

turningpoint

Reading Plan

23rd September to 6th December

B.L.E.S.S.

5 EVERYDAY WAYS TO
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND
CHANGE THE WORLD

Journey through the
PsalmS

DAVE FERGUSON AND JON FERGUSON

Introduction:

In Term Four of 2024, **turningpoint** will embark on a journey to explore how we can bless our community by diving into Dave Ferguson's



book on the BLESS program, alongside a reading of the Book of Psalms. Australia, with its diverse landscapes and multicultural heritage, is known for its strong sense of community. Whether we're cheering at a footy game, lending a hand to a mate, or enjoying a family barbie, Aussies are all about connection. BLESS presents a great opportunity to share our faith in ways that are relational and genuine.

The **B.L.E.S.S.** program is all about this. It's an acronym for **Begin with Prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, and Story**—a Christ-centred approach to sharing the gospel that fits perfectly with our Australian values of fairness, camaraderie, and authenticity. At **turningpoint**, we're passionate about outreach, community support, and discipleship, so we have embraced the BLESS principles as part of our ongoing ministry.

Over the first two weeks, we'll introduce each element of the BLESS model before the reading plan parallels with the book "B.L.E.S.S." by Dave & Jon Ferguson. Throughout the reading plan, we'll draw wisdom from the Book of Psalms, reminding us of passages like Psalm 37:5: *"Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act."*

Let's get ready to BLESS our community in real and lasting ways!



B Begin with prayer

Blessings



L Listen

Phil



E Eat

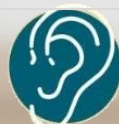
Acknowledgments:
B.L.E.S.S. by Dave &
Jon Ferguson, Blue
Letter Bible.



S Serve



S Story



Australians often embrace a “no worries” attitude, approaching life with a relaxed perspective. But when it comes to sharing faith, many feel uncertain, fearing they’ll come across as pushy or awkward. The BLESS program understands these concerns and emphasizes that the first step in sharing faith is prayer. Prayer allows us to invite God into the process, seeking His guidance and wisdom on how to bless those around us.

In Jesus’ ministry, prayer was always the starting point. Before major decisions, such as selecting His disciples, Jesus prayed all night, seeking God’s direction (Luke 6:12-13). This demonstrates that spreading the gospel isn’t about relying on our own efforts; it’s about participating in God’s work already happening in people’s lives. When we pray, we acknowledge our dependence on God, allowing Him to guide us in reaching others.

The importance of beginning with prayer is reinforced in the Psalms, where the psalmist highlights the need to rely on God for guidance and blessing. *“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord... whatever they do prospers”* (Psalm 1:1-3). Through prayer, we position ourselves to be blessed by God’s wisdom, aligning our actions with His purpose.

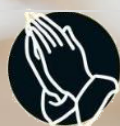
At **turningpoint**, prayer is central to everything. Weekly prayer meetings and intercessory teams gather to ask God to open doors for connection and transformation. These gatherings create a space for believers to seek God’s will, asking how they can bless their neighbours, family, and friends.

The Psalms also speak to the power of calling out to God: *“Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer”* (Psalm 4:1).

Ponder: How can prayer become the foundation of my relationships and outreach efforts?

Action: Set aside time each day to pray for those you want to bless, asking God to reveal opportunities to connect with them meaningfully.

Relevance: Prayer shifts the focus from our own strength to God’s wisdom, ensuring that our efforts are aligned with His will.



Australia is a nation that values authenticity. We appreciate honest, down-to-earth conversations, and we have a keen sense of when someone is being genuine. This is why the second step of the BLESS program, *Listen*, resonates so deeply with us. Instead of jumping into conversations about faith, Ferguson highlights the importance of first hearing people's stories, concerns, and questions.

When we listen, we're essentially saying, "You matter. Your thoughts and feelings are important." This mirrors the way God listens to us, as the Psalmist beautifully reflects in Psalm 5:1-2: "Listen to my words, Lord, consider my lament. Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray." Just as God listens to our prayers and petitions, we too are called to actively listen to others.

Jesus exemplified this in His encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). He didn't immediately dive into teaching or correcting her. Instead, He asked questions and attentively listened to her story. Only after He had truly heard her did He gently share the truth of who He was. This intentional act of listening broke down barriers and opened her heart to receive His message.

Whether it's a Connect Group, youth group, or a casual one-on-one conversation, people need to be heard. This practice reflects the wisdom found in Psalm 7:9: "Bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure— you, the righteous God who probes minds and hearts." Just as God examines the heart, we too must listen to understand others on a deeper level.

Listening creates an atmosphere where relationships are strengthened. Psalm 8:4 reminds us of the significance of each individual: "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" Our listening affirms their worth in the eyes of God.

Ponder: How well do I listen to others in my daily life?

Action: Make an intentional effort this week to actively listen without interrupting.

Relevance: Listening is a divine act that opens doors for deeper connections and demonstrates the love of Christ in a practical way.



In every corner of Australian culture, food plays a huge role in bringing people together. Whether it's fish and chips by the beach or the iconic sausage sizzle at Bunnings, the act of sharing a meal creates connection. In the B.L.E.S.S. program, the third step, *Eat*, emphasises how vital eating together is for building relationships.

In the Gospels, Jesus often used meals as opportunities to connect with people from all walks of life. He didn't reserve His table for religious leaders; instead, He dined with tax collectors, sinners, and those on the margins (Matthew 9:10). These meals weren't just about food—they were about offering inclusion, building relationships, and sharing life. Psalm 9:9 echoes this, saying, "The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble." By sharing meals with outcasts, Jesus created a refuge—a space where everyone felt seen and valued.

At **turningpoint**, the idea of using meals to connect has been embraced for years. These gatherings aren't focused on formal sermons but on sharing life, much like Jesus did. Sitting down together over a meal helps foster genuine conversations and allows people to explore faith in a relaxed setting. As Psalm 8:4 says, "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" God's care for us is mirrored in the way we care for each other through simple acts like sharing a meal.

Psalm 10:17 further reinforces this approach: "You, Lord, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry." A shared meal is more than just food—it's an opportunity to listen, encourage, and be present with one another in a meaningful way, reflecting God's love and care. Through the simple act of eating together, we follow Christ's example by nourishing both body and soul, building trust, and forming deeper relationships.

Ponder: Who in my life can I invite to share a meal as a way to connect?

Action: Plan a meal this week where you can intentionally build or strengthen a relationship.

Relevance: Sharing a meal opens the door to deeper connection and reflects Jesus' inclusive love.



Australians have a strong sense of fairness, always willing to lend a hand or come together for a cause. We believe in practical actions that make a real difference. The fourth step in the B.L.E.S.S. program, *Serve*, encourages us to live out this value by meeting the needs of others in meaningful, hands-on ways. Service isn't just about doing good; it's about showing God's love in action.

Jesus set the ultimate example of service. In Mark 10:45, He said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Throughout His life, Jesus constantly served others—from healing the sick to washing His disciples' feet. His acts of service were humble and selfless, focused on meeting the real needs of those around Him. Psalm 12:5 mirrors this compassion: "Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise," says the Lord. This is the essence of service: seeing the need and responding with love.

At **turningpoint**, this spirit of service is put into action through community outreach, supporting individuals, and local events. These acts of service go beyond just addressing physical needs; they create spaces for relationships to form and open doors for deeper, spiritual conversations. As we serve, we reflect God's love in practical ways, showing His kindness and care to those around us.

Service is a powerful way to connect with people, offering them a glimpse of God's love through action. When we step out to serve, we not only bring joy and purpose to others, but we also draw closer to God's presence. Psalm 11:7 reminds us, "For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face." In serving, we become part of God's plan to bring justice and love to the world.

Ponder: How can I serve someone this week in a way that reflects God's love?

Action: Find a practical way to serve a neighbour, friend, or stranger, meeting them where they are.

Relevance: Serving others reflects Jesus' love, living out the gospel in everyday life.



Storytelling is a key part of Aussie culture. Whether it's sharing tales about a footy match, recounting a road trip, or swapping family memories, Australians love a good yarn. The fifth and final step of the BLESS program, *Share Your Story*, encourages us to embrace this tradition by sharing how Jesus has changed our lives in an authentic and relatable way.

Jesus often used storytelling to teach profound spiritual truths. His parables were simple, grounded in everyday experiences, and easy to understand (Matthew 13:34). Like Jesus, our stories don't need to be dramatic or perfectly crafted. What matters most is that they're real. As we see in Psalm 17:1, "Hear me, Lord, my plea is just; listen to my cry," God values sincerity. Just as we come before God with honesty, we should share our personal stories with the same transparency.

Telling your story offers others a glimpse into how God's grace has worked in your life, inviting them to reflect on how His grace could impact theirs. Like the psalmist in Psalm 16:11, who declares, "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence," your testimony is a way to show how God has guided you and brought you joy. It demonstrates that faith is personal, accessible, and truly life-changing.

At turningpoint, testimony nights, baptism services, and everyday conversations offer opportunities to share these stories of faith. These moments remind us that God's work in our lives is ongoing and real. By sharing your story, you reflect God's goodness and extend hope to those around you.

Ponder: How can my story of faith encourage someone else today?

Action: This week, take the opportunity to share your personal testimony with someone, focusing on how God has worked in your life.

Relevance: Telling your story is a powerful way to reveal God's grace, offering hope and making faith tangible to others.



Australians have a deep appreciation for the spirit of togetherness. Whether it's cheering for the local footy team or banding together in tough times, we know that we are stronger when united. The BLESS program taps into this sense of unity, encouraging believers to view evangelism not as an isolated task but as something that thrives within the bonds of community.

The early church sets a powerful example of community. In Acts 2:42-47, we see the first believers meeting regularly, sharing their resources, and supporting one another. Their strength didn't come from individual efforts but from their shared commitment to spreading the love of Christ. Likewise, Psalm 18:2 reminds us of God's collective protection and strength, declaring, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer." Just as God is our fortress, communities built on faith are strong and unshakeable.

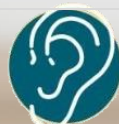
From Connect Groups to youth ministries, we are called to foster relationships that create a sense of belonging. These groups aren't just social gatherings—they are essential to building strong, supportive relationships that mirror the early church. At **turningpoint**, we show that faith is most effectively shared through authentic relationships. Psalm 18:50 speaks of God's faithfulness: "He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed." In community, we share in victories, lift each other up, and see God's love in action.

Building a community of faith allows people to experience the love of Christ in practical ways. It's more than just attending church services—it's about cultivating relationships that reflect God's care for each person. As Psalm 18:28 declares, "You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." In community, we help one another see that light.

Ponder: How can I contribute to building a stronger sense of community in my church or neighbourhood?

Action: This week, find a way to connect with or serve within a group, building unity and support.

Relevance: Community is at the heart of our faith, and through it, we reflect the love and strength of Christ to the world.



In Australia, faith can often feel like a "Sunday thing"—something we do once a week, keeping it separate from our everyday lives. But the BLESS program challenges this mindset, calling us to integrate our faith into the everyday moments of work, home, and social life. Faith is meant to be woven into the fabric of our daily lives, not just reserved for church.

Jesus is the perfect example of this. His ministry wasn't confined to temples or religious events. He met people in everyday situations—whether at a well, in the marketplace, or walking along the road. In the same way, the BLESS model encourages us to look for opportunities to bless others wherever we are. Psalm 19:14 reminds us, "May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer." This verse highlights how faith should guide not just our prayers, but our daily actions and words.

At turningpoint, we're encouraged to see everyday moments—whether in the workplace, at home, or in the community—as opportunities to live out our faith. Whether it's sharing a moment of kindness with a colleague, helping a neighbour, or teaching your kids about Jesus, every day provides a chance to reflect God's love. Psalm 20:4 speaks of God's desire to "grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed." This isn't just about big goals—it's about succeeding in showing love and grace in the small, ordinary moments of life.

Living out faith in everyday life might be as simple as offering a listening ear, sharing an encouraging word, or lending a hand. These small acts reflect a faith that is active and alive beyond Sundays.

Ponder: How can I integrate my faith into the everyday moments of my life?

Action: Look for one practical way this week to share God's love with someone in your daily routine.

Relevance: Faith is not limited to Sundays; it shapes how we interact with others and live out God's love every day.





Generations Training

12th October 2024

9am to 2pm

LUNCH INCLUDED FOR ALL ATTENDEES

Gen Hall, 1785 Sth Gippsland Hwy,
Cranbourne East

with special guest Dr David Goodwin

BOOK IN



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One of the unique challenges of sharing faith in Australia is the “she’ll be right” attitude—a laid-back mindset that believes everything will work out without much effort or thought. While this attitude has its benefits, it can also make people resistant to exploring deeper spiritual matters. This approach often keeps people from recognising their need for God or engaging in conversations about faith.

The BLESS program provides a gentle way to navigate this barrier by focusing on relationships rather than pushing a religious agenda. It encourages believers to connect through everyday actions, like praying, listening, sharing meals, serving, and telling stories. This method builds trust and fosters genuine relationships, breaking down the walls of indifference over time. In Psalm 22:24, we’re reminded, “For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.” Just as God hears and responds to us, we too are called to listen and be present for others.

Whether it’s over a barbecue, during a service project, or a casual chat, the key is to build authentic connections. Through these interactions, others will see that faith isn’t about rigid rules but about a genuine relationship with God. As Psalm 22 captures David’s deep cries to God in a time of trouble, it reminds us that faith can meet people where they are, even when they aren’t actively seeking it. Our role is to be present, patient, and open to sharing God’s love in natural, everyday moments.

Overcoming the “she’ll be right” mentality requires persistence and a commitment to authentic relationships. By investing time and care into people’s lives, God can soften even the most resistant hearts, leading them towards His grace.

Ponder: How can I build deeper, more trusting relationships that open the door to sharing faith?

Action: This week, focus on building a genuine connection with someone by listening and serving them.

Relevance: Overcoming indifference takes time, but by investing in authentic relationships, we reflect God’s love and create opportunities for transformation.



Hospitality has always been a cornerstone of Australian culture. Whether it's gathering for a casual barbecue or inviting mates over for a meal, Aussies know how to make others feel welcome. This sense of warmth and openness is central to the BLESS program, where hospitality becomes a practical way to share the love of Christ. It's not just about hosting events but creating spaces where people feel valued and accepted.

The Bible highlights the importance of hospitality. In Romans 12:13, we are encouraged to “share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” It’s a reminder that our homes and hearts can be used to bless others. Psalm 23:5 reflects this idea beautifully: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Just as God welcomes us with abundance and love, we can extend that same spirit of welcome to those around us.

When we open our homes, we offer more than just food or shelter—we provide a space where people can relax, feel safe, and have meaningful conversations. It’s in these moments of sharing that trust is built, and deeper connections form. As Psalm 25:9 says, “He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.” Through hospitality, we create opportunities for others to experience God’s grace and guidance in ways that are natural and unforced.

Acts of hospitality, no matter how simple, reflect God’s invitation to all of us. By offering our time, space, and care, we mirror His love. As Psalm 25:14 reminds us, “The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.” In the same way, our hospitality opens doors to spiritual growth and deeper relationships.

Ponder: How can I use hospitality to create a space where people feel valued and loved?

Action: Invite someone to share a meal or spend time in your home this week, focusing on making them feel welcome and cared for.

Relevance: Hospitality is a simple yet powerful way to live out the love of Christ, creating space for genuine connection and spiritual growth.



The BLESS program teaches us that blessing others isn't just a one-off effort but a lifelong mission. It's about weaving prayer, listening, serving, and sharing into the very fabric of our daily lives. As Aussies, we have a unique way of living out our faith—through genuine relationships, practical acts of kindness, and showing real care for the people around us.

Psalm 33:11 reminds us of the enduring nature of God's plans: "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations." This verse aligns with the BLESS program, emphasizing that our purpose as Christ-followers is not just a short-term task but a lifelong commitment. We're not called to bless others just once or twice—we're invited into a daily rhythm that has the power to make a lasting impact over time.

The beauty of adopting the BLESS lifestyle is that it's not about grand gestures or dramatic moments. It's about consistently showing up for the people around us. Small acts of kindness, thoughtful conversations, and moments of listening can be just as impactful as bigger efforts. It's in these everyday moments that we reflect the love and heart of Christ, inviting others to experience God's grace in real and practical ways.

Psalm 28:7 speaks to the joy that comes from this mission: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise Him." When we live out the principles of BLESS, we not only bring joy to God's heart but also to our own, as we see the difference His love can make through us.

Ponder: How can I incorporate the principles of the BLESS program into my daily life as a lifelong mission?

Action: Choose one area—prayer, listening, serving, or sharing—and focus on consistently practicing it this week.

Relevance: Living a lifestyle of blessing others reflects God's ongoing work in the world, and through it, we can make a lasting impact for His kingdom.



THE B.L.E.S.S. PLEDGE

The next readings are taken from the B.L.E.S.S. books and from Psalms. It will be helpful to have a B.L.E.S.S. book to follow along with. The below is a pledge that Dave Ferguson has put in his book as a statement of commitment to B.L.E.S.S.

Jesus commanded us to be a blessing to the world around us when He said, Love your neighbour as yourself (Mark 12:31). In obedience to that command, I pledge to do one of the following five B.L.E.S.S practices every day:

B: BEGIN WITH PRAYER -

I pledge to pray for my neighbours. My example is Jesus, who started His earthly mission with prayer (Luke 6:12–16). Prayer is both how I discover my mission and how I do the mission of Jesus.

L: LISTEN

I pledge to listen to my neighbours. My example is Jesus, who loved others by asking questions and then listening to them (Luke 18:40–42). Listening is how I give dignity to others, and it is a gracious expression of love.

E: EAT

I pledge to eat with my neighbours. My example is Jesus, who consistently shared meals with the sinners (Matthew 9:9–13). Eating with others is how I move a relationship from an acquaintance to a friendship.

S: SERVE

I pledge to serve my neighbours. My example is Jesus, who did not come to be served, but to serve others (Matthew 20:28). Serving others is a tangible way I can demonstrate the love of God to others.

S: STORY

I pledge to share my story with my neighbours. My example is Jesus, who shared the good news of His own story with others (John 3:1–17). Sharing my story gives others a clear understanding of how God's love and the life of Jesus can change their lives.



More than twenty years ago, someone took a chance and extended a simple invitation. A man feeling lost, unsure of his purpose, was welcomed into a community. That invitation—to sit together, share a meal, and learn from others—had a profound impact on his life. This story is a reminder of the power of inclusion and how an open hand can change someone's direction.

Psalm 30:2 says, *"Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me."* Just like the man in the story, when we feel lost or uncertain, God often brings healing through community and connection. This healing can come from a kind word, a meal shared, or simply being included. When we feel seen and valued, it opens the door for God to work in powerful ways.

At **turningpoint**, these principles are lived out through the B.L.E.S.S. practices: praying, listening, eating together, serving, and sharing stories. Each practice is designed to reflect God's love through simple, everyday actions. The beauty of B.L.E.S.S. is that it isn't about grand gestures—it's about showing care in ways that anyone can do. Whether it's inviting someone to sit with you, listening to their story, or sharing a meal, these small acts can have a big impact.

Psalm 32:7 says, *"You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance."* In the same way, when we welcome others into our lives and share in their journey, we create a space where they feel protected, heard, and surrounded by God's love.

Ponder: Who can I invite into my life this week?

Action: Take the initiative to invite someone for coffee or a meal, offering them connection and community.

Relevance: A simple invitation can have a lasting impact, showing others they are valued and loved by God. Through everyday acts of hospitality and kindness, we reflect God's heart to those around us.



Last week, a big orange moving truck pulled into the driveway next door, signalling the arrival of new neighbours. It's always a bit exciting when new people move in—there's potential for new friendships, new connections, and maybe even great moments shared over a barbecue. But beyond the excitement, the Bible gives us clear instructions on how to treat our neighbours: *"Love your neighbour as yourself."* This command appears not once, but eight times throughout the Bible, showing just how important it is to God (Mark 12:30-31).

But who is my neighbour? In the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), Jesus teaches that a neighbour isn't just the person next door but anyone in need—whether they live next to us, work with us, or cross our path in everyday life. We are called to love all of them with intentionality, even when it's hard. Psalm 34:14 says, *"Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."* This reflects the heart of the B.L.E.S.S. program: it's not just about being passive, but about actively seeking to do good for those around us, building relationships and offering love and support.

Sometimes, loving our neighbours isn't easy. Maybe they have different lifestyles, or maybe, like the author's neighbours who caused trouble with a loose dog and drug issues, they are hard to love. But as Psalm 33:5 reminds us, *"The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love."* If God's love is so great, we are called to share that love, even when it requires effort.

Ponder: Who has God placed around me as my neighbour, and how can I love them better?

Action: Identify eight people in your neighbourhood, workplace, or social circles, and make a plan to bless them with kindness or support this week.

Relevance: Loving our neighbours is an active choice that reflects God's unfailing love and brings us closer to fulfilling His mission of peace and goodness.



The B.L.E.S.S. program is built on five everyday practices that help us live out the command to love our neighbours. These five practices—Begin with Prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, and Story—aren't just theoretical concepts; they're practical actions that anyone can take. They come from the Old Testament but are modelled in the life of Jesus.

In Psalm 35, David cries out, *"Contend, Lord, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me."* It's a reminder that even in the challenges of life, God is with us, guiding us to live righteously. Just as David sought God's intervention, we too are called to begin everything with prayer, especially when it comes to loving our neighbours. This is where the first B in B.L.E.S.S.—Begin with Prayer—comes into play. It's about seeking God's guidance, asking Him to open our eyes to the people around us who need His love.

After prayer, we're called to Listen. Listening is an underrated skill but an essential one in building meaningful relationships. Jesus always took the time to listen, and through listening, we can understand the needs of those around us better.

Eating together is another powerful practice. There's something special about sharing a meal that breaks down barriers and fosters connection. In Australia, whether it's a casual barbecue or a coffee catch-up, these moments allow us to build trust and friendship.

Serving is at the heart of Christ's mission, and by serving others, we show them the love of God. Finally, sharing your Story is about telling others what God has done in your life in an authentic, relatable way. Through these five practices, we can bless those around us and create genuine connections.

Ponder: Who can I begin praying for this week as part of my commitment to love my neighbours?

Action: Start praying for two or three neighbours, asking God to guide your interactions and open opportunities to listen, serve, or share a meal with them.

Relevance: The B.L.E.S.S. practices offer simple, everyday ways to live out God's command to love our neighbours and make a difference in their lives.



The B.L.E.S.S. practices are designed not only to bring God's love to others but also to transform our own lives. By committing to daily practices of praying, listening, sharing meals, serving, and telling our stories, we naturally deepen our relationships with those around us and with God. As we live out these practices, we find that they make our lives richer and more meaningful.

Psalm 37:4 encourages us to "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." When we commit to blessing others through the B.L.E.S.S. practices, we are aligning our hearts with God's will. In doing so, we experience the true joy of living a life that reflects His love and grace. The act of blessing others, whether through prayer, serving a meal, or simply listening, brings fulfilment that far exceeds any material gain.

In our Aussie culture, where mateship and community are highly valued, the B.L.E.S.S. practices fit naturally. We're used to lending a hand, sharing a cuppa, and being there for our neighbours. Through these everyday interactions, we can create environments where genuine connection and trust flourish. These practices will not only impact individuals but can also transform entire neighbourhoods into places of community and care.

In my early years as a Christian, I tried numerous approaches to sharing my faith, often with awkward results. But what I've learned is that loving our neighbours isn't about formulaic evangelism. It's about building relationships, creating spaces where people feel seen and valued, and sharing the love of Christ in authentic, relatable ways. As Psalm 36:7 says, "How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings." When we bless others, we offer them a glimpse of that refuge and love.

Ponder: How can I incorporate the B.L.E.S.S. practices into my daily life?

Action: This week, focus intentionally on bless a neighbour or friend.

Relevance: B.L.E.S.S. is about transforming our own hearts and lives as we live out God's love in practical ways.



If you're hoping to use the B.L.E.S.S. practices to convert someone, here's the reality: conversion isn't your job. It's the role of the Holy Spirit to convict hearts and bring people to faith (John 16:8–11). As Psalm 40:4 says, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord." Our task is to trust in God's plan and timing while playing our part in sharing His love through our everyday actions.

It's natural to want to help others find and follow Jesus, but we're not responsible for their response. The pressure to "get it right" or say something profound can be overwhelming. But remember, we are simply called to bless others and live out our faith authentically. The Holy Spirit does the heart-changing work. As Psalm 39:7 reminds us, "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you." Our hope lies not in our own efforts but in God's work through us.

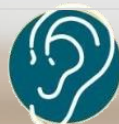
For years, I felt frustrated. I tried every method I could think of to share my faith, but it always felt awkward or forced. Whether it was doorknocking or street evangelism, it left me discouraged. I realised that living like Jesus and waiting for people to come to me wasn't enough either. I had missed the point: loving my neighbours should be a natural part of my everyday life, not a rehearsed presentation or a silent witness.

The B.L.E.S.S. program provides a better way. Through prayer, listening, eating together, serving, and sharing stories, we can love people as Jesus did—genuinely and without pressure. God will do the rest. Psalm 40:10 declares, "I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help." Our role is to reflect God's love and faithfulness through our actions and words, leaving the outcome in His hands.

Ponder: Am I feeling pressured to "convert" others, or am I trusting the Holy Spirit to do that work?

Action: Focus on building authentic relationships with those around you, trusting God to work in their hearts.

Relevance: Sharing your faith isn't about pressure or performance—it's about loving others and trusting God with the outcome.





Are you ready...

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



RETURN 27TH OCTOBER

A recent survey reveals that many Christians are confused about sharing their faith. While 96 percent of practicing Christians agree that being a witness for Jesus is part of their faith, a surprising 28 percent believe it's wrong to share personal beliefs with someone from a different faith in the hope they might convert. This contradiction highlights the confusion believers face when it comes to evangelism. Psalm 44:3 says, "It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your right hand, your arm, and the light of your face, for you loved them." Just as the psalm reminds us, it's not by our efforts but by God's power and love that people are drawn to Him.

This confusion often stems from the feeling that sharing our faith can come across as confrontational or pushy. Many Christians worry about sounding like they're part of a sales pitch rather than genuinely offering something life changing. This concern is reflected in the survey results, especially among younger Christians. But as Psalm 42:1 expresses, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." People are spiritually thirsty, whether they realize it or not, and it's our privilege to share the living water of Christ.

Interestingly, non-Christians are more open to conversations about faith than we might think. Surveys show that a large percentage are curious about Christianity and would welcome conversations—especially if they are built on genuine relationships. Psalm 41:1 says, "Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble." By listening without judgment and loving our neighbours, we open doors to spiritual conversations that feel natural and meaningful.

Ponder: Am I approaching faith conversations with love and openness, or am I hesitant because of fear or confusion?

Action: This week, focus on listening to someone's story without judgment and look for opportunities to share your faith naturally.

Relevance: Sharing faith isn't about converting someone on the spot—it's about building relationships and allowing God's love to shine through you.



One of the most powerful ways we can share the love of Jesus is through genuine friendship. People aren't looking for a sales pitch or a religious argument—they are looking for someone to walk alongside them, listen without judgment, and offer support. In Psalm 45:2, we see the beauty of speaking words of grace: “You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.” Grace-filled conversations flow naturally when they come from a place of friendship.

Jesus was known as a “Friend of Sinners” (Matthew 11:19), not because He was trying to convert people with forceful words, but because He genuinely cared for them. He blessed others through His presence, meals, and conversations, forming authentic relationships. Whether it was with fishermen like Peter and Andrew or tax collectors like Zacchaeus, Jesus showed that friendship opens the door for deeper spiritual connections. In Psalm 46:1, we are reminded, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Through friendship, we become a refuge for others, just as God is for us.

The B.L.E.S.S. practices—praying, listening, eating, serving, and sharing stories—help us to live out Jesus’ example in our own lives. By being a true friend, you show the love of Christ in a way that is natural, sincere, and impactful. It’s not about making evangelism complicated; it’s about weaving God’s love into everyday moments. Psalm 48:9 reinforces this truth: “Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.” As we reflect on God’s love, we are empowered to share it with others in the simplest yet most profound way—through friendship.

Ponder: How can I be a better friend to those around me, reflecting the grace and love of God in my everyday interactions?

Action: Reach out to a neighbour or friend this week with no agenda—just to listen, share a meal, or offer support.

Relevance: Friendship is the foundation for sharing the good news of Jesus. By being a genuine friend, you open the door for God to work through you.



In Australia, we love the idea of helping out a mate. Whether it's lending a hand to move house or bringing a casserole during tough times, we instinctively know that being there for others builds stronger communities. This is exactly what the B.L.E.S.S. strategy embodies: blessing others, not with the sole agenda of converting them, but with genuine care and love. Psalm 49 reminds us of the futility of earthly efforts without God, declaring, "No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them" (Psalm 49:7). This shows us that conversion is God's work, not ours.

A study conducted on missionaries in Thailand highlighted this truth. Two groups were sent out: one group focused on converting people, while the other group set out to simply bless the people they encountered. The results were eye-opening. The "Blessers" not only brought social good to the community, but they also saw almost fifty times more conversions than the "Converters." This affirms the wisdom of being a "blesser"—impacting lives through authentic relationships and leaving the work of conversion to God.

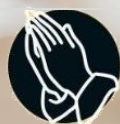
In Psalm 51, David cries out for a clean heart, recognizing that transformation comes from God's Spirit: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). Just as David trusted God to renew him, we must trust God to work in the hearts of others. Our role is to bless, serve, and love those around us, trusting that God will do the rest.

When we practice these principles, we embrace God's strategy from the very beginning, as seen in His promise to Abraham: "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). It's a strategy that has always worked and continues to work—because it reflects God's heart.

Ponder: How can I shift my focus from trying to "convert" people to simply being a blessing to them?

Action: Choose one person this week to bless through an act of kindness, prayer, or simply listening.

Relevance: Blessing others not only reflects God's love but also opens the door for His Spirit to transform lives in ways we cannot.



Jesus is the perfect model of living a life of blessing. Throughout the Gospels, we see countless examples of how Jesus blessed those around Him, often in unexpected ways. In Psalm 52:8, David reflects on God's unfailing love, saying, "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever." Just as David trusted in God's love, Jesus embodied that love by blessing others wherever He went, even when it wasn't part of a grand plan.

One great example of Jesus's spontaneous blessing is His encounter with Zacchaeus, the despised tax collector (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus was simply "passing through" Jericho, but He took the time to engage with Zacchaeus, a man shunned by society.

By doing something as simple as sharing a meal with Zacchaeus, Jesus demonstrated acceptance and friendship. This simple act of blessing transformed Zacchaeus's life, leading him to repent and restore what he had wrongfully taken. Jesus didn't just bless Zacchaeus materially or socially; He blessed him spiritually, declaring, "Today salvation has come to this house."

The beauty of Jesus's B.L.E.S.S. strategy is its simplicity and accessibility. Like Jesus, we can bless those we encounter in our everyday lives—whether it's a neighbour, colleague, or stranger. Psalm 55:22 encourages us to cast our burdens on the Lord, knowing He sustains us. As we bless others, we can trust that God is working through us, just as He worked through Jesus.

By following Jesus's example, we not only live a life of purpose but also bring others closer to God. Like Zacchaeus, those we bless may find salvation through simple acts of kindness, friendship, and love.

Ponder: How can I take a moment out of my day, like Jesus did, to bless someone unexpectedly?

Action: Look for opportunities to bless someone in your everyday routine, even if it's unplanned.

Relevance: Small, intentional acts of blessing can lead to life-changing moments, as seen in Jesus's encounter with Zacchaeus.



In the Bible, we see a clear pattern of being blessed so that we can bless others. From Abraham to Zacchaeus, and ultimately through Jesus, the blessings we receive aren't meant to be hoarded but shared with those around us. Paul makes this connection in Galatians 3:7–9, where he says, "Those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." This blessing flows through us, touching the lives of others.

Psalm 57:9 captures the essence of this call: "I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples." David understood that the blessings of God were not for him alone but to be shared with the nations. Likewise, our role as Christians is to pass on the blessings we receive, impacting our communities and beyond.

Jesus is the perfect example of living a life of blessing. When He encountered Zacchaeus, He didn't just pass by; He engaged, listened, and blessed him, transforming Zacchaeus's life. Jesus showed that blessings come through simple acts of kindness, attention, and presence. The B.L.E.S.S. strategy—Begin with prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, and Share your story—follows Jesus's approach to loving His neighbours in everyday ways.

But does this really work? The answer is yes! The simplicity of these practices allows us to connect with others authentically. Whether it's a neighbour, friend, or colleague, using these B.L.E.S.S. practices helps create meaningful relationships that reflect God's love.

Psalm 59:16 reminds us of God's faithfulness: "But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble." Just as we find refuge in God, we are called to be that refuge for others by living out the B.L.E.S.S. strategy in our daily lives.

Ponder: How can I bless someone in my life this week, following Jesus's example?

Action: Choose one of the B.L.E.S.S. practices today and intentionally use it to connect with someone.

Relevance: By living out these simple practices, we reflect God's love and make a lasting impact on the lives of those around us.



One of the most powerful ways to bless those around us is to start with prayer. In fact, Jesus invites us to do exactly that. But as we pray, it's important to remember that we're not the ones who will change the world—only God can do that.

Prayer is about aligning ourselves with God's purpose and allowing Him to work through us. Psalm 61:1 captures this beautifully: "Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer." Prayer is where our partnership with God begins, and through it, He can use us to bring about real change in the world.

Prayer, like breathing, has a rhythm. We breathe in to hear God's voice and breathe out as we pray for our neighbours and the world around us. As we listen to God, He often guides us to people and situations where we can be a blessing. This rhythm of prayer is what fuels the B.L.E.S.S. program, beginning with God's voice leading us to bless others.

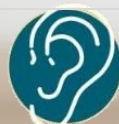
One story shared by Louie highlights the power of listening to God in prayer. Louie kept feeling a nudge to tell a stranger in a mall that God loved him. After initially resisting, Louie finally obeyed, and the man, overwhelmed, shared how he had asked God to show him love that very day. It was a divine appointment that came through prayerful listening.

This is what happens when we allow God to talk to us through prayer. Like in Psalm 62:5, "Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him," we learn to trust that God will guide us to bless others in ways we could never imagine.

Ponder: How can I listen to God more intentionally in my prayers?

Action: Begin each day this week with a prayer asking God to show you how you can bless someone in your life.

Relevance: Prayer is not just a personal practice; it's a powerful tool through which God can use us to bless others and change the world.



Prayer was central to everything Jesus did. It wasn't just something He did at the start of His ministry, but it guided Him daily. Like Jesus, we are invited to begin with prayer, especially when seeking to bless others.

Psalms 64–67 remind us of the importance of turning to God in prayer and praise, with Psalm 65:2 saying, "You who answer prayer, to you all people will come." This verse highlights that prayer is not just a personal act but a doorway for God's blessings to flow to others.

In Luke 6, before Jesus chose His twelve disciples, He spent the entire night in prayer. Even though it might have seemed obvious to choose the strongest and most gifted people for His team, Jesus sought guidance from God before making that decision. His disciples, in turn, were blessed by Him and became a blessing to the world. Just as Jesus prayed before making crucial decisions, we too are called to seek God's direction in all things, especially when it comes to serving others.

In Australia, we value being practical and taking action. But there's a quiet power in starting with prayer, asking God to guide our steps as we look to bless our neighbours.

It helps us tune into what God is already doing and opens up opportunities to love others in ways we might not expect. Whether it's blessing a neighbour or being present in someone's life, prayer gives us the right perspective to bring God's love to those around us.

Ponder: How can I incorporate prayer as the starting point for blessing others this week?

Action: Take five minutes each morning to pray for those in your life, asking God how you can be a blessing to them today.

Relevance: Starting with prayer connects us to God's plan, allowing His love and guidance to flow through us as we bless others.



Prayer doesn't just change the people you're praying for—it also changes you. Psalm 68 is a beautiful reminder of God's power and the way He works through us: "Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the Lord" (Psalm 68:4). This verse points to God's majesty and the importance of our connection to Him through praise and prayer. It's this connection that allows us to be part of God's mission to bless others.

If you're not praying for the people in your life by name, it's unlikely that God will use you to impact their lives deeply. Prayer helps you connect to God, the source of all change, and it transforms your heart to align with His. Through prayer, people are no longer just "projects"—they become individuals that you care for with God's heart. You might feel prompted to send a simple message, catch up over coffee, or lend a hand when needed. Often, the timing of these nudges is divine, and you'll hear, "Your timing is perfect!" That's God at work through prayer.

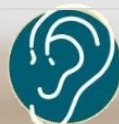
Jesus also began His mission with prayer, as seen in Luke 6, where He spent the night praying before choosing His disciples. These weren't the obvious choices—they were fishermen, tax collectors, and revolutionaries. Yet, through prayer, Jesus was guided to the right people to help Him bless the world.

While there are many reasons why we might not pray—feeling too busy, unsure how to pray, or doubting it works—starting with prayer is essential if we want to bless our neighbours and see real change. If you're unsure how to begin, start simply. As Psalm 68 reminds us, God is powerful and ever-present, working through those who seek Him.

Ponder: How can I be more intentional about praying for those around me?

Action: Set aside time each day this week to pray for a specific person in your life by name.

Relevance: Prayer connects us to God's heart, enabling us to bless others in meaningful ways while transforming us in the process.



In Psalm 69:13, the psalmist writes, “But I pray to you, Lord, in the time of your favour; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.” This verse reminds us that prayer is the foundation for connecting with God’s love and sharing that love with those around us. The first tool in the B.L.E.S.S. strategy is prayer, and today’s reading plan focuses on identifying and praying for our neighbours.

A simple way to begin praying for your neighbours is with the “Who Is My Neighbour?” map. It’s easy to create—just draw a square in the middle to represent your home, then eight squares around it for your eight closest neighbours. Don’t worry about being geographically perfect; the goal is to think about the eight people who live nearest to you, whether you’re in the city, suburbs, or countryside.

If you don’t know their names, now is the time to find out. Maybe you’ve lived in your area for years without knowing who’s just a few doors away. Take the opportunity to ask their names, introduce yourself, and start praying for them by name. You can also apply this idea to your workplace or community—who are the eight people you interact with most often?

Once you’ve identified these neighbours, begin praying for them daily. Ask God to open doors for connection, build relationships, and guide you in loving them. It doesn’t have to be a lengthy prayer session—just a few minutes a day to lift up their names and ask for God’s blessing over their lives.

Hudson Taylor, a British missionary, once said, “Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.” This is the heart of the B.L.E.S.S. strategy—starting with prayer, getting in harmony with God, and letting Him guide you in loving your neighbors.

Ponder: Who are the eight people in closest proximity to me, and how can I pray for them daily?

Action: Create your own “Who Is My Neighbour?” map and begin praying for each person by name this week.

Relevance: Prayer is the first step in building relationships with your neighbours and allowing God to use you to bless them.



In Psalm 71:14, we read, “But I will hope continually and will praise you yet more and more.” This verse reminds us of the importance of persistence, especially when we embark on a journey of prayer and blessing others. The B.L.E.S.S. tools provide practical ways to put into action the five everyday practices to love your neighbour and change your world. But to be effective, we must not just read them—we must commit to using them daily, allowing God to guide our actions.

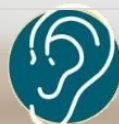
To integrate this into our daily lives can be by following the four P’s: Plan, Prepare, Places, and People.

1. **Plan** – Like anything important in life, if you don’t plan it, it won’t happen. Set aside time every day to pray for your neighbours by name. You might choose the morning, during your lunch break, or before bed. The key is to be consistent, as praying regularly will help develop a habit.
2. **Prepare** – Prayer isn’t just a list of requests. It’s a time to prepare your heart for what God wants to do through you. Ask for courage, boldness, and the opportunity to bless your neighbours. This step gets you ready for the adventure of being used by God in everyday life.
3. **Places** – As you move through your day, mentally map out where you’ll be. Ask God to open your eyes to the places and opportunities where you can be a blessing. It could be your workplace, your local café, or the gym.
4. **People** – While praying, focus on your eight neighbours. Ask God how you can bless each one and be open to His guidance. It might be a kind word, a thoughtful gesture, or simply praying for them by name.

Ponder: How can I consistently use the B.L.E.S.S. tools to bless my neighbours?

Action: Create a plan for daily prayer, focusing on the people and places God is calling you to bless.

Relevance: Prayer isn’t just an action; it’s a powerful tool that brings God’s blessings into the lives of others.



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Listening is a powerful tool, one that Jesus used to truly connect with others. In our busy world, we often think of communication as speaking, but the B.L.E.S.S. program reminds us that listening is just as important—if not more so. Psalm 73:24 says, "You guide me with your counsel," highlighting the importance of receiving guidance, and often, that comes through truly listening.

We all know that listening can transform relationships. Whether it's asking a mate how they are or paying attention to the deeper emotions behind their words, listening with care shows love and respect. As Aussies, we value mateship and good conversation, but we sometimes miss the power of just stopping and truly hearing someone's story. It's easy to assume we understand or jump in with advice, but real listening takes patience and humility. Listening, like any skill, takes practice. This is where the "Four H's" come into play:

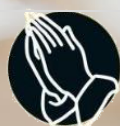
- **History:** Asking someone about where they grew up or their background opens the door to deeper understanding.
- **Heart:** Finding out about someone's passions—whether it's their favourite footy team or a cherished holiday spot—builds a connection.
- **Habits:** What do they enjoy in their free time? This helps us see what fills their life with joy or relaxation.
- **Hurts:** Compassionately asking about someone's struggles, and then listening, shows real care.

Listening isn't just about words—it's about understanding and being present for others.

Ponder: How can I be a better listener in my relationships, especially with those I want to bless?

Action: This week, focus on using the Four H's in a conversation and practice active listening with someone you care about.

Relevance: In listening, we reflect God's love and presence in our everyday interactions, allowing others to feel truly heard and understood.



In today's fast-paced world, genuine listening has become a rare commodity. Whether in casual conversations or on social media, most people seem more focused on getting their point across than truly understanding others. Psalm 78:1 says, "My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth." It reminds us that listening is not just about hearing words but absorbing the deeper message. It's about being fully present.

We've all been in conversations where, instead of listening, we're simply waiting for our turn to speak. It's easy to fall into this trap, especially when we have something to say, but real listening is much harder. It requires patience, attention, and humility. Too often, we don't even realise how much we miss by not actively listening. Just as you might miss the sounds of a bird chirping or the wind rustling unless you stop and focus, you miss the deeper emotions and thoughts of others if you're not truly tuned in.

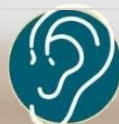
Jesus was the ultimate listener. Throughout the Gospels, we see Him taking time to listen to people, even when He was busy or interrupted. His compassion and love for others often came through not just in His words but in His willingness to listen to their stories, their hurts, and their struggles. As followers of Christ, we're called to do the same. To B.L.E.S.S. those around us, we must start by listening—really listening.

When we take the time to listen, people feel valued and known. It moves us from surface-level interactions to deeper connections where genuine love and care can flourish. As Aussies, we pride ourselves on mateship, but to build real relationships, we must make sure we're not just hearing but truly listening to our mates.

Ponder: When was the last time I truly listened to someone without waiting to speak?

Action: This week, have a conversation where you intentionally listen without interrupting. Focus on understanding before responding.

Relevance: Listening deeply is one of the simplest yet most profound ways to show love. It helps us connect with others and reflect Jesus' care in our daily lives.



Being a great listener doesn't always come naturally, especially in our world filled with distractions. Whether it's the physical noise around us, our internal thoughts, or misunderstandings of what someone is trying to say, truly listening can be difficult. Psalm 81:8 says, "Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—if you would only listen to me, Israel!" This verse reminds us how much God values our attention, and in the same way, we must give our full attention to those around us.

Jesus showed us the power of listening. In Luke 18, He encountered a blind man who called out for mercy. Even though there was a lot of noise and commotion around, Jesus paused and heard his cry. What's remarkable is that Jesus didn't assume He knew what the man needed—He asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" This question is a reminder that listening involves more than just hearing words; it's about understanding the heart behind those words.

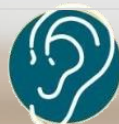
In our busy lives, it's easy to half-listen while thinking about what we'll say next. We might be in a conversation but only give partial attention, as our minds drift off. But Jesus modelled a better way. He stopped, focused, and listened deeply to those around Him. This is something we can emulate as we try to bless those in our lives through listening.

When we truly listen, we not only hear words but get to know the person behind them. In doing so, we show love and care, creating a deeper connection. As Aussies, we pride ourselves on being good mates, but to be the best mates we can be, we need to become intentional listeners, just like Jesus.

Ponder: When was the last time I truly listened to someone without distraction?

Action: This week, take time to engage in a conversation where you put aside distractions and fully listen to the other person.

Relevance: Listening is one of the simplest ways to show someone they are valued and loved, and it builds stronger relationships in our everyday lives.



Listening isn't just about hearing words; it's about truly understanding the person speaking. Whether we're talking to our neighbour, a co-worker, or someone from a different culture, the importance of listening is universal. In Psalm 82:3, we're reminded, "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed." How can we defend or uphold others if we don't first take the time to listen to their stories and understand their needs?

A powerful story is told about a missionary group who went to serve in a remote Indian village. Armed with supplies and good intentions, they offered to build a medical clinic, a school, and a church, thinking that's what the community needed most. However, they quickly learned that before jumping into action, they needed to listen to the people and hear what their real desires were. This is a perfect example of the difference between helping in a way that we think is best versus listening and truly responding to what is actually needed.

Listening across cultures or to those from different walks of life requires patience, humility, and a willingness to set aside our assumptions. It's not just about hearing words; it's about hearing hearts. Like the invention of the stethoscope in 1816, which allowed doctors to listen more effectively, we too need tools—not physical ones, but the tools of empathy and understanding—to really connect with others.

When we listen to the stories of those around us, whether it's the single mum next door, the colleague in the cubicle next to you, or even the cashier who mentions her struggles, we open the door to being a true blessing.

Ponder: When was the last time I truly listened to someone, without rushing to respond?

Action: Take time this week to intentionally listen to someone from a different background or experience, asking questions to understand their heart.

Relevance: Listening isn't just hearing words—it's the foundation of loving and blessing others, especially across cultural divides.



In Psalms 86:11, we read, "Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth." This verse speaks to the importance of paying attention to God's guidance and, by extension, listening well to our surroundings. Listening isn't just about hearing people, but also the places we find ourselves in—our neighbourhoods, workplaces, and cities.

In Acts 17, we see how Paul approached the city of Athens. He didn't rush in with answers; instead, he listened to the culture, observed the people, and learned about their values. He noticed they had an altar to an "unknown god," which he then used to introduce them to the one true God. This wasn't a random observation—it came from actively listening and understanding the place he was in.

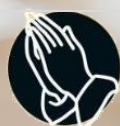
In our modern context, we too can listen to the "heartbeat" of a place. Author Rich Gorman talks about listening for the "Four P's of a Place": Pain, Pennies, Power, and Parties. These are the clues that help us understand the struggles, economy, influencers, and celebrations in any community. For example, understanding the local economy or identifying community leaders can give us insight into the needs and strengths of a neighbourhood. Listening to what people celebrate—like family, sports, or local events—reveals what they value most.

When we take time to listen, like Paul did in Athens, we gain the knowledge to bless our communities in ways that matter. Whether we're attending a local community meeting or simply walking through our neighbourhood, listening helps us find opportunities to be a blessing. Paul's strategy of listening first is a timeless approach we can apply today.

Ponder: How well do I listen to the needs and values of the places where I live, work, and play?

Action: Take a walk around your neighbourhood this week, paying attention to the people, places, and atmosphere. What can you learn about your community's needs and values?

Relevance: Listening to the culture of a place allows us to bless our communities in more meaningful and impactful ways, just as Paul did in Athens.



HAPPY

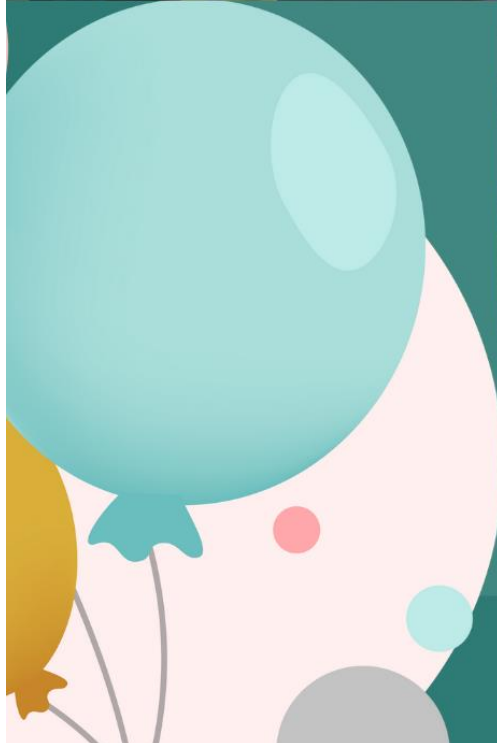
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Psalms 89:1 says, "I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations." This verse highlights how we can live out God's love through simple yet impactful actions, such as sharing meals and showing hospitality. When we open our homes and share food with others, we reflect God's grace and faithfulness in practical, everyday ways.

One of the most effective ways to bless others is through sharing a meal. In today's busy world, it's rare to sit down and enjoy food with someone, making the act itself a powerful gesture of friendship and care. Jesus often shared meals with people from all walks of life, including those on the fringes of society. It wasn't just about food—it was about connection, acceptance, and showing people their value in God's eyes.

In Matthew 9:9–13, we see Jesus calling Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him. Instead of lecturing Matthew or setting out a list of religious tasks, Jesus shared a meal with him. This wasn't just any meal—Matthew invited other tax collectors and "sinners" to join. To the Pharisees, this was shocking. Sharing a table with people like Matthew was a radical act of inclusion, demonstrating Jesus's mission to bless and save those whom society had rejected. By eating with them, Jesus showed that no one was beyond the reach of God's love and mercy.

When we follow Jesus's example of eating with others, particularly those who may feel excluded or overlooked, we participate in His mission of blessing and reconciliation. The simple act of eating together can break down barriers and build relationships that open the door for deeper spiritual conversations.

Ponder: Who in my life can I invite to share a meal with, as Jesus did with Matthew and others?

Action: This week, invite someone for a meal, especially someone who may feel isolated or overlooked. Focus on listening and making them feel valued.

Relevance: Sharing a meal is a simple yet profound way to reflect God's love and build connections that can change lives.



Psalms 91:1 says, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." This verse is a reminder of God's protection and presence, particularly when we step out in faith to bless others. One of the simplest ways to bless those around us is through sharing a meal, just as Jesus did.

Jesus often faced criticism for the company He kept during meals. In Luke 7:34, He was accused of being "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners." Why? Because Jesus regularly sat down to eat with people whom society had rejected. He wasn't afraid to get close to those who needed love the most, and He used meals as a way to build relationships, show care, and speak truth into their lives.

Sharing a meal isn't just about eating; it's about creating space for meaningful connection. In our modern world, sitting down to eat with someone can be a rare and special occasion. It's an opportunity to invite people into a deeper relationship, where they feel heard, valued, and loved. Whether it's with a friend, a neighbour, or even a stranger, meals are a powerful way to live out the love of Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we're called to do the same. Whether it's inviting someone to our home or meeting for a coffee, sharing a meal provides the perfect setting to listen, care, and bless. You don't need a full house to make a difference—a simple meal shared with intention can have a lasting impact.

Ponder: Who in my life could I invite for a meal or coffee to deepen a connection and show them God's love?

Action: This week, make a plan to share a meal with someone. It could be a friend, family member, or someone new. Focus on being fully present, listening, and showing care.

Relevance: Meals aren't just about food—they're a way to live out the Gospel, reflecting the love of Jesus by building relationships and blessing others.



In Psalms 96:2, we are encouraged to "Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day." Sharing a meal is a powerful way to live out this message by building relationships and showing God's love through fellowship. Jesus often used meals to connect with people, and whether He was hosting or attending, food became a tool for deepening connections.

Interestingly, Jesus didn't always host meals at His own place. He was just as often the guest. He attended dinners like the one at Levi's house, where He spent time with tax collectors and sinners (Luke 5:27–32), and He was even at the wedding in Cana where He performed His first miracle (John 2:1–11).

The lesson here is that you don't have to always be the host. Being invited into someone else's home, or even meeting at a restaurant, can still be an opportunity to bless and build relationships.

Eating together is about so much more than food. It's about sharing life, listening to people's stories, and getting to know them on a deeper level. This aligns with the practice of listening, which we've already explored in B.L.E.S.S.

By accepting an invitation to someone else's home or table, you are also opening the door to deeper conversations and a genuine connection. Psalms 96 calls us to declare God's glory and marvel at His works, and one of the simplest ways to reflect His love is by being present in people's lives—often around a shared meal.

Ponder: Who might be inviting me into their life that I haven't noticed?

Action: Look for opportunities this week to accept an invitation to someone else's home or meal. Don't hesitate to make the effort, even if it seems inconvenient.

Relevance: Sharing a meal is not just about food—it's about showing love, being present, and deepening relationships, just as Jesus did in His ministry



In Psalms 100:1-2, we read, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." This call to rejoice and worship with joy reminds us that sharing meals with others can be an act of celebration and connection—an opportunity to bless others and build relationships over food.

A meal calendar is a simple yet powerful tool to help you intentionally bless your friends, family, and neighbours. The concept isn't about adding more to your busy schedule but making the most of what you already do. Most of us eat three meals a day, and each one of those meals can be an opportunity to connect with someone and build relationships. Whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner—or even just coffee and dessert—you can use that time to bless someone.

Jesus used meals to connect with people in a meaningful way. Whether He was dining with tax collectors like Matthew (Matthew 9:10) or feeding the multitudes with loaves and fish (Matthew 14:13-21), meals became a central part of His ministry. Similarly, we can use our everyday meals as an invitation to show care, listen, and share life with those around us.

With over ten thousand taste buds, humans are made to enjoy food, and God's grace is evident in this simple yet joyful act of eating. Sharing meals can be more than just feeding our bodies; it's about feeding our souls by spending time with others and showing God's love through hospitality. As you plan your meals, consider inviting someone to join you—whether it's breakfast before work, coffee at lunchtime, or dinner around your table at home.

Ponder: Who could I invite to share a meal with this week, and how can I be intentional in using that time to bless them?

Action: Use the meal calendar to schedule at least one meal or coffee this week where you invite someone over, focusing on building a deeper connection.

Relevance: Sharing meals is a simple but impactful way to bless others and build meaningful relationships, just as Jesus did in His ministry.



Psalm 103:8 says, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.” This verse reflects the heart behind the Dinner Church movement—a place where compassion, grace, and abundant love are shared around a meal, showing the love of Jesus in a practical and tangible way. Sharing a meal together is a simple yet profound act that reflects God’s care for us, and it can open doors for deeper relationships and spiritual conversations.

The idea behind Dinner Church is simple: gather your neighbours, share a meal, and allow conversations to flow naturally. As Verlon Fosner found in Seattle, this simple act of hospitality can lead to something much bigger. What started as a weekly meal for neighbours eventually turned into multiple Dinner Churches across the country. The power of a shared meal became a vehicle for sharing the Gospel in an accessible and meaningful way.

Jesus understood the significance of eating with people. In Matthew 9:9–13, He sat down to eat with tax collectors and sinners, much to the dismay of the religious leaders. But in doing so, He demonstrated that everyone is welcome at His table. Eating together breaks down barriers, builds trust, and creates an environment where people feel valued. Jesus wanted to be known as someone who shared meals with everyone, regardless of their status or reputation.

If the idea of hosting a meal feels daunting, consider the bigger picture. Just like Psalm 103 reminds us of God's abounding love, your simple act of hospitality can show His love to others. A weekly meal could be the start of something significant in your community. It doesn't have to be fancy—just generous, welcoming, and focused on building relationships.

Ponder: How can I use a shared meal to connect with my neighbours and show them God’s love?

Action: Plan a meal this week, inviting neighbours or friends over. Focus on listening and building genuine connections.

Relevance: Sharing a meal is a powerful way to deepen relationships and reflect the compassion, grace, and love of God to those around us.





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Psalm 105:4 says, “Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.” This verse reminds us that we are not meant to rely on our own strength when we serve others. Instead, we are to seek God’s strength and guidance as we step out to bless and serve those around us.

Serving, in many ways, is about shifting our perspective—realising that true strength comes from God and that we can be used in surprising ways to bless others.

In the same way that Albert Einstein turned the world of physics upside down, Jesus flipped traditional thinking about service. Instead of starting with doing for others, He taught His disciples to begin by allowing others to serve them. When He sent His disciples out, He didn’t instruct them to fix everything or meet every need. Instead, He said to look for people who would welcome them, feed them, and take care of them. This was a radical shift—service isn’t just about what we do for others, but about being in a posture of humility, sometimes allowing others to serve us.

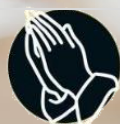
This paradigm shift helps us see that serving isn’t a one-way street. In our Aussie culture, where mateship and lending a hand are highly valued, we often rush to serve others without considering that letting them serve us is just as valuable. By allowing others to serve, we open the door to mutual respect and deeper relationships.

We don’t always have to be the hero. Sometimes, being served is the best way to serve in return, because it creates a space where authentic connection can thrive.

Ponder: How can I shift my perspective on serving? Are there times when allowing others to help me could strengthen our relationship?

Action: This week, be open to receiving help from someone. It might feel counterintuitive but allow someone to serve you and see where that relationship goes.

Relevance: Serving is not just about giving; it’s about opening up opportunities for genuine connection, sometimes by allowing others to give back. Seek God’s strength as you serve and be served.



Psalm 106:3 says, “Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right.” This verse reflects a fundamental truth about serving: it’s not just a one-off act, but a lifestyle of justice and care for others. Serving, as Jesus taught, is a way of showing love and humility. He didn’t just teach it with words—He modelled it with His life.

In one of the most powerful examples of service, Jesus washed His disciples’ feet just before He was arrested. At the Last Supper, Jesus knew that He had all the authority in the world, yet He set aside His crown for an apron and did the job of a servant. He washed the feet of His followers—dirty, grimy, and gross—showing that real greatness comes from humility and service, not from power or position.

This act wasn’t just about washing feet. It was a shift in thinking—Jesus wanted His followers to understand that blessing others comes from serving them. The act of washing feet, a lowly and even humiliating task, was Jesus’ way of demonstrating that to be truly great in the Kingdom of God, you need to be willing to humble yourself and serve others.

We live in a world that often values status, success, and climbing the social ladder. But Jesus showed us that real impact, real blessing, comes when we choose to serve others, even in the most menial of ways.

Whether it’s through helping a neighbour, supporting a friend, or being there for a stranger, we are called to follow Jesus’ example.

Ponder: How can I serve others in a way that reflects Jesus’ humility and love?

Action: Find one way this week to set aside your “crown” and serve someone else, even if it feels beneath you.

Relevance: Serving others isn’t about power or recognition—it’s about showing love through humble, selfless acts, just as Jesus did.



Psalm 107:8 says, "Let them give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind." This verse encourages us to recognise the goodness of God in everything we do, including how we serve others. Serving is one of the most tangible ways to show God's love and goodness to those around us.

Football is a huge part of Australian culture, and it's often seen as more than just a game. For many, it's a way of life, a community, and a place where friendships are forged. Similarly, faith is about more than just personal belief—it's about living in a way that brings people together and makes a positive difference. When football and faith come together, something special can happen.

Jesus understood the power of serving with care and dignity. In Mark's Gospel, when He healed a man who was deaf and had a severe speech impediment, He didn't make a spectacle of it.

Instead, Jesus took him aside privately, respecting the man's dignity and avoiding any unnecessary attention. This small yet profound act of service showed that Jesus wasn't just interested in fixing the man's physical problems—He cared about his emotional and social well-being too.

In the same way, serving others in our everyday lives, whether it's through simple acts of kindness or deeper connections, brings people together. Whether on the footy field or in our neighbourhoods, when we serve with dignity and respect, we reflect the heart of Jesus.

Ponder: How can I serve others in a way that shows dignity and care, just like Jesus did?

Action: This week, find a way to serve someone in your community or at your workplace, not just by helping, but by showing genuine respect for their unique needs.

Relevance: Serving isn't about being a hero—it's about recognising the humanity in others and showing God's love through humble, caring actions.



Psalm 108:12 says, "Give us aid against the enemy, for human help is worthless." This reminds us that while we can do much to help others, the real power to serve and bless comes from God. Serving others isn't just about doing good deeds, but about relying on God's strength and guidance in our efforts.

In your everyday life, what might be stopping you from truly serving others? Perhaps it's your time, your pride, or even just the convenience of your current routine. To serve like Jesus did, we need to put down our "crowns"—the things that keep us from helping others—and pick up the apron of service.

One simple way to serve is through the R-P-M-S tool. This stands for Relational, Physical, Mental, and Spiritual, and it's a way to assess how the people around you are doing. Just like monitoring the RPMs of an engine helps gauge its health, this tool can help you understand where someone might need help or support.

Here's a quick overview of R-P-M-S:

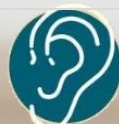
- **Relational:** How are their relationships with others? Are they feeling isolated or connected?
- **Physical:** How is their health or physical well-being?
- **Mental:** Are they facing any mental or emotional challenges?
- **Spiritual:** How is their spiritual life? Do they feel close to God or distant?

By asking yourself these questions about your neighbours or friends, you can better understand how to serve them in a way that meets their needs.

Ponder: What is the "crown" I need to put down to better serve those around me?

Action: Use the R-P-M-S tool this week to assess how you can serve a neighbour or friend in one of these four areas.

Relevance: Serving others isn't just about doing something nice—it's about truly understanding their needs and stepping in to help where it matters most, just like Jesus did.



Psalm 111:9 says, "He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever holy and awesome is his name." This verse highlights God's continuous care for His people. As we reflect on serving others, we can look to God's example of serving us by providing for our needs, redeeming us, and keeping His promises.

The R-P-M-S tool (Relational, Physical, Mental, Spiritual) is a simple way to assess how we can serve our neighbours and community. Just as we monitor our own well-being, we can look for ways to bless others in these four key areas.

- **Relational:** How are their relationships with family and friends? Do they seem isolated or in need of deeper connections? Maybe they need someone to listen or to offer them time with a supportive group.
- **Physical:** Consider their health. Do they appear tired or stressed? Do they talk about struggles with sleep or eating habits? Perhaps offering to go for a walk or bringing over a healthy meal could be a way to serve.
- **Mental:** Are there signs of stress, anxiety, or emotional exhaustion? Maybe they're dealing with issues they haven't shared. A gentle conversation could give them the space they need to open up.
- **Spiritual:** Is your neighbour seeking something more? Are they open to spiritual conversations or curious about prayer? You might offer to pray with them or share your own experiences of faith.

Serving others in these areas, much like Jesus did, can open doors to deeper relationships and allow you to bless them in practical ways. Sometimes, the smallest acts of service, like offering help when they're struggling, can make the biggest impact.

Ponder: Who in my life could benefit from relational, physical, mental, or spiritual support right now?

Action: This week, pick one neighbour or friend and use the R-P-M-S tool to identify how you can serve them.

Relevance: Serving others isn't just about big gestures. It's about noticing the small needs that reflects Christ's love.



Psalm 116:1-2 reminds us, "I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live." This verse speaks of a personal experience with God—an answered prayer, a moment of mercy. It's a perfect example of what it means to have a personal story of faith to share.

Jesus invites us to share our story, and as Christians, our story has three key elements: who we were before we knew Jesus, how we met Him, and what our life has been like since.

Telling your story isn't about being a polished speaker or having a dramatic conversion experience. It's simply about sharing how God has moved in your life, making it relatable and real.

Think of your own journey. What was life like before you knew Jesus? What struggles did you face? Then, how did you come to know Him? Was it through a friend, a church service, or a quiet moment of prayer? And finally, how has your life changed since?

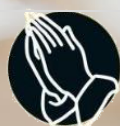
Sharing these personal reflections can be powerful. It brings to life the grace and love of God in a way that others can understand.

Jesus often used stories—parables—to teach important lessons. And like Him, we are called to use our stories to bless others. You don't need to have all the answers, just an open heart and a willingness to share how God has been real to you.

Ponder: What are the key moments in my faith journey that I could share with others?

Action: This week, find a moment to share your story with someone who may need encouragement or a reminder of God's love.

Relevance: Your personal story of faith can be one of the most powerful ways to bless others and help them see the reality of God's love and grace in their own lives. Just like the Psalmist, tell how God has turned His ear to you, and how He's changed your life.



Psalm 119:9 asks, "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." This verse points to the importance of aligning our lives with God's Word and living in a way that reflects His grace and truth. Sharing our stories is a way to show how God's Word has transformed us.

Jesus Himself shared His story in a powerful way, especially in His conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:14-17). Nicodemus, curious and spiritually hungry, came to Jesus at night seeking answers.

Instead of giving him a simple reply, Jesus shared the greatest story of all—the story of God's love for humanity. He told Nicodemus that the Son of Man must be "lifted up" and that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. In that moment, Jesus didn't just share facts; He told the story of His purpose, His mission, and God's plan for salvation.

Like Jesus, we are invited to share our own stories. Your story, like His, is powerful because it's personal. It shows how God's grace has changed your past, shapes your present, and secures your future. When we share how God has worked in our lives, it can inspire others and remind us of His faithfulness.

Sometimes, like Nicodemus, people come to us with spiritual curiosity. These are divine opportunities to share how God's love has impacted us. You don't need to be a theologian; just be authentic. Share how Jesus has changed your heart, healed your wounds, and brought you hope.

Ponder: What part of your faith journey can you share with someone who is searching for hope or guidance?

Action: This week, find an opportunity to share your faith story with someone who may need encouragement or understanding.

Relevance: Just as Psalm 119 reminds us to live according to God's Word, sharing our story reflects how God's Word has transformed us. Your story is a testament to God's ongoing work in your life and can be a beacon of hope for others.



Psalms 119:46 says, "I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame." This verse reminds us to boldly share God's truth, no matter who is listening. Yet, many of us hesitate when it comes to sharing our own stories of faith. Why do we hold back?

One common reason is the fear that we don't have what it takes. We worry that someone might ask a tough question or challenge our understanding. But just as Psalms 119 encourages us to rely on God's guidance, we can trust the Holy Spirit to provide the words we need. In Matthew 10:19-20, Jesus reassures His disciples not to worry about what to say, as the Spirit will speak through them.

Another reason is the fear of imposing our beliefs on others. But sharing our story isn't about force—it's about offering hope, much like a beggar sharing where they found bread. When we tell others about the transformation we've experienced through Jesus, it's an invitation, not an imposition.

Finally, sharing our story can make us feel uncomfortable. It's natural to get nervous, but the impact of sharing the good news far outweighs any discomfort. Your story could be what leads someone to Christ.

Consider the blind man from John 9. He didn't have all the answers, but he shared his story simply: "I was blind, but now I see" (John 9:25). He didn't need to explain every detail or quote Scripture—he just shared what Jesus had done for him. And that's all we need to do too.

Ponder: What's stopping you from sharing your story?

Action: This week, step out of your comfort zone and share how Jesus has transformed your life with someone.

Relevance: Like the blind man who was healed, you don't need all the answers—just share your story of how Jesus changed your life. It can make an eternal difference to someone who's listening.



Psalms 119:67 says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word." This verse reflects the essence of transformation, much like the once-blind man in John 9 who simply said, "I was blind but now I see." Sharing your story is about showing how Jesus has changed your life, and Psalms 119 reminds us of the power of obedience and transformation.

There are three simple parts to sharing your story:

Part 1: My Life before Jesus

Just like the blind man said, "I was blind," this is where you share how your life was before you met Jesus. Were you lost, confused, or seeking something more? What struggles did you face? This part helps others understand the reality of life without Christ.

Part 2: How I Met Jesus

The man in John 9 explained how Jesus put mud on his eyes and healed him. This is where you share your personal encounter with Jesus. How did you first realise who He is? What event or moment led you to accept Him? Just like the small group in the story who set out to bless others with hot chocolate but ended up transforming a young girl's life, God often works in unexpected ways.

Part 3: My Life since I Met Jesus

The once-blind man now sees, and his life is forever changed. In this final part, you share how your life has been transformed since following Jesus. What has changed in your heart, actions, and perspective? This is the hope-filled conclusion that shows the ongoing impact of Christ in your life.

Sharing your story, like the B.L.E.S.S. group, might lead to unexpected results, but God uses even the smallest acts to create life-changing moments.

Ponder: How has your life changed since meeting Jesus?

Action: This week, practice sharing your story with a friend, following the three-part framework.

Relevance: Your story can be a powerful tool in showing others the transformative power of Jesus, just as the man in John 9 simply shared, "I was blind, but now I see."



Psalms 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” It’s a simple yet profound way to guide others toward hope and truth. Your story, no matter how ordinary, has the power to impact lives.

Simple Framework for Sharing Your Story

Using a three-part framework can help you tell your story effectively:

Part 1: My Life Before Jesus

Start by describing what your life was like before you fully encountered Jesus. This could be a time of struggle, uncertainty, or even just living without a clear sense of purpose. Be honest and share what your world was like before faith became personal.

Part 2: How I Met Jesus

Explain how you came to know Jesus. Was there a particular event, moment, or person that introduced you to faith? This is where you describe the turning point, much like the blind man in John 9 who shared how Jesus healed him. Whether it was a friend’s invitation or a personal challenge that led you to seek God, this part of your story is pivotal.

Part 3: My Life Since Meeting Jesus

Conclude by sharing how your life has changed since you started following Jesus. Be real life still has challenges, but talk about how faith has impacted how you handle them. Share both the blessings and the ongoing growth that comes from walking with God.

Five Tips for Sharing Your Story:

1. **Ask God for Help** – Pray before you share your story.
2. **You Be You** – Speak naturally and be yourself.
3. **Keep It Real** – Be authentic, sharing both the good and struggles.
4. **Keep It Short** – Aim for a 3–5-minute version of your story.
5. **Practice Out Loud** – Rehearse your story until you feel comfortable.

Ponder: How has your life changed since meeting Jesus?

Action: Write out your story using the three-part framework.

Relevance: Sharing your story as Psalm 119 reminds us that God’s word guides us, your story can help guide others to Him.



Psalms 119:130 says, “*The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*” This verse is a reminder that God's wisdom and purpose shine through when we dive into His word. As we learn more about God’s mission for us, we begin to see clearly how we can become a blessing in the world every day.

Three Types of People

Think about how you approach life. There are three types of people:

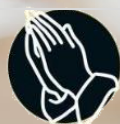
1. **Nothing-to-Do People** – These are the people whose goal is to get everything done so they can relax and have nothing on their plate. They look forward to weekends, holidays, and retirement. Rest is their ultimate goal.
2. **Always-Something-to-Do People** – These people thrive on tasks and accomplishments. Their to-do list never ends, and they take pride in being busy and productive. For them, life is about checking things off a list.
3. **Have-to-Do People** – This group has found a calling. They understand that God has a purpose for them. Every day, they wake up knowing they are part of God’s greater mission, and their actions flow from a sense of responsibility to bless others.

Which one are you? The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:10 that we are “*created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” As a Have-to-Do person, your life is no longer about just relaxing or getting things done. It's about waking up with a sense of purpose, knowing that each day brings an opportunity to serve God’s mission by blessing the people around you.

Ponder: Are you living as a Have-to-Do person, fully engaged in God’s mission?

Action: Start each day with prayer, asking God to show you someone you can bless today.

Relevance: When we embrace the mindset of a Have-to-Do person, life becomes more than a checklist—it becomes a mission.



Psalms 119:160 says, “*The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*” This verse highlights the enduring nature of God’s truth and His promises.

As we learn to live out His word through the B.L.E.S.S. practices, we must remind ourselves that transformation takes time. Like God’s truth, building relationships and guiding others to Jesus is a process that cannot be rushed.

Slow is the New Fast

When I first started applying the B.L.E.S.S. practices, I was eager to see results. I thought, *How long until someone says ‘yes’ to Jesus?* I wanted it to happen quickly. But building deep, meaningful relationships takes time. If we rush it, people may feel like projects instead of individuals we genuinely care about. So, slow down and remember: God is responsible for converting hearts, while we are responsible for loving people.

Jesus demonstrated this approach. In John 4, we read about how He *had to* go through Samaria. This wasn’t a geographical necessity; it was a spiritual one. Jesus knew there was someone there He had to meet—the Samaritan woman at the well.

Despite cultural and personal barriers, Jesus approached her, treated her with dignity, and changed her life. She went from being a social outcast to someone who excitedly shared her story with the whole village.

Ponder: Are you allowing enough time for genuine connections with others, or are you rushing the process?

Action: This week, intentionally slow down and focus on building a deeper relationship with someone in your life. Ask God to guide your interactions and remind you that it’s not about speed, but about love.

Relevance: Just as God’s truth endures, so does the impact of our patience and love. When we focus on the mission God has given us, like Jesus did, we can truly bless others in a way that lasts forever.



Psalms 121:1-2 says, *“I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”* This verse reminds us that God is our ever-present help, guiding and empowering us in all situations, including our efforts to bless others. When we look to Him for guidance, He helps us be a blessing in ways that truly impact those around us.

The Balance Between Discipline and Grace - When we live out spiritual disciplines like the B.L.E.S.S. practices, there’s a delicate balance to maintain. It’s easy to fall into the trap of measuring our worth by how consistently we practise these disciplines. But as Psalms 120-123 reminds us, our help comes from the Lord—not from our works. God’s love for us isn’t dependent on our performance, but on His grace.

This is a critical mindset shift. We are called to bless others, not to prove ourselves, but because we’ve already been loved and blessed by God. The story of Lauren Seaman in Chicago beautifully illustrates how this mindset can transform ordinary moments into Kingdom opportunities. By being present, listening, and loving others without an agenda, he witnessed God’s hand in his friendship with Ibrahim, a West African immigrant, and many others.

Intentional Living - We can choose to live every day with intentionality and purpose, asking God to reveal how we can bless the people we encounter. It’s not about rushing through a checklist of spiritual activities; rather, it’s about letting God’s love flow through us naturally in our daily interactions. Sometimes, like in Lauren’s story, it takes months or even years, but the slow process of building genuine relationships is where the real impact lies.

Ponder: Are you living with intentionality to bless others, or do you find yourself rushing through the motions?

Action: Ask God to show you one person you can intentionally bless this week by listening, sharing a meal, or serving them in some way.

Relevance: When we lift our eyes to God for help and guidance, we can become vessels of His love, blessing those around us and bringing His Kingdom into everyday moments.



Psalms 127:1 says, “*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.*” This verse is a powerful reminder that all our efforts, no matter how well-intentioned, need God’s guidance and blessing. When we commit to B.L.E.S.S. practices in our work or personal life, we’re not acting alone—God is with us, guiding the way.

B.L.E.S.S.ing at Work - Rosa’s story is a brilliant example of how living out the B.L.E.S.S. practices can transform not just our personal relationships, but also our workplaces. After going through training at her church in New Jersey, she applied these principles at her consulting firm in New York, praying for her colleagues, listening intently, and sharing meals with them. By taking the time to genuinely care for her coworkers, she created an environment where trust and respect grew.

Through simple, intentional acts, such as walking through the office and praying for her team or taking extra time to listen to their personal lives, Rosa became a trusted mentor. Her leadership wasn’t about pushing her beliefs but about demonstrating care and kindness that reflected the love of Jesus. As a result, her team flourished, and her efforts were noticed by senior executives, who were eager to see that kind of leadership across the firm.

Faith in Action - Rosa’s approach to leading with the B.L.E.S.S. practices shows us that integrating faith into everyday life doesn’t need to be overt or forced. It’s about living authentically, letting the principles of Jesus shape how we treat others, and trusting God to use those small acts of kindness for greater good.

Ponder: How can you bring the B.L.E.S.S. practices into your workplace or community?

Action: Start praying for your coworkers or neighbours by name and look for opportunities to listen, serve, or share a meal with them.

Relevance: As Psalms 127 reminds us, it’s God who builds and blesses our efforts. By allowing Him to guide us, we can bless those around us, making a real difference in their lives and reflecting the love of Jesus.



Psalms 131:2 says, “*But I have calmed and quieted myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content.*” This verse beautifully illustrates the peace that comes when we let go of striving and learn to rest in God’s presence. As we seek to bless others with the B.L.E.S.S. practices, it’s essential to keep this spirit of contentment and calm, trusting that God is working through us, even in our ordinary, everyday actions.

Become a Have-to-Do Person

We all have different approaches to life—some of us like to have nothing to do, enjoying relaxation and rest, while others are always busy with a to-do list. But when we commit to the B.L.E.S.S. practices, we move from being either *Nothing-to-Do* or *Always-Something-to-Do* people to becoming *Have-to-Do* people. Why? Because loving our neighbours and living on mission for God becomes something we simply *have to do*.

In Mark 12:30-31, Jesus tells us that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love our neighbours. The B.L.E.S.S. practices provide a practical and meaningful way to live out these commandments, shifting the focus from ourselves to others, and bringing God's love into our relationships and communities.

The Power of Commitment

This journey isn’t just about being nice or helpful—it’s about embracing a new way of living that impacts the world around us. By making these practices part of our daily rhythm, we become instruments of God’s love, and in the process, we are changed as well.

Ponder: What would it look like if you truly committed to the B.L.E.S.S. practices as part of your everyday life?

Action: Take time today to sign the B.L.E.S.S. Pledge and share it with two close friends or family members who can hold you accountable.

Relevance: As Psalm 131 reminds us, we can find peace and contentment when we quiet our own striving and trust God’s guidance. By becoming a *Have-to-Do* person, you will bring the love of God into your everyday interactions, transforming lives—including your own.



Psalm 135:13 says, "Your name, Lord, endures forever, your renown, Lord, through all generations." This verse highlights God's enduring presence and His work throughout all generations. Just as God has been actively involved in history, He continues to lead and send His people to carry out His mission today.

God Is Always Going and Sending - From the beginning of time, God has been leading His people and sending them to be a blessing to others. We see this with Abram, who was called to leave his home and go to a foreign land to be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-2). Similarly, God sent Jesus into the world to be the ultimate example of love and sacrifice, and Jesus then sent His disciples to go and make more disciples (Matthew 28:19).

The pattern is clear: God initiates, and we are called to respond by going. Whether it's sharing His love with our neighbours, coworkers, or friends, God's mission involves stepping out of our comfort zones and engaging with the people around us.

The Call to Go Beyond Our Walls - Too often, we may be tempted to stay within the walls of our church or homes, expecting people to come to us. However, the mission of God is to go out into the world, loving people where they are—where they live, work, and play. Just like Kathy, who saw an opportunity to reach out to friends who wouldn't attend church, we are called to take the initiative to bless others and build relationships.

Making B.L.E.S.S. a habit isn't always easy. It takes intentionality and accountability. Experts say it takes twenty-one days to form a habit, but consistency and support from others can turn this into a lifelong practice.

Ponder: Are you willing to take the initiative and bless the people around you?

Action: Set aside time to reflect on how you can go beyond your usual circles to bless someone this week.

Relevance: God's mission to bless others requires us to go and take action. Just as Psalm 135 reminds us of God's lasting impact, we are called to make a difference in the lives of those around us, bringing His love into the everyday moments.



Psalm 136 opens with “*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*” This chapter, along with Psalms 137 and 138, reminds us of God’s enduring love and faithfulness, which He calls us to share with others. Just as God has reached out and sent His love to us, He calls us to do the same for those around us.

Treat Them Like They’re Christians Till They Realise They’re Not -

Matt joined a small group with a vision to love neighbours and use the B.L.E.S.S. practices to build relationships. Soon, two new members, Kathy and Richard, joined the group. They weren’t Christians but were searching for answers. As they formed friendships within the group, they asked questions, shared meals, and had meaningful conversations. Over time, Kathy and Richard realised they weren’t followers of Jesus but wanted to be.

This transformation happened in the context of community and friendship. The group’s approach of “treat them like they’re Christians till they realise they’re not” created a safe space where Kathy and Richard could explore faith without pressure. It was through consistent love, prayer, and shared experiences that they found their way to Christ.

The Urgency of Sharing - While the B.L.E.S.S. practices emphasise loving and serving others without pressure, there’s also an urgency in sharing the good news of Jesus. 2 Corinthians 6:2 reminds us that “*now is the day of salvation.*” We can trust God’s timing but also be aware that eternity is at stake.

As Psalm 138:3 says, “*When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me.*” Let this embolden us to share the love of God with those around us, trusting in His plan and timing.

Ponder: Who in your life needs to hear the good news of Jesus?

Action: Begin by praying for them and building a genuine friendship.

Relevance: Sharing your faith isn’t about pressure or urgency—it’s about loving others like Christ, trusting that God will work in their hearts.



Psalm 139:7 says, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” This beautiful reminder of God’s omnipresence echoes the truth that God is always with us, going ahead of us and sending us out to bless others. In the same way God goes before us, we are called to go and be a blessing to others, as part of His great mission.

Four Generations of B.L.E.S.S.ing - The idea of multiplying blessings through generations is deeply rooted in God’s plan. Jesus had a vision for His followers to take the blessing of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The Apostle Paul passed this vision onto Timothy, who was then challenged to entrust the message to reliable people who would, in turn, teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

This generational impact of blessing is something we can be a part of today. Just as Paul did with Timothy, we can multiply blessings by sharing the B.L.E.S.S. practices with others. In my own experience, I’ve seen this multiplication firsthand, as one person shares with another, who then passes it on. It becomes a ripple effect, reaching far beyond the original circle.

Keeping It Simple - Multiplying a B.L.E.S.S. group is simpler than you might think. All it requires is a small group of people willing to live out the B.L.E.S.S. practices and the intentional decision to pass those practices on to others. Whether you meet weekly in person or online, it’s about building relationships, encouraging one another, and being a blessing.

Just like the blessings described in Genesis 12:3, we are part of God’s plan to bless all peoples on earth. It starts with us—our willingness to follow God’s lead and go where He sends us, sharing His love and goodness with those around us.

Ponder: How can you be a blessing to others and help multiply the B.L.E.S.S. practices?

Action: Pray about starting or joining a small group with the intention of blessing others and multiplying those blessings.

Relevance: We are part of a grand mission—one that began with God’s promise to bless the world. By sharing and multiplying the blessings, we become active participants in God’s ongoing work.



Psalm 144:1 says, “Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.” Just as David acknowledged God’s role in preparing him for the challenges ahead, we too are equipped by God for the mission of blessing others. This preparation includes not only spiritual strength but also the practical tools to bless those around us. The B.L.E.S.S. practices are one such tool, designed to help us actively live out God’s calling every day.

The Two Commitments of a B.L.E.S.S. Group - To live out God’s mission, a B.L.E.S.S. group requires two key commitments.

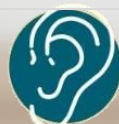
Commitment #1: Use One B.L.E.S.S. Practice Every Day - Being a blessing doesn’t happen by accident. It takes intentionality and daily effort. The first commitment is simple but vital: every member of the group should use one B.L.E.S.S. practice each day. Whether it’s praying for someone, listening to them, sharing a meal, serving, or telling your story, this daily habit ensures that blessing others becomes part of your everyday life. In doing so, you open the door for God to work through you. Leaders, in particular, must model this commitment. If you start your day with prayer and focus on blessing others, the rest of your group will follow suit. A small but consistent action like writing down the names of your neighbours or colleagues and praying for them can have a powerful impact.

Commitment #2: Begin Each Group by Asking, “Who Did You B.L.E.S.S.?” - Accountability is key to sustaining any habit, and B.L.E.S.S. groups are no different. By starting each meeting with the question, “Who did you B.L.E.S.S.?” you create a culture of encouragement and focus. Even a simple act like praying for someone counts and is often the first step in blessing their life.

Ponder: Are you ready to commit to using a B.L.E.S.S. practice each day?

Action: Start your day with prayer, writing down the names of people you want to bless. Be consistent and intentional.

Relevance: God has called each of us to be a blessing in our communities.



Psalm 145:4 says, *“One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.”* This verse reminds us that God’s story, His blessings, and His love are meant to be shared. Just as the psalmist proclaims God’s greatness, we are called to pass on His goodness to others. Sharing the good news of Jesus should not feel burdensome or awkward, but rather a natural part of our everyday lives, as we bless those around us.

Change Your World with B.L.E.S.S. - In Genesis 12:3, God promises that *“all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”* This is an amazing call that each of us has—our everyday actions can bring God’s blessing to others. By using the B.L.E.S.S. practices, we can fulfil this calling in ways that are relational, authentic, and impactful.

It doesn’t require grand gestures or complicated methods. As you go about your daily life, whether at work, with friends, or in your neighbourhood, you can use these five simple practices: Begin with Prayer, Listen, Eat, Serve, and Share Your Story. Each of these actions opens the door to deeper relationships and opportunities to bless others.

Matthew 18:20 says, *“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”* This means that when you team up with others in your community or church to B.L.E.S.S. people, God’s presence is there. You don’t have to go it alone; find a friend, a small group, or even start a B.L.E.S.S. group to keep each other accountable and on mission.

Ponder: Where is God sending you to be a blessing? How can you integrate B.L.E.S.S. practices into your daily life?

Action: Commit to using one B.L.E.S.S. practice every day. Start a small group or partner with a friend and ask each other, *“Who did you B.L.E.S.S. this week?”*

Relevance: By living out the B.L.E.S.S. practices, you’re following God’s call to bring His love to the people around you. You don’t need to wait for a perfect moment or place—start today and watch how God changes your world.



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Pastor Sean LaBrooy
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turningpoint Officer

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Pastor Tony O'Connell
Sunday Service: 10.30am

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turningpoint Filipino Outreach

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Outreach Online *** (see link below)
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Allan & Cynthia Quiambao
Sunday Service: 2pm

turningpoint Rosebud

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Rosebud
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