

abundant*life*
day book



365 BLESSINGS
TO BEGIN YOUR DAY

Nancy Guthrie

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Abundant Life Day Book: 365 Blessings to Begin Your Day

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered why we say “God bless you” to people when they sneeze? There was a time when sneezing was a symptom of the deathly plague. And because getting the plague was considered a sign of God’s displeasure, saying, “God bless you” when someone sneezed was offering a prayer that the person would receive the blessing of God—ongoing life—rather than dying from the plague. To be blessed is to have life—abundant, overflowing life.

In the best-known blessing from the Bible, we read that the Lord instructed Moses to tell Aaron and his sons to bless the people of Israel with this special blessing:

*May the LORD bless you
and protect you.*

*May the LORD smile on you
and be gracious to you.*

*May the LORD show you his favor
and give you his peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*

God wanted his people to enjoy the assurance of his intention to bless them. From this special blessing we learn that to be blessed is to see the smile of God over our lives rather than to live under his frown. It is to experience his ongoing grace rather than expect his condemnation. It is to enjoy God’s favor rather than endure his rejection. It is to be at peace with him rather than being his enemy.

Experiencing God’s blessing is not merely getting good things from God. The essence of blessing is God himself. When we begin to see how much God has given to us in Christ, and how much he is worth, we realize that all of the things we were hoping to get from God—good health, loving relationships, protection from harm, material provision—are

only temporary, tangible reminders of all we have in Christ. As blessed people we can say along with the psalmist:

*I desire you more than anything on earth.
My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,
but God remains the strength of my heart;
he is mine forever. (Psalm 73:25-26)*

As we begin this journey together over the next year, there are two important things you must know. First, while I've taken great liberty in writing these blessings as if they are God speaking to you, the only aspect of each day's blessing that has the authority of God is the Word of God quoted at the top of each page. Writing as if it is God who is speaking is only a device employed for the purpose of helping you hear him speak his blessing personally to you. My hope is that it will serve to make the Scripture come alive and become even more precious to you. I have sought to be faithful to God's Word in expounding on it and applying it using this literary device, and have done so with a sense of holy fear, prayerfully seeking to be one "who correctly explains the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Second, you need to know that the Bible makes it clear that while God offers his goodness to all who will embrace Christ by faith, he does not force his blessing on those who do not desire him. But if you want him, he will freely give himself to you. You do not have to earn God's blessing (in fact, you can't earn it!). You do not have to deserve God's blessing (in fact, no one deserves it!). You cannot twist God's arm or wrestle his blessing from his reluctant grasp using the right technique or the right prayer. This life with God is not about what he wants you to do for him, but what he has done for you through Christ.

If you have lingered away from God, fearing what he will demand of you, unsure of all it will mean for you, you need not stay away any longer. If you have settled for trying to be a good person or a spiritual person, you can become a completely new person. You can turn to Christ and take hold of him by faith. Tell him that you want to belong to him, to know him and be known by him, to be changed by him. He “is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent” (2 Peter 3:9) Then you’ll be able to celebrate that he “has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light” (Colossians 1:12).

That is what this book is about—the blessing and inheritance that belong to God’s people. I invite you to celebrate that blessing and revel in that inheritance. I invite you to drench your soul in this steady stream of God’s blessing given to you freely and fully in Christ. I hope that you’ll open this book day after day along with God’s Word, and that you’ll open your life to all that God has given to us in Christ, confident that because “he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, [he will] also give us everything else” (Romans 8:32).

Nancy Guthrie

I Am Making You into a New Person

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

In your old life you lived for yourself—for what brought you temporary pleasure, for what made sense in your worldly way of thinking and had value in your worldly way of measuring worth. I love you far too much to let you linger in that old life. That life is gone for good. The old you is gone for good. I've made you into a completely new creation—fresh and new on the inside—blessing you with a fresh perspective about what really matters and a youthful vigor for pursuing me.

This newness is no self-willed fix-yourself-up, become-a-better-you self-improvement project. Your newness is not an effort I required of you but a gift from me, a work of my Spirit from start to finish.

I know I am new, and yet I find myself so easily embracing old habits, old grudges, old patterns of thinking. I'm turning toward you today, Lord, so that I can walk in this newness of life in the words I speak, the thoughts I think, the pleasures I enjoy . . .

I Have More Blessing for You Than You Know

From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. John 1:16

When you ask me to bless your plans, I wonder if you really know what you are asking for. To be blessed is to experience and know more of me. To ask me to bless your life and your efforts is to invite me into the center of them. That is the essence of blessing, the joy of it. Oh, how I long to bless you! I want to share from my abundance one gracious blessing after another.

To be blessed is to be deeply content in me. It is to make your home so securely in me that nothing can shake you. You can be blessed in the midst of a miserable situation, because being blessed doesn't mean you have no trouble or struggle or sorrow; it doesn't mean you always experience success and comfort. Instead, it means that in the midst of the trouble and struggle and sorrow, you find yourself deeply secure, profoundly content, and happy in me. To know me, walk with me, and share life with me—that is the essence of blessing.

I am incredibly blessed! In the hard places as well as the good times, I am finding more of you than I have experienced before . . .

I Have Said “Yes!” to You

All of God’s promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding “Yes!” And through Christ, our “Amen” (which means “Yes”) ascends to God for his glory. 2 Corinthians 1:20

Hear me saying “Yes!” to you throughout your day. By giving Jesus to you, I am living up to every promise I have made to my people throughout the ages. Into eternity you will be blessed by my abundant fulfillment of my promises to you. I’ve promised you peace, and I’ve given you Jesus, who is your peace. I’ve promised you joy, and Jesus is your joy. I’ve promised you a life that is meaningful and worthwhile, and it is Jesus living through you that makes your life meaningful and worthwhile.

Whenever you might be tempted today to think that I am withholding anything good from you, remember that I have given you my very best in giving you Jesus. In him you have everything you truly need, and more than you even know to ask for.

God, I hear you saying “Yes!” to my every need through Jesus, and I say “Yes!” in response to whatever you ask of me today . . .

I Myself Will Bless You

May the LORD bless you and protect you. Numbers 6:24

All the goodness you desire in this life comes from me. It doesn't come from having things or enjoying pleasant circumstances, but from relationship with me. You do not have to work or manipulate to extract from me the goodness you long for and the resources you need. I give to my people freely. All I have is yours in Christ, given freely, abundantly, eternally.

To experience and enjoy my blessing, simply cling to me. Cling to me in the pleasant places of life. Cling to me in your darkest hours. Come to me early in your day and throughout your day. Remain in me when your patience is tested and your strength is gone. Rest in me when you are tempted to simmer in anger or agonize in anxiety. Whenever you are tempted to think that I have been unkind, unfair, or untrustworthy, close your eyes and hear me whispering, "I myself will bless you."

*I open my hands to receive all you want to give me today.
I place my life in your hands, resting in your promise to
protect me . . .*

I Am Working Out My Plans for This World

God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

Ephesians 1:9-10

When it seems to you that everything about this world has careened decidedly off course, you can rest easy, confident that everything is really falling right into place. Human history has never been determined by the decisions or actions of mere humans. And the future of this world and all who live in it will not be guided by mere fate. I am Lord over history and Lord over time, and I am guiding this world to its appointed destiny.

You do not need to live in fear that a dangerous dictator, a dreaded disease, or an environmental disaster is going to displace my plans for this world or for your life. Of this you can be certain: All of my plans will one day fall into place, and all of my promises will become the reality you will live in and enjoy into eternity future.

How I long for the day when I will see with my eyes what this world will be like under the authority of Christ . . .

I Will Bless Your Brokenness

Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat it, for this is my body." Matthew 26:26

In this world, when something is broken, it is often considered useless and thrown away. But in my economy, brokenness is not cause for being cast aside. It is your brokenness that actually makes you useful and pleasing to me. The sacrifice I want is a broken spirit. Brokenness is not the automatic result of experiencing deep hurts; rather, it's a lifestyle of agreeing with me about the true condition of your heart. It is shattering your self-will so that the life of Jesus might spill out of your life. It is continually responding to conviction with humility and obedience.

It was in his broken body that Jesus accomplished the work of salvation. Jesus has shown you what it means to be broken and to be used by me in painful but beautiful ways.

Broken Savior, used by God, as I remember your body, broken for me, I begin to see my heart the way you do. I fall down in brokenness and repentance before you . . .

Walking in My Ways Brings Real Blessing

Be careful to obey all these commands I am giving you. Show love to the LORD your God by walking in his ways and holding tightly to him. Deuteronomy 11:22

To know me, walk with me, and share life with me—this is the essence of real blessing. And the truth is, it is the hard things in your life that cause you to want to know me more intimately, walk with me more closely, and share life with me more fully. That is why, in the losses of life, you can find yourself blessed beyond your imagination or expectation. Because you have found more of me in these hard places.

When you look up from your hardship with a smile, you know you've moved from just hearing my Word to living it—putting it to the test. You're finding that giving is better than receiving, neediness is better than self-sufficiency, trust is better than worry. You've discovered that my Word is true, my joy is your strength, my promises are your hope, my presence is your comfort. This is the life of blessing you always longed for but didn't expect to find in this way.

What a blessing to walk with you and hold tightly to you both when the sun is shining and when there is only darkness. Lord, you are the real blessing in my life . . .