

## The Ark Community

# 108: **TO BLESS OR NOT TO BLESS?**

by Steve **Hughes** (UK)

Nowadays there is an increasing desire for everything to be blessed; services are held to bless everything from houses to vehicles to pets. The Bible identifies it is God's nature to bless; to pour out His goodness, favour and wellbeing e.g. on creation (Gen. 1 v 22, v28). Our heavenly Father has also poured out every spiritual blessing on us in Christ Jesus (Eph 1 v 3). It is good for us also to bless others, and not just after someone has sneezed! There has been a recent habitual trend, particularly with young people, to respond positively / affectionately towards others with the phrase "Ahh, bless" (in my opinion a much better term than 'wicked'). I love blessing people; asking for God's favour on them, I feel like I have imparted something to them. However, what happens when we come across people we either do not want to bless or feel they do not deserve a blessing?

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 7) Jesus revealed that living in the Kingdom of God was not only a blessing, but that fruit of this was for Christians to be a people of blessing. Jesus radically taught to love your enemy and bless those who curse you (Matt 5 v 44). Further, as we do this we become sons of our heavenly Father; transformed to become like Him, the One who blesses. Recently I was asked about the dilemma of how we can bless those clearly living in sin and not walking in God's ways. After a moment of silence, a Holy Spirit prompted response came quickly: **"If we stop blessing people, we start judging people."** A key kingdom principle therefore is to love unconditionally and bless all people, without condoning their behaviour, leaving conviction of sin to the Holy Spirit.

I believe there is power in the words that we speak. The Bible (James 3) challenges us to take control of our tongues and use them for God's glory, to produce fruit for the kingdom. **Christians are a blessed people and called to BE a people of blessing** (1 Peter 3 v 8 – 9), full of the presence of a wonderful living God. The Fruit of this in our lives will be seen in what we say (and don't say!) and what we do (or don't do).

Let us consciously commit ourselves, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to unconditionally bless, thank and encourage others. Let us also further demonstrate this by going out of our way to bless others e.g. by helping them, sending flowers or thank you cards, visiting people, praying with someone or meeting a need. As we bless others, not only will they be blessed, but we too will know the blessing of God in our lives.

**"If we stop blessing people, we start judging people."**

Many blessings!

