

The Integrity Wheel: Blessing Season 2, Episode 8

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Exercise for Blessing

Bill Tillman noted in [this week's podcast](#) how hard it is to communicate the idea of blessing. He shared that in a recent church newsletter, the word was used five different ways in just five paragraphs.

Some common uses of the multifaceted term are:

- A mealtime prayer: A short prayer or expression of gratitude before eating.
- An affirmation: A positive statement or word of approval directed toward another person.
- A received benefit: A gift or fortunate circumstance—such as good health, a loving family, a fulfilling job, or financial security—often seen as coming from God.
- An invocation: The act of calling for divine favor, protection, or grace upon a person or object, serving as a "good word" that empowers and strengthens.

Consider these questions:

- Which of these definitions aligns most closely with your own understanding of a blessing? What makes that particular meaning stand out to you?
- In the Bible, blessings often flow from God to humanity, either directly or mediated through one person to another, such as Isaac to Jacob. Is it appropriate to use the term for secular encouragement, or should it be reserved for invoking the divine?
- We often call good health, a loving family, or financial security "blessings from God." How do we reconcile this with a theology of suffering, or with the fact that some believers who experience poverty or illness? If material wealth is a blessing, does that imply that hardships are a lack of divine favor?
- Some definitions treat a blessing as a noun (something we possess, like a comfortable life), while others treat it as a verb (the act of invoking God's favor and protection over someone). Which of these aligns more closely with a biblical understanding of blessing? How does shifting our focus from having blessings to being an instrument of blessing change our daily spiritual walk?

A Prayer of Blessing for You

The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Shalom.
(Numbers 6:24-26, NRSV)