

4. Read the description of the first church in Acts. How did they exemplify the BLESS practices?

Acts 2: ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

5. Even though Acts 2:41-47 is describing their life gathered, how might these practices have spilled over into their lives when they scattered into their workplaces, life in their neighborhoods, and the time with friends and family? Note the outcome of their lives in the last verse (Acts 2:47).

6. Look up and read "How to Pray More Deeply Using Prayer Cards" and "How to Pray Your BLESS List" in the Five Oaks Prayer Toolshed (<https://bit.ly/2XFbnCy>). How might you incorporate these practices or some insights from them into your personal prayer life?

BLESS

"The Power of Prayer to BLESS Others"
Galatians 3:7-9

God's Greatest Promise

God's greatest promise is to bless us, his people, so that we can bless the world with the message of his _____ in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:7-9; Genesis 12:1-3; 18:17-18; 22:17-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-15; Matthew 28:18-20

The Five B.L.E.S.S. Practices

Begin with prayer.

Listen with care.

Eat together.

Serve in love.

Share your story.

1 Thessalonians 2: ⁷ ...Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

Where is God leading you with your BLESS list this week?



Praying Our BLESS Lists Together

Ephesians 6: ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Colossians 4: ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

2 Thessalonians 3: ¹ As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.

Resources:

- “How to Pray More Deeply Using Prayer Cards” and “How to Pray Your BLESS List” in the Five Oaks **Prayer Toolshed**: <https://bit.ly/2XFbnCy>
- “Undeceptions with John Dickson” podcast.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week’s sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Complete the following sentence: “I feel blessed when...”
3. Read Genesis 12:1-3, Galatians 3:7-9 and Romans 4:1-3,16-17. How are the blessing and the responsibility of passing on the blessing to the nations passed on to us?

Genesis 12: ¹ The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. ² “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Galatians 3: ⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Romans 4: ¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.