

Bringing Blessings

- So good to see you guys. Who's glad to be back? Amen? Woo! Hey, and if you are new, you're surrounded with the best guys. Let's just be honest. The world has lost whatever is left of its mind, and what we want to do is we want to get the guys together who are like-minded, have the mind of Christ. Find your brothers for the battle, find the guys who are gonna walk with you, be friends for you, help lift burdens, give blessings, and be an encouragement, and that's why we're here. You guys matter. Your life matters. Your family matters. Your marriage matters. Your kids matter. Your business matters. Your legacy matters. You guys matter deeply, profoundly, greatly to God, greatly to us, and greatly to me, and it's a great honor and joy to have you with us, and leading the tables are some great guys, and they've been praying for you. They just love you. They want to help, they want to serve, they want to connect, and they want to be of an encouragement. And so my job is great joy. My name is Mark, one of the pastors here. I preach through books of the Bible, generally. We're in Genesis. And then I do a little leadership lecture for the men on Wednesday night, "Real Men," and so what I want to talk about in our time together is bringing blessing. And as we were in Genesis 1 this week, a word showed up, bless, that God blessed. And let me say this. This little word has big implications. And what we learn is that God is a Father who blesses, and our God is a God who blesses, and this language of blessing, it appears about 400 times in your Old Testament. It appears more than 80 times in the book of Genesis. There is no book of the Bible that has the word bless more frequently than Genesis. The second would be Psalms. And the big idea from beginning to end is that God is good, and that God blesses, and God likes to bless his people, and he likes to bless others through his people. So we're gonna look at this theme of blessing, and what's really timely is, the world we live in, does this world feel like a blessing? Anybody feel blessed by their government, blessed by the CDC, blessed by the supply chain? Anybody feel blessed? If so, we're gonna drug test you after "Real Men." You're not dealing with reality. This world is not a place that is filled with a lot of blessing. It's got a lot of cursing. Our culture has become increasingly cruel, critical, mean-spirited, lonely, isolated, jaded, self-righteous, and complicated, and it is a constant beat down just to try and be a healthy man, loving and leading your family and your business, and ultimately, what I want you to know is that we don't bring the culture of the world into our lives, into our families, into our homes. We want to bring the culture of the kingdom of God down into our family, our life, and our home. And you're not gonna find a culture of blessing in the world we live in, but it comes down from God, and that's the big theme of Genesis. God creates and then he blesses those whom he has created, if they're living in obedience to him, and leadership is this. And as men, let me say this. I'm gonna say things that are controversial. This is one of them. If you're a man, you're a leader. Some men are like, "I'm not a leader." You are a leader. The question is not, are you a leader? The question is, are you a good leader or a bad leader? The question is not, are you a leader? The question is, are you a good leader or a bad leader? And you have spheres and circles of influence and people that are depending on you, and at the end of the day, as a leader, you get to set the culture. That is one of the primary responsibilities of every leader. This is true in business. This is true in family. This is true in ministry. This is true in marriage. And as a leader, you can set a culture of blessing or cursing, and cursing is the opposite of blessing. Furthermore, you will reap what you sow. How

many of you guys have been married for more than 15 minutes? Have you learned this lesson? If you come home and you're in a bad mood, guess what? Everybody's in a bad mood. If you start yelling, what does your wife started doing? Yelling. What does your kids start doing? Yelling. How many of you are like, I hate that environment? You created it. Like God, we bring an environment, and then we live in the environment that we bring. If you want to live in an environment where you're blessed, bless. You want to live in an environment where you're loved, love. You want to live in an environment of grace, give grace. You want to live in an environment of forgiveness, bring forgiveness. But you and I as leaders have really got to decide, you know what? It is crazy out there. The world is a total dumpster fire, but in our life, in our marriage, in our home, in our circles of influence, in our relationships, in our business, are we going to have cursing from out there, or blessing from up there? And so when we get into the book of Genesis, I just want to look at this, that blessing, and that's gonna be our whole talk, is that it is life-giving power. That's the literal definition of the original word in the Hebrew text. Life-giving power. How many of us right now, we're looking for somewhere that is life-giving? I mean, it's been a horrible time for two years. No sense that anything is gonna get easier or better. It's a horrible time to be a child and growing up. It's a horrible time to try and lead, because all you're going to do is get attacked and criticized. And what a blessing is, it's a life-giving power, and you know what we all need? We all need life and we need power to live life, and what a blessing does, it provides a life-giving power. And within this concept of blessing, it is usually a grace, and this is where men struggle with blessing, because we tend to think that you have to earn something, and a blessing is a grace, meaning it's not earned. So we'll talk in a minute about a blessing, but how many of you struggle to bless your wife? How many of you struggle to bless your children? How many of you struggle to bless your friends? How many of you struggle to bless your extended family? How many of you struggle to bless your employees? And you're like, "Well, they didn't earn it. They didn't deserve it." That's what a grace is. It is a blessing that is undeserved. It's a grace that is given, not because we have earned it, but because ultimately, our God blesses us, and then we bless them. Because he's given grace to us, he gives grace through us to them. I'll show you the two places in the beginning of Genesis where this theme of blessing shows up. God our Father blesses. Genesis 1:22. This is the first mention of blessing in the book of Genesis. It's the first mention of blessing in the Bible. "God blessed them," speaking of the animals, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." And then God makes our first parents, Adam and Eve, and before they did anything, I just need you to see this. Adam hadn't done anything. He hadn't earned it. He hadn't performed. He hadn't executed on his responsibilities. God blessed them, Adam and Eve, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it," make culture, create business, develop land, have children. A man's gotta have something to do. "And have dominion over the fish of the seas, the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves along the earth." Here's the big idea. God blesses. How many of you want to live a life blessed by God? Let me tell you, more than being successful, more than being powerful, more than being rich, more than being famous, the best thing you can aim for is to be blessed, to live under the blessing of God, be who he wants you to be, do what he wants you to do, have what he wants you to have. His plan for you is the right plan for you, and what I want us all to do is to seek to live under God's blessing. In the book of

Genesis, God's blessing comes in various ways. His presence. The Holy Spirit is in us. That's a blessing. Children are a blessing. If you have children, your children are a blessing, and what's so weird is we live in a day when men murder their own blessing. That's how messed up. I mean, everything I just read to you, God made a man and a woman, and they had a baby. That is controversial. All three parts, the man, the woman, and the baby. That's how messed up this world is. Oh, you believe in binary gender and reproduction? Yeah. Yeah, I got a wife and five kids, so I'm a rebel. And the point is, now the only thing left is to be a heterosexual man who just lives a normal life, and now you are the rebellious minority. Congratulations, outliers and punk rockers. That's where we find ourselves. But what it says ultimately is that the blessing comes with God's presence, and also the blessing of children. It comes with possessions in Genesis, long life, friends, and the ability to persevere through hardship and trial. The opposite of a blessing is a what? It's a curse, and curses find themselves throughout Genesis as well, and it usually is in response to sin. It includes separation, blessings from God, the blesser, judgments, famine, oppression, and exile, Our first father is blessed by God, and then he sins against God and he brings a curse into the world. That's what Adam does in Genesis 3. The result is that now blessing only comes from God, and that ultimately we live in a cursed world. And again, as men, we've really got to make this decision every day. The culture that I'm going to live in, the culture that my marriage is going to be in, the culture that my children are going to grow up in, the culture that my business will be nurtured in, the culture that my grandchildren will experience from me is either blessing or cursing. It's either just multiplying the problems in the world or it's bringing the presence of God down into the situation. And so ultimately, when it comes to this issue of blessing, the book of Genesis starts with God blessing, and the theme of blessing flows, as I said, mentioned more than 80 times in the book, and that it ends with a guy named Joseph at the end of the book of Genesis. He is a man who is cursed by his family. He is a man whose brothers disown him. They declare him to be dead. They put together a plot to deceive his father, that he would be dead. They sell him into slavery, off to a foreign nation, assuming they'll never see him again. His brothers cursed him. Some of you have had that life. You're like, "Man, I feel like my dad cursed me, my family cursed me, my job cursed me, my ex-wife cursed me, my kids cursed me." You just feel cursed. You feel like everyone just wants you dead and buried and never to return. That was Joseph's life. But then what did God do? God blessed him. The theme of blessing is introduced with our first father and through the book of Genesis, it leads to the story of this guy named Joseph, and he's blessed. God gets him out of the pit. God ultimately moves them into a position of power. God raises him up to be the right hand of the leader in the nation of Egypt, and ultimately, at the end of the day, God blesses him and God blesses others through him. This is the goal as a man of God, to live under God's blessing and then to bless others. Joseph serves as the pattern in Genesis of what it means to be a blessed man, and Joseph's blessing, here's what's really encouraging. His blessing is commensurate with his cursing. He was very cursed and he was very blessed. I have good news for you, if you have lived a life that has some cursing or even feel like you're cursed. The more you're cursed, if you'll find God's will, the blessing can be equal or even greater than the cursing. And that's the story of Joseph. His family ruined him, and God restored him. His family disowned him, and God adopted him. His family betrayed him, and God never failed him. And so what I want for all of us as men is just to ask first and foremost, am I living a life that God would bless? And are people

around me experiencing God's blessing through me? And what I want in you is an environment of peace and joy, and then others to experience that as they are around you. Well, the whole point as well of this theme of blessing in Genesis is that ultimately God is gonna bless his people, and then he's gonna bless this guy named Abraham, and he's gonna bless his family to bring forth who? Jesus. The whole point of Genesis is to bring us Jesus, and we're told that he is the blessing to the nations of the earth. So the whole point of blessing is to point people to Jesus. Let me explain blessing to you. I'll answer three questions. Number one, who does God bless? Okay, let me ask you this. How many of you would like to be blessed by God? Anybody? That sounds great, right? I mean, I don't know about you. I've been to Costco. I can't find the blessing section. I went to Amazon, and I can't find blessing to put in my cart. You know, it's hard to find blessing. Where do you find blessing? Who does God bless? The first thing I will tell you is that God doesn't bless people. God blesses a place. Most people think, why does God bless them? God blesses not a people, but a place, and it's people who place themselves under his Word. If you want to be a man blessed of God, you need to obey what God says. Hey, at this point, when we read early in Genesis, sin had not yet entered the world, so there was no curse. God spoke. Up until that point, everyone and everything obeyed what God said, so they're living in the place that God blesses. How many of you... How many of you are dads? You got kids? You got kids? Okay, what happens if you reward bad behavior? You raise Bin Ladens. You raise just terrorists. They're horrible people. Okay? God is a Father, and he can't bless bad behavior. Otherwise, what does he get? Lots more bad. Now, here's what God can do. God can forgive bad behavior. God can pour grace out on bad behavior, but God can't bless bad behavior, because God can't bless that which is contrary to his character and his Word. How many of you, in raising your kid, if your kid was trying to, even if your kid wasn't getting it right, if they were trying to do the right thing, how many of you would help him? "Hey dad, I'm really struggling with my homework. I'm trying my best. I can't figure it out. Can you help me?" Answer? Yes, okay. "Hey dad, you know, I'm trying to find out a career, and I'm trying to get my resume together, and I'm trying to figure out how to financially put things together and be a responsible adult. Dad, I want to grow up and get off your payroll. Will you help me figure that out?" Answer? Immediately. Yeah, I'll help you. If your child comes to you, especially your son, and says, "Okay, I know what's right. I agree with it. I want to do it. Can you please help me?" Answer? Every time. If your son comes to you and says, "Dad, I want to do some things that are wrong. Will you help me?" Right? Answer? No. No. I can't help you do evil. I can't help you do foolish. I can't help you do destructive. I can't help you do that. I love you. And sometimes I've heard people say this. They're like, "Are you for me or against me?" It's like, I'm not for or against anybody. I'm for what's right and I'm against what's wrong. If you want me to be for you, be for what's right, and if you're for what's wrong, I have to be against you, because you're against God, and I can't be for you if you're against him. So, give an example. Tuesday, I do lunch with my oldest daughter. She's 24. She runs real fast. She's done an incredible job. By the way, the ministry was like this until my daughter took over and she fixed everything. So everybody's like, "What'd you do?" Nothing. I had a good daughter. So thank you, sweetheart, for doing a great job. And every Tuesday, I do lunch with my daughter, and here's what I ask her. How can I help? What can I do? What burden can I lift? What gift can I give? What can I do? My whole, I have one goal, one goal, one goal every Tuesday, lunch with my daughter. How can I bless you?

That's my whole goal. My whole goal. Sometimes she talks. Sometimes she asks a question. Sometimes she has a prayer request. Sometimes I said or did something that was not great, and I need to apologize and make it right to my sweetie pie. My whole goal, I just want to come and I just want to bless, and what always happens with my daughter, she tells me what's going on in her life, and she asks me for prayer and help. Guess what the answer is? Yes. I adore you, and if you would invite me into your life, I want to be in your life, and if you're trying to serve the Lord and love your husband and do the right thing, guess what I want to do as a dad? Please let me help. That's a blessing. Every Wednesday, I do lunch with my oldest son who's also married.

Same thing. What can I give? What can I do? How can I pray for you? What can I help with?

What do you need? What are you dealing with? What's going on? My whole goal every Wednesday with my son is, how can I help? When your dad comes, I want it to be, "Okay, I'm gonna get blessed. When my dad comes, I'm gonna be blessed." How many of you, when your dad came, he didn't come with a blessing? The reason that sometimes, how do I say this, sometimes you're like, "Why does my wife not want to be with me?" Are you a blessing? "Why don't my kids want to be with me?" Are you a blessing? I don't know about you, I just tend to find that people who are a blessing, they tend to attract other people. I've just observe that. You're like, oh, just get near them. Boy, I'll tell you. Life's gonna come. Life is gonna come from them.

They're a benefit to your life. They're an asset. They're an investment. They're help. Having them around, they're not perfect, but I'm telling you, if they intersect your life, your life just got improved. God doesn't bless people. He blesses people who place themselves under his Word. And oftentimes what happens is a man will live apart from God's Word, and then he'll get angry or bitter at God, because he doesn't feel blessed. And so he's like, "Well, God, why am I not

blessed?" It's like, well, are you blessing your wife? Are you blessing your kids? Are you blessing your employees? Are you blessing your grandkids? Are you blessing your friends? Are you blessing them? And ultimately, are you obeying him? Here's what I find. I find this radical supernatural thing happens when men who are not obeying place themselves under God's Word, and say, "I want to obey," guess what? Blessing starts to flow down on their life. I didn't... I verbal process this, so just I think out loud when I do men's, but I'm assuming Drew won't mind me sharing his story. He helped lead worship two years ago. Drew was up here leading worship for us, and love you very much, buddy. Two years ago, he was a drug addict. He's been sober two years. Now, he's leading worship today. He recorded a song that got played on 200 radio stations, and he shared his testimony, how God has richly blessed his life, in two years of sobriety as he placed himself under God's Word. Okay, that's awesome. Okay? And it's like, well, how do you go from here to there? Well, you're gonna need to be blessed. And once you're blessed, things go a lot faster, 'cause God shows up to help. Your Dad shows up to assist.

That's what happens. I have never seen God bless a man who is defiant and disobedient and disregarding of his Word. If you want your marriage to be blessed, obey God's Word. You want your kids to be blessed, your family to be blessed, obey God's Word. You want your business to be blessed, obey God's Word. Ultimately what we see in Genesis, God speaks, everyone and everything obeys him, and is blessed, 'cause they're living under the authority of his Word. As soon as Adam and Eve disobey God, guess what happens to the blessing? It stops. And guess what happens instead? Something called the curse. I don't know about you, I would rather live blessed than cursed. I would rather live under God's blessing than apart from God's blessing,

and the best way to be blessed is ultimately to say, "Okay, Father, what do you have to say? I want to do what you want me to do. Will you help me to do what you want me to do?" And what do you think his answer will be? "Son, absolutely." My favorite thing in being a dad, one of my favorite things in being a dad, five kids, I got great kids. I'm blessed by my kids. My kids often come to me and they say, "Okay, dad, I know what the Bible says and I want to do it. Can you help me?" Answer? Gosh. Everything in me wants to help you. You need to know that God is a Father, and his heart for you is that he wants to bless you. He wants to help you. He wants to pour life into you. He wants hope and a future for you, but he can't do that unless you will obey him, because otherwise, then he is rewarding bad behavior. So who does God bless? He blesses those who live under his Word. How does God bless? How does God bless?

Sometimes God just, boom, shows up and just does something to bless you. Totally unexpected and supernatural. We call this a miracle. Some of you have gotten a miracle. Some of you got healed. God just showed up. Some of you, God supernaturally provided, and some of you got a woman to think that you were a good idea and you have a wife. Like it's a miracle, right? It is, man. You know, I always tell guys, you can fool some of the people some of the time, and then some of you got married, you know? So I mean, how many of you, there are things in your life, you're like, you know what? That was just God showed up and did it. He just did it. He healed me. He saved me. He just did something. That's a miracle. Sometimes God's blessing is just supernatural. He just does it. Oftentimes, when God blesses someone, he works through someone else. So God is the blesser, and then there's the means of his blessing. Okay? And oftentimes, when God seeks to bless us, he blesses us through someone else. Why do you think that sometimes God doesn't just bless us directly, but he blesses us through someone else? Because then that person is blessed as well. It multiplies the blessing. How many of you, God gave you something, and then you got to share it with someone else, and they were blessed, and so were you? It's 'cause the Bible says it's more blessed to give than receive. How many of you, you've learned something. Maybe you're reading the Bible, you're learning, you're like, "Man, I learned something, and I shared it with somebody and then it helped them, and it blessed me and it blessed them." Oftentimes God chooses not to bless directly through a miracle. He chooses to bless through us, so that we can be blessed, too. Here's what I'm telling you. Look around in your life, and just start asking, "Okay, God, who can I be a blessing to?" 'Cause what happens as men, this world does not bless men. All it does is curses men. That's all this world does. Every sitcom says that the husband is an idiot. Every children's movie says that the father is a dullard and an idiot. Every cultural narrative is just cursing men, just mocking men, just disregarding men, and if you say anything about it, well, then you're just a toxic man. And ultimately, at the end of the day, a lot of men don't bless because they don't feel blessed. A lot of men are like, "Why should I bless them? Nobody blesses me. Why should I look for people to bless? Nobody's ever looked to bless me." And the point is this. As men, we're leaders, and you want to start new legacies, especially in our families. So you know what? The blessing needs to start with somebody. Guess what? I'll start. It'll start with me. How many of you... I just... It's weird, I can see some of you guys when you were young and you were teenagers, the environments you grew up in, it's like, I can see it. It wasn't blessed. It was cursed. It's not a place you wanted to be. Not a place that was hopeful, life-giving joyful, fun. If you had a problem, you just kind of kept it to yourself. If you had a need, you didn't say anything, and if you

were struggling, you surely weren't gonna divulge anything, 'cause you knew what, you knew, "Nobody's gonna bless me. Nobody's gonna bless me, so I'm just gonna have to just kinda endure it." And what I would say is I'm sorry for those of you who grew up in an environment of cursing. We tend to think of cursing is, oh, they said a potty word. It's it's worse than that. It's like demonic presence instead of the presence of God. It's death instead of life. It's hell and not heaven. It's bringing the world in. It's not bringing the kingdom down. It's a lot bigger than just naughty words. But the question is, what do you want your wife to say? Do you want her to say, "Living with him is a..." It's a blessing or it's a curse. Your kids. Do you want him to say, "Tell me about your dad." "Oh, my dad was such a blessing." Your grandkids. "Oh, my grandpa was such a blessing." Your friends. "Well, they're such a blessing." Your employees. "They're such a blessing." And as I say that, some of you feel very convicted. You're like, "I don't really bless people. I'm not really the source of blessing. God blesses me, but I don't bless others. God's blessing doesn't flow through me." Well, you know what? That can change. That can actually change right now, because if you would say to your Father, "Hey, you blessed me, and now I want to bless others." Guess what he's gonna do? He's gonna help you. He's gonna help you be the source of blessing. God wants his blessing not just to come to you, but ultimately to flow through you. So let me say this. Third question, how can you bless others how God blesses you? There are two basic ways to bless. One is to take something bad. The other is to give something good. So it's really simple. So let's say... Let's say your wife is having a hard day, and you come home. Kids are just working her over. Mom's exhausted. Well, you can do is you can say, "Okay, what do you need me to do?" It's like, I wouldn't say like, "Can I cook dinner?" 'cause I don't cook for health and safety reasons. You know, it's just, it's scary. I mean, I'm not gonna die of COVID, but if I cook, that's what's gonna get me. That's what's gonna get me. I'm just telling you right now. I won't eat anything that I cook, but I'm good at takeout. So you come home. "Hey, honey, how can I... Do you want me to get dinner? Do you want me to deal with the kids? Do you want me to buy a taser?" You're like, "What do want me to do?" Okay? And what that is, is it's lifting bad, giving good. There's two ways to bless. Okay, what can I take off of you that is burdening you, and what can I give to you that'll bless you? So it's burden off, blessing on. Burden off, blessing on. Either way is a blessing. How many of you at work, you're overwhelmed, somebody comes and helps finish the job, and you're like, "That was such a blessing," 'cause they were taking the burden off. How many of you, you don't know something, you need something, you're short on cash, or whatever the case is. Somebody pours grace on you. You're like, "That was such a blessing." And let me give you some practical ways to bless. Number one, your words. God speaks. That's how everything happens in Genesis. God speaks, his Word gets things done, and his Word brings life and blessing. The question is, are my words bringing life and blessing? In Proverbs, it says that life and death are in the tongue. Cursing and blessing come out of the mouth, okay? So let me just do this. What are some things that a man can do to have his words be a blessing? What are the things a man could do? He could encourage. He could pray. Sometimes as a man, we don't know how to bless, 'cause I don't know what to do. Pray. Sometimes praying is inviting God in, and that's part of the blessing. How many of you, when we get together at the end of our time, we gather around tables, for those of you who are joining us online, and the guys huddle up and pray for one another. How many of you, that time is a blessing? You're like, "A dude prayed for me." That's a blessing. You

need to know that, even with your wife, spiritual connection is deeper than sexual connection.

You need to touch your wife's soul before you touch her body, and when you pray together, you're connecting at the deepest part of your being, and that is how you become one, and that opens up the intimacy and the trust and the safety for the sexual relation. That if you'll just pray for your wife, pray blessing over her. Don't just pray the problems over her. God, please bless my wife. Please cause her to not be contentious. God, I was reading Proverbs, and I'm thinking about living on the roof, and help me not to live on the roof, and dripping faucet, I think that was her maiden name." And I mean, you know, don't... How many of you, your wives would just melt

if you just said, God, just the reasons you appreciate her, why you're grateful for her. I was struck with emotion recently. I came home, and Grace was there, my wife Grace, smiling. She said, "Hi," and I just stopped and I said, "You're here!" She's like, "What do you mean I'm here?" I said, "You're here!" She was like, "What do you mean I'm here?" I was like, "You're still here. Like, if you Google me, honey, you've been through a lot, and you're still here. Like hey, you've hung in there. Thank you, honey. I mean, I know wives that have been through far less and hit the eject button far earlier. Just thank you for being here, and not with a loaded weapon. I mean, you know, thank you." Just praying over your wife. God, here's what I'm grateful for. Here's what

I appreciate. Here's the memories. Praying over your kids. One of my kids, when he was little, how many of you had that one kid that was super stubborn, totally defiant? You're like, "Oh no. This is the one that I'm gonna be posting bail for." You know, you just got that kid. I had that kid.

I couldn't get this kid to obey. I couldn't, and you know what I started doing? I started getting really frustrated with that kid, and then one day, literally God convicted me, and he said, "I bless you. You're my son. Why don't you bless your son?" And I remember just getting very frustrated, thinking, "Have you seen this kid?" And God's like, "Yeah, he looks like his old man. I'm dealing with this all the time. I'm dealing with this all the time." So I went to my son, and he was acting up. He was being difficult, and I remember I just laid hands and I prayed over him. "God, I thank you that I'm a father. I thank you that the son is my blessing. I thank you that you put him under my roof. I thank you that you've put strength in them. I pray you would direct it toward life and not toward death. God, I thank you that he has so much inner fortitude. I pray you would use it for the Gospel, that you would redirect." I started praying blessing over my son. You know what he did? He broke, in a good way. He started crying. He looked at me. He's like, "Dad, I'm sorry." He's like, "I want to change." And sometimes you just put grace on somebody. You put kindness on somebody. You put blessing on somebody, and that's the thing that really softens their heart.

So Romans says, it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. You know what that means? Is we're just really stubborn boys and God blesses us, and then we want to change, 'cause we wanna be like our Father. You can bless with your words, praying over, speaking blessing, speaking encouragement. Sometimes, crazy. Not speaking. You're like, "Ah! Just not gonna say that. Instead, I'm gonna go talk to the Lord, and maybe the Lord will talk to you, but I'm gonna just hold my tongue a little bit here, 'cause I want to bless." We can bless with our words. This can include things like thank you. I appreciate you. I love you. That was wonderful. I'm sorry. Blessing with the words. Blessing as well with service. This is practical ways to help.

How many of you, your wife feels blessed when you do something, right? How many of you, your kids feel blessed when you do something? I was having lunch with my son today and his daughter, and her car was on empty. She got in her car, it was full. He came, he got up early,

went and gassed up her car, because she doesn't like to gas up her car. You know what that is? That's a blessing. It's a way of saying, "I was thinking about you and I love you, and I want to do something good for you, 'cause you matter to me." As men, there are innumerable ways that we can be blessing through serving. What usually happens is we pour out so much at work, we come home, and we don't want to do any more, and instead we think, "You know what? My wife, my kids, I've been working hard all day. I provide for the family. They should bless me." Nope. Let me say this. The man is to be the blessing. Your children don't exist to bless you. God gave you those children as a blessing, and you're to bless them, and usually what happens is we want to be blessed, but we don't bless, and as a result, we can't reap what we haven't sown. It's your words and it's your deeds. How many of you right now, the Holy Spirit brings to mind something that you said to your wife, to your kids that was a curse, and you need to go apologize. I should've never said that. How many of you, you grew up in a home where the majority of the words that were spoken were curses and not blessings. It's like having a bank account where all they do is make withdrawals. A blessing is a deposit. A criticism or correction, it's a withdrawal. If all we ever do is just make withdrawals and no deposits, we bankrupt that relationship. We bless through our words. We bless through our deeds. We bless through generosity. We give. How many of you, somebody has given you something tangible, a car, a house, college money, a big gift, a free vacation, home furniture, something. Somebody's given you something, and it was a tangible, physical blessing to receive that. As men, we have this opportunity to be looking for needs, and to meet them, and as we bless them, we bless people. Okay? And sometimes it's really practical. It's like, "Honey, I'm gonna put new tires on your car. Son, I'm gonna help you with college. Daughter, let me pay your rent. I know you're tight this month." You know, it's looking for ways to just be generous. I don't say this in a... I just had this weird experience. I was at the grocery store. I was telling the staff at the Bible study today, I was at the grocery store, and there's a single mom with little kids, and they ring up all of her groceries, and her kids are... It's kind of a situation, and she goes to pay, and she forgot her purse or her wallet at home. She forgot. Now she's embarrassed, 'cause she had lot, she had groceries and kids, and now it's just like, "Ah!" And I looked at her, I said, I told the clerk, I said, "Well, just, you can go ma'am." And I said, "Add my stuff to hers, and I'll buy her groceries," and I had a couple of items. And the woman looks at me. She's like, "Why would you do that?" And here's what I said. This is what I said. I said, "Because that's what my God's like. My God gives. My God's gracious. My God's generous. My God blesses people. You know what? He blessed me. I have enough money in my account. I can buy my groceries and your groceries." Guess what? I'm not just to be blessed. I'm to be a blessing, but ultimately it comes from him, and if it comes through me, guess what? You're blessed and so am I. I got to see a happy single mom. That was a blessing. I get to see the kids go away in the car, knowing they're gonna have dinner tonight. That's good. I feel very blessed by that. As men, it's looking for ways to bless with our words, it's looking for ways to bless with our deeds, and it's looking for ways to bless with our wealth and with our possessions, and in our stuff. And guys, this is simple stuff. This is like, you know what? I got a used car. You know, we're not desperate for cash. I'm gonna go get another car. You know what? I'm gonna give my car to somebody. Oh, there's a single mom, college kid, somebody lost their job, has a medical problem. There you go. Blessing. And then lastly, ministry of presence is one way that we bless. How many of you, just having people who are

around is a blessing? We just had the holidays. Just having Grace around, blessing. Having the kids around, blessing. I've been excited to see you guys all day. You know why? It's a blessing to see you. It's nice to be together. It's good to see the fellas. It's a good place to be. It's the right place to be. And sometimes as guys you're like, "I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do." Let me just say this. Sometimes as a man, just being in there is a blessing, just showing up, just ministry of presence. How many of you, you know, when you're a little boy, you look up in the stands, you're like, "My dad's here. He's not doing anything, but he's here." Blessing. Blessing. Right? Graduation, big day, they dress you up silly, but your dad, he's there. You men are far more powerful than you think. You're far more significant than you think. Your presence is far more necessary than you think, and sometimes it's just showing up. It's just being there. It's just actually getting in the room and making certain people and things a priority. And let me say this. I've seen with you men as a group, and I'll close with this, tremendous improvement. This is not a condemnation. This is an encouragement. We are hearing reports that your wives and kids are more blessed than they have ever been in their entire life. I've had women, some of your wives and girlfriends come up and say, "You know, thank you for "Real Men." The man that I love is a different man. I feel so blessed by him. He is a blessing to me. I feel safe with him. I feel cared for by him." Great. This is not a discouragement. This is an encouragement. This is not a condemnation. This is a coaching. And here's what I want to say. This is our first meeting of 2022. Wouldn't it be great if all of us said, "My goal this year is to be a blessing, to be a blessing to the people around me. In a world that is filled with cursing, I want to be a blessing. In a world filled with words that should never be spoken, I want to speak words of life. In a world when people are using one another, I want to be serving each other. In a world where people are just taking, I want to be a giver, and in a world where people are not present, I want to be the one who is present, starting with my family." Here's what we're gonna do. We're gonna spend some time in discussion and prayer. Who or what was your biggest blessing last year? Think back on last year. Who or what was your biggest blessing? Last year was one of the hardest years of my whole life, and honestly, it was one of the most blessed years of my whole life. I tend to find that as there is cursing, God just ramps up the blessing. In addition, who needs your blessing, and how can you bless them this year? Who is in your orbit, coworker, family, friend, spouse? You know what? You're like, "You know what? They need some blessing. I want to be the means by which God pours out his blessing on them." And then lastly, how can we be praying for you? And I'm gonna pray for you right now. I will ask you to come back next week. We're gonna have a special "Real Men." I'm gonna bring in, I think it was somebody, Andy Gould. He was a State Supreme Court Justice. He's running for Attorney General. We're gonna have a conversation about family, faith, and freedom, and how to lead through these troubled times as men. And so he'll be with us next week. But let me just ask a question. Is it a blessing to get together? Is it a blessing to look around the room and say, there are guys who love Jesus, and they want to do what God says, too? Is it a blessing to sing together and just hear men's voices worshipping Jesus? Is it a blessing? Is it a blessing to have guys at the table that you can talk to? Is it a blessing to have some guys that maybe you could choose as friends, and maybe even if you're married, your families could get together, and you guys could have a community of support? Is that a blessing? And is it a blessing just to pray for the guy next to you and get prayed for? Father God, thank you so much for all of these blessings, and Lord, I

confess we live in a world just filled with cursing, and we want to be men who bring blessing. And Lord, I pray that these men would be richly blessed in whatever form or fashion you would seek to bless them, with wisdom, with provision, with health, with favor, whatever the case may be. And God, as you bless these men, and you've blessed us as men, Lord. We're blessed. I pray that we would not just enjoy the blessings, but that we would share them that we would ask, okay, how can I bless my wife? How can I bless each of my kids? How can I bless my grandkids? How can I bless my coworkers? How can I bless my brothers? What can I do to just bring life-giving power? And God, would this be a night when we get together every week, of blessing, would the men bless one another? Would they pour life into one another? Would they encourage one another? And God, I pray for those who are watching online, and some, Lord, are in cities and states that are still closed, and churches that are still throttled and closed, and God, it seems like everything is working against a blessing. God, we pray for a blessing in, on, and through your men to those who are present in our life. In Jesus' good name we pray. Amen.