions.

God has blessed you in unique and specific ways so that you might be a unique and specific blessing to others. There are people that you will influence for the Master that others will not be able to touch. The opportunities will vary from season to season and situation to situation, but one thing is sure—**you have been blessed to be a blessing!**

Some of the most seemingly "ordinary" people who are just walking through life joyfully planted in the will and purposes of God can accomplish some of the greatest deeds for Christ. Many of these "ordinary" people who are *blessed to be a blessing* have accomplished great things throughout ancient history and they still do it today. It matters little what your station in life is, what matters is that you are walking in the blessing of God and sharing that unique blessing with others.

When Catherine Booth's husband was distressed about their lot in life, she said to him, *"God's invisible fingers are shaping us for an important work ahead. I'm as certain of that as I am of the 2nd coming of Christ."* In response, William frowned at his wife and said, *"How could rejection and poverty be shaping us?"* Catherine replied, *"By helping us to understand the poor. William, you're a unique person! You've been a pawnbroker. You've stared poverty in the face. God is equipping us for the future."* William laughed, his face brightened and he put his arms around his wife and exclaimed, "Let's kneel and thank God for all His blessings."

With renewed faith in God's unique blessing and leading in their lives, William and Catherine Booth became the co-founders of the Salvation Army that serves and blesses so many poor and destitute to this day.

Regardless of your financial status, ethnic heritage, educational background, or social station, God has blessed you and wants to continue to bless you so that you might be a blessing to others. Two people who relished in the blessing of God in their individual lives and were securely planted in the will of God were two single adults named of Ralph and Colleen.

Ralph and Colleen met each other in 1998 in Redding, California while ministering to the poor. They were from different churches ministering together on a common project. God had individually and uniquely placed them both at this particular time so that many poor and needy people could be rescued from hopelessness and introduced to Christ. While ministering together, they fell in love and made plans for their wedding.

Since Ralph and Colleen had become the friends of many of the poor and homeless to whom they ministered, they wanted to invite them to their wedding to help celebrate their special day. They desired for their wedding day to be a day of generosity and miracles just as it had been at the wedding in Cana where Jesus did His first earthly miracle. Just as Christ's love had been planted in their hearts, they desired to see His love planted into the hearts and lives of those who were in desperate need of His grace and mercy.

Because they wanted this very special day to be a day of blessing for all of those who attended, not just for them, they requested that any gifts that were to come would be purchased for their homeless friends, such as sleeping bags, coats, hats, and gloves. These gifts would then be given to the attendees-in-need at the reception. Also at the reception the bride and groom served all their guests, rich and poor alike, a wonderful and complete dinner.

This was such an amazing deed of compassion that the local newspaper sent a reporter and photographer to cover the event. They put a picture of the bride and groom in their tuxedo and wedding gown serving food to the needy on the front page of the Sunday edition of the newspaper. Next to the picture of the bride and groom was an article describing the wedding, the needy crowd, and the involvement of the two participating churches.

Although their report represented a wonderful testimony to the community, they missed a story that was happening behind the kitchen doors. This was an answer to the prayers of the bride and groom that miracles would be released that day and that those in need would be ministered to. It's always so amazing how God is on the move in so many miraculous and unseen ways while man is busy "taking note" of all he can see of God's goodness. May He open our eyes more to His numerous wonders!

One man and woman passing through the area stopped by the church to get in on the free wedding meal. The man struggled to walk and was in obvious pain. The ministers of the ceremony spoke with them and discovered that he had been given two to three years to live due to cancer. He had braces on each wrist due to carpal tunnel syndrome, and a brace on his neck because cancer had destroyed the muscles that held his head up. He also walked with pain due to hip replacement surgery, which also left him walking with one leg shorter than the other.

After the couple had eaten the wedding dinner, the pastors invited them into the church kitchen for the man to receive prayer. As the pastors prayed first for his wrists, the man became free of pain. They then prayed for his leg to be lengthened, asking his wife to watch knowing that the healing would increase her faith as well. The pastor reported, *"both his leg and her faith grew quickly."* They then prayed for his hip and he walked across the kitchen with no pain or hindrance in his ability to walk. The man then removed his neck brace and they prayed for a creative miracle of redeveloped muscles. By this

time others began to come into the kitchen and join in prayer including a medical doctor who also believes that healing miracles are for today. He placed his hands on the man's neck and prayed for the cancerous lumps to be removed and for the specific weakened neck muscles to be restored and it happened. The man's doctors' reports have since confirmed that all cancer is gone. He now also jogs every morning.

On the following Sunday morning the man gave his testimony in church saying, "I walked in here a cripple; but God gave me my life back!" The man and woman who wandered into the wedding to eat a meal received a feast from the Lord. They both received Christ as their personal Savior as a result of the miracles performed that day. The Lord not only made Ralph and Colleen's day a successful ministry time for others through their compassion, but through the Lord and the pastors in the kitchen became a blessing as well.

These two brief stories of those who were blessed to be a blessing do indeed capture the heart and spirit of God's will and purposes for His unique blessings. Everything God ever does in our lives is for a purpose. He blesses us because he loves us, but He also blesses us that we might pour out that blessing to others. God shares that we might share. He blesses that we might bless. May we too be able to recognize God's blessings regardless of what form or shape they come in and share them with others in need of the Master's touch. Whether you are currently living in poverty as William and Catherine Booth were or you are a financially stable, single adult like Ralph and Colleen were or you are somewhere in between, share. For you have been blessed to be a blessing!

*Charles Ludwig, Mother of an Army, Bethany House Publishers.*

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