

LIVING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER – BLESSING THE LORD

Abri Brancken, 26 Nov 2017

After wandering in the desert for 40 years, the Hebrews came to the promised land. When they came to the edge of the Promised Land, Moses spoke these words to the Hebrews:

Deuteronomy 8:10-16 (ESV)

10 And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

11 “Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today,

12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them,

13 and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,

14 then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,

15 who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock,

16 who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.

IMPLEMENTING THE DAILY “SHORT PRAYERS”

A few hundred years before Jesus, Jews began to pay very close attention to this passage of Scripture. They did not want to fall into the sin of forgetting the LORD so in order not to forget the LORD their God, the Jews developed a tradition of offering up short prayers throughout the day. This would help remind them of the fact that God is their source of all good things and that they should always remember it throughout their day. Today, in the Jewish culture there is a prayer for just about everything.

MEANING OF “BRACHA”

These little prayers that they offered up to God are called a (“בְּרָכוֹת, berakhot”) “Bracha”, meaning blessing. The word “bracha” is related to the word “kneel” just like a camel does (Gen 24:11). The idea is when we bless God, we mentally bow on our knees to worship Him, acknowledging Him as the source of all blessing.

When a person wakes up in the morning he/she would thank God for awaking them.

They would thank God for a new day and for clothing their naked bodies.

There is even a prayer for when they went to the toilet, thanking God that everything works right.

They thanked God for other people, their gifts and what those people meant to them.

They had a blessing for the highs and lows in life, when it went well and when life was challenging.

BRACHA EXAMPLES

Here is the blessing when eating bread:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

(Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam hamotzi lehem min ha'aretz.)

Here is the blessing when drinking wine or grape juice:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

(Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam borei p'ri hagafen.)

Here is the blessing when eating fruit:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

(Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam borei p'ri ha'eitz.)

The aim of the “Bracha” is to saturate your life in prayer. These small blessings throughout the day would enable them to express their thankfulness towards God and to keep life in proper perspective. These prayers were done in private and it was done publicly.

BLESS THE LORD O MY SOUL – KING DAVID

King David blessed (acknowledged) God in his daily life. For example:

Psalm 103

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

BRACHA IN JESUS' LIFE

In Jesus' time the “bracha's” started with “Blessed is He”. We see evidence of this in Jesus' life:

- Bread and fish:

Matthew 14:19, (ESV)

19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then

he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

Jesus was not blessing the food, but in line with tradition Jesus was blessing the LORD who gave the food.

- **Reveal it to children:**

Matthew 11:25

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from wise and intelligent people and have revealed them to infants.

- **Healing the paralytic:**

After Jesus healed the paralytic, people "praised God, who had given such authority to human beings" (Matt 9:8)

- **Raising Lazarus:**

John 11:41, (BBE)

So they took away the stone. And Jesus, looking up to heaven, said, Father, I give praise to you for hearing me.

- **Healing the lepers:**

Luke 17:12-19 (ESV)

12 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance

13 and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

14 When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed.

15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;

16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.

17 Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?"

18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Jesus expected the other nine to also thank God through the traditional blessing.

"Blessed is He who does good to the undeserving and has rendered every kindness to me"

BRACHA IN PAUL'S LIFE

The Apostle Paul often alludes to the short prayers of blessing.

Ephesians 5:20 (ESV)

giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Colossians 3:17 (ESV)

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (ESV)

17 pray without ceasing,

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

THE EFFECT OF LIVING A PRAYERFULL LIFE

- Prayer changes your attitude in life. Thanking God continuously throughout the day helps us to avoid negativity. We see the glass as half full, not half empty.
- It counters our materialistic culture because we acknowledge God as the source.
- Thanking God makes you aware of the needs of others, those who do not have what you have.
- Saturating your daily life in prayer brings about a deep awareness of God's presence and His overwhelming love for us.
- It brings God into every situation in your life. You become more "God focused" in life.
- It also helps us to remember that we are under God's constant care.

THE CHALLENGE

Why don't you start by thanking God for 5 things every day.