

A FOUR-WEEK  
GUIDED EXPERIENCE FOR  
INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

YOU ARE  
BLESSED, BLESSED...  
BLESSED



STAR OF **A&E'S DUCK DYNASTY**

**MISSY ROBERTSON**

*with Ashley Wiersma*



A FOUR-WEEK  
GUIDED EXPERIENCE FOR  
INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS



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*You Are Blessed, Blessed . . . Blessed: A Four-Week Guided Experience for Individuals and Groups*

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## *A Note from Missy*



**B**lessed, blessed . . . blessed. Many times, blessings are easy to spot: loving parents, a new baby, a great job. But sometimes blessings show up clothed in situations and challenges we didn't expect and definitely wouldn't have chosen for ourselves. A blessing like this typically peeks around the corner of our lives right when we're just rocking along, thinking everything is going pretty well. All of a sudden, *wham!* It hits us right between the eyes, and it in no way resembles anything "blessed." Based on Jase's and my personal experience, I've learned that it takes some time to recognize the blessings behind the burdens we bear. In fact, it can even take *years* of full-on commitment to peeling away layer after layer of hardship and sadness before we get to that blessing hidden way down deep.

Through all of our trials in life—especially a major one with our daughter, Mia, which is the central subject of this guided experience you hold—my husband and I have tried not only to stay the course of continually peeling off those

layers together, but also to do our best to become better people—better parents, better spouses to each other, better friends to the people in our lives, and better children of God. We’ve tried to do more than survive our challenges; we’ve also endeavored to *thrive*. This is my hope for you, too.

The truth is that when something tragic happens in your life, you can choose to deny it, ignore it, and hope it gets better on its own, *or* you can choose to face it head-on and, under the tender care of a loving God, flourish in spite of the pain. A long time ago, I chose the latter. Jase and I both did. We were determined to deal with the difficulties and emerge *more* stable, *more* faithful, *more* loving, and *more* filled with peace on the other side. I chose to face the tragedy head-on for the simple reason that I believed God had created me for a purpose and had my best interest at heart. “If God is for us,” Romans 8:31 plainly says, “who can ever be against us?” Things looked tragic, but I knew God was on my side. I knew there was purpose in the pain, and so I decided to work to discover what that purpose was.

I grew up in a preacher’s home, the daughter of a very enthusiastic evangelist—someone whose job it was to tell anyone and everyone about the love of God and about the grace available to them because of the completed work of Jesus Christ. My dad spent his days explaining the gospel of Jesus—the “Good News,” the Bible calls it—that in Christ we can be free of the things that weigh us down. We can live with an inner sense of being settled, of being completely and totally at peace. I had no idea as a child how invaluable those

gifts would be to me later in life. How could I have known that decades later, after I'd gotten married and had three children, my world would be completely rocked by my sweet girl's physical challenges? Well, I may not have known, but God did. And to this day, I am humbled by the fact that He invited me into a relationship with Him all those years ago, knowing full well that that relationship would be my lifeline during some stormy weather that would soon be brewing on the horizon of my life.

What He knew that I couldn't yet understand was that I would never be able to experience those realities we all want in life—contentment, gratitude, steadiness, a deep-seated sense of rightness, all of the fruit of the Spirit that Galatians 5:22-23 describes—until I devoted myself to Him. After all, He invented all those things. Looking for peace and joy and happiness apart from God is about as ludicrous as going fishing in the desert; both end in futility every time.

Like me, you may be enjoying wonderful intimacy with Christ these days because at one point along the way, you realized that God wanted to relate with you and that He had already provided a means for connecting through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, on the cross. You surrendered your life to Him, told Him you wanted to go His way instead of your own, and began walking the path of righteousness, seeking His will above all else. But I recognize that for a certain percentage of the wonderful people who pick up this guide and begin working through its content, you aren't in *any* form of relationship with God right now, let alone a relationship

you'd describe as intimate. If I'm talking about you here, then please know that I understand what it's like to have more questions than answers about God. I remember being a young woman who was filled to overflowing with curiosity about Him. Who is He? What does He want? What is it like to be in relationship with Someone you cannot see? Does relating with Him really make a difference in life at all?

Regardless of where you find yourself along the spiritual continuum—either deeply in love with Jesus or else deeply curious (or even skeptical) about Him—you *are welcome here*. This guided experience was created with the heartfelt desire for you to find a way through your pain, through your doubt, through your depression or sorrow or rage, and that you will persevere until you reach the blessing waiting for you at the other side. The tunnel may be very dark, but I assure you, the light will come. There, you will find peace. And it is my firm belief that there *you will find God*. He's waiting to help you in the same way He stood ready to help me all those years ago. And His message to us all—you and me and everyone else who suffers and struggles in this life—is that in Him, we are richly blessed.

At the end of this guide, you will have an opportunity to explore what beginning a personal relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, looks like. I remain eternally grateful for my dear dad, who patiently walked me through the very same tenets of our faith that I will walk you through starting on page 97. There is no greater honor for me than to be the bearer of the *ultimate* good news in a

person's life. If you choose to be “born again,” as we'll discuss in the postscript, I hope you'll let me know by tweeting me at #blessedblessedblessed.

*BlesSINGs,\**  
*Missy Robertson*  
*May 2015*

\*I always sign my name this way, emphasizing the word within the word because I love to sing—something I have been doing my entire life.



## *Before You Begin*



**W**elcome to *You Are Blessed, Blessed . . . Blessed: A Four-Week Guided Experience for Individuals and Groups*. As Missy mentioned, it is her deep desire that you would experience the same level of peace and provision—fully and completely—that she and Jase have known as they’ve walked through the most tumultuous times in their lives. To that end, she and I (Ashley) have put together this guide aimed at helping you name the heaviest burden you’re carrying these days and then navigate the path toward peace. Ready to dive in?

### *What You’ll Need*

To get the most out of *You Are Blessed, Blessed . . . Blessed*, have the following materials at hand each time you sit down to work through one of the parts:

- ➔ *A copy of Missy’s book Blessed, Blessed . . . Blessed*
- ➔ *Your favorite Bible (This guide uses the New Living Translation, but any translation is fine.)*

- *Extra paper or a journal, in case you need more space to log your thoughts*
- *A pen*

## *How to Get Started*

As you dig into each part of this guide, you'll notice a word of encouragement to read a few chapters of Missy's book. Doing so will ensure you're up to speed on the themes and stories referred to in each part, all of which come from the suggested reading. The schedule is as follows:

BEFORE BEGINNING . . .	BE SURE TO READ IN MISSY'S BOOK . . .
Part I: Name Your Burden	The introduction and chapters 1-3
Part II: Tell Your Truth	Chapters 4-6
Part III: Grow as You Go	Chapters 7-9
Part IV: Say Yes to "Blessed"	Chapters 10-12

Consider rallying a few friends, family members, or colleagues to walk through this experience with you. Certainly, you can work through the content on your own, but the best growth happens in community. While sharing your burdens aloud in the presence of other living, breathing human beings can feel a little scary at first, the support and strength you'll gain as a result of sojourning with others who also are choosing candor will be worth it in the end.

Once you confirm who will be joining you for the journey, choose a time and date to kick things off, and decide how frequently you will meet. This guide has been arranged

according to four weeks' worth of content, but feel free to adjust that rhythm based on your group's specific needs.

Prior to your first meeting, ask every group member to complete all of part 1. This way, each participant will be prepared for the questions she or he will be asked to answer. Along these lines, throughout this guide you will notice "With Your Group" callouts; these questions make for fantastic road signs to lead your group through each part.

A quick note regarding facilitation: Depending on the composition of your group, you will want either to designate a facilitator who will lead all of the four group meetings, or to rotate those responsibilities week by week so that four individuals have the chance to lead.

### *What to Expect as You Go*

This guide was designed to afford you lots of "processing" space, so take advantage of the journaling prompts, margins, and lined spaces for recording thoughts and ideas, knowing that all your jots and doodles will help you mark your progress as you go. Also, digging through the layer upon layer of pain that is always inherent in the burdens we bear can be quite an emotional experience. *Have grace toward yourself as you go.* Take your time. Ask God for help. And trust that your labor will not be in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

If Missy's journey thus far declares anything, it is that despite life's most challenging circumstances, we can do more than get by; we can *thrive*. Fellow burden bearer, let the thriving begin.





PART I

# *Name Your Burden*



TO PREPARE FOR PART I,

PLEASE READ THE INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTERS 1, 2, AND 3

IN MISSY'S BOOK BLESSED, BLESSED . . . BLESSED.





*Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.*

JESUS OF NAZARETH<sup>1</sup>



**M**any people would agree that the deepest need we human beings have is for control. Or at least a *sense* of control. We want to believe that we have a say in how our lives are going to turn out, that our opinions actually count regarding the circumstances we're willing to face.

This is why it is so upsetting to us when we learn that we have a horrible illness, or that the money that was supposed to come in isn't coming, or that the spouse we adore has had an affair. "This isn't what I signed up for," we silently protest. "This isn't how my life was supposed to turn out."

In chapter 1 of *Blessed, Blessed . . . Blessed*, Missy writes of two unexpected situations that would radically affect every single aspect of her life. One was the visibility that came from being part of the television show *Duck Dynasty*. The other, not nearly as joyous, was the realization that the perfect little girl she'd always dreamed of having would be born with special needs.

### *My Impossible Burden*

As you come to this guided journal, you likely have a series of situations in your life that have unfolded in unexpected ways. You are in a different job than you thought you'd be in. Or you are living in a city you never thought you'd call home. Or a child of yours is making unwise decisions. Or your physical health has taken an unfortunate turn. Whatever the specific circumstance, perhaps it seems as if God has abandoned you to it, and the burden you now face seems impossible for you to bear.

What is the burden in your life you most wish God would lift? Write it on the following lines using as many, or as few, words as you'd like.

*My Impossible Burden*

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*Some "Impossible Burdens" We May Bear:*

- *An ungrateful spouse*
- *An infertile womb*
- *Job loss and financial chaos*
- *The betrayal of a friend*
- *A wayward child*
- *A perplexing medical diagnosis*

✦ WITH YOUR GROUP ✦

*If you're comfortable doing so, share with your  
group the burden you're bearing.*

For most of us, our “impossible burden” is intensely upsetting because it represents an expectation we had for our lives that, to our great disappointment, is going unmet. We expect to have gainful employment, financial stability, a loving spouse, respectful children, and good health as we journey through this thing called life. We expect our family members to be supportive of us and our friends to be faithful to us. This is why it hurts deeply when our realities are not fulfilled.

With your impossible burden fresh on your mind, spend a few minutes thinking about the unmet expectations it represents. As it relates to the burden you are bearing, what goals or ideals did you have for your life that just aren't panning out? Log your thoughts on the following lines. An example has been provided for you.

**Example:** My *expectation* was that I'd have a job by now, but my *reality* is still no work, still no hope.

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≡ WITH YOUR GROUP ≡

*Discuss one or two of your unmet expectations with your group,  
noting any themes that emerge among everyone's lists.*

In the first part of her book, Missy noted several emotional reactions to the news about the health of her pregnancy with Mia, including feeling unsettled, unprepared, stunned, disbelieving, grief stricken, devastated, and also, later, *resolved*. When we come face-to-face with the realization that a core expectation we have held about life is at risk of not being met, big emotions like these tend to surface.

What about you? Review the list of unmet expectations your impossible burden represents, and then note the emotions you have experienced (and perhaps continue to experience) as a result on the following lines.

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### *Telling the Truth to God*

In the introduction to her book, Missy says plainly that walking with God has been her sanity throughout every trial she has known. Knowing Him, trusting Him, crying out to Him when the outlook was bleak, and turning to her faith instead

of caving in to fear and pain have proven to be the most valuable actions she could take. And just as she first discovered during her early days of ministry and marriage, one of the most profitable ways for us to know God is to read and meditate on His Word.

How would you describe your level of reliance on God's Word, the Bible, as you go about your day-to-day life? Check one of the following boxes.

- CONSTANT.** I read it every day and can't imagine life without the guidance and encouragement it offers.
- OFTEN.** I read the Bible from time to time but not every day.
- OCCASIONAL.** During some seasons of my life, I've been known to read God's Word. But it's been awhile . . .
- RARE.** Honestly, I've never really made a practice of reading the Bible.

What personal benefits would you hope to receive, or have you already received, as a result of increasing your faithfulness to reading God's Word, especially during burdensome times? Jot down your thoughts on the following lines. An example has been provided.

- Example: A sense of peace, even when life feels chaotic .
- \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_.

- \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_.

In the pages of Scripture, we find people with hopes and dreams and sorrows similar to ours, people who also carried burdens that felt utterly impossible to bear. And as we watch them wrestle with their big emotions before God, we gain insights into how to win the knock-down, drag-out matches with fear and faithlessness that we ourselves sometimes face.

In the Old Testament book of Psalms, a handful of the entries are known as “psalms of lament,” and here we find a treasure trove of lessons to be learned. In these particular psalms, the writers address God by describing all of the terrible things that are happening to them, as well as several reasons why God should quickly intervene. They then promise God that in exchange for a divine rescue operation, they and all of their fellow believers will offer praises of thanksgiving to their King. In other words, “Our lives are bad, but You, God, are good, so do something really good to make all our bad go away.”

You probably can relate to this sentiment of wishing a good God would remove the bad parts of your life. Based on your impossible burden, what would such an exchange involve? Infertility for fertility? Insecurity for security? Despair for hope? On the following lines, note the bad things

you wish God would remove and also the good things you wish He'd replace them with.

*God, please take these  
bad things . . .*

*and replace them with  
these that are good.*

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now take a look at the following excerpt from Psalm 44, one of the psalms of lament, circling all of the emotionally charged words and phrases you can find. A sample has been provided.

O God, we give glory to you all  
day long  
and constantly praise your  
name.  
But now you have  
tossed us aside  
in dishonor.  
You no longer lead our  
armies to battle.  
You make us retreat from our  
enemies  
and allow those who hate us  
to plunder our land.

You have butchered us like  
sheep  
and scattered us among the  
nations.  
You sold your precious people  
for a pittance,  
making nothing on the sale.  
You let our neighbors mock us.  
We are an object of scorn  
and derision to those  
around us.  
You have made us the butt of  
their jokes;

they shake their heads at us  
in scorn.  
We can't escape the constant  
humiliation;  
shame is written across our  
faces.  
All we hear are the taunts of  
our mockers.  
All we see are our vengeful  
enemies.  
Wake up, O Lord! Why do you  
sleep?

Get up! Do not reject us  
forever.  
Why do you look the other  
way?  
Why do you ignore  
our suffering and  
oppression?  
We collapse in the dust,  
lying face down in the dirt.  
Rise up! Help us!  
Ransom us because of your  
unfailing love.

PSALM 44:8-16, 23-26

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*Want to read more? Go to the halfway point in your Bible, flip open to the book of Psalms, and devour the entries in any order you wish. The psalms you find here are some of the very first “worship choruses” ever sung. God’s people would belt them out as they traveled on foot from one place to another, with or without instruments, as a way to stay connected to Him throughout their days. Whether you choose to sing the psalms, pray them, memorize them, or simply read them, you will always find your life richer after having let them enter your heart and mind.*

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