

Authors of the Million-Copy Bestseller *The Blessing*

JOHN TRENT, Ph.D.
KARI TRENT STAGEBERG

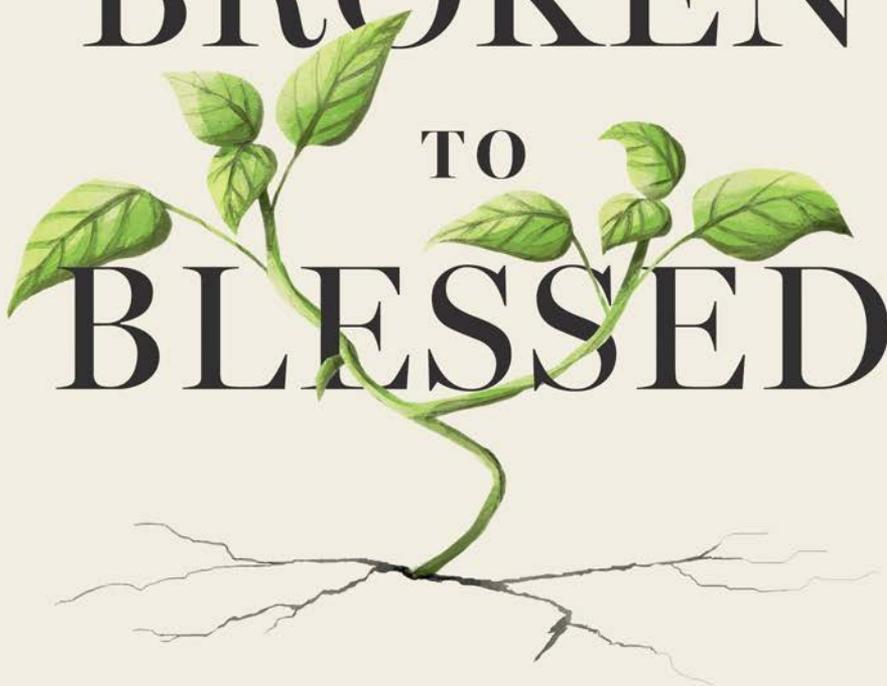
YOUR JOURNEY

— **FROM** —

BROKEN

TO

BLESSED



Finding the Love
You Didn't Receive

Like friendly guides who get it—and get you—John and Kari walk you through what to do if you didn't receive the Blessing. When the cry of the past bullies again with “not enough,” “unlovable,” “broken,” “stuck,” or “alone,” *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed* stands beside you, guiding the way forward to healing, hope, and the real joy you crave! I devoured this book in one sitting and am going back to linger in the pages. Grab a copy for yourself, and send one to a friend!

DIANA MESCHER, Bible study teacher and speaker

We were created in, through, and for relationship, not only with God but also with one another. *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed* beautifully captures God's heartbeat for us to feel loved and secure. Dr. Trent and his daughter Kari walk this pathway with transparency and biblical truth to a destination full of hope and blessing.

DR. ERIC SCALISE, president of Hope for the Heart

After the transformative gift of *The Blessing*, Dr. John Trent now joins with his daughter Kari Trent Stageberg to address the deeply felt pain of those who never received the Blessing they longed for. *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed* is a lifeline of hope, offering biblically grounded, practical steps for healing and restoration. With profound empathy and personal insight, this book invites readers to move from heartache to healing, from brokenness to blessing. It's a must-read for anyone yearning to break free from the past and embrace the love, purpose, and hope God has for them. I highly recommend it.

JIM MCGUIRE, founder of THRYVE Leaders

In *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed: Finding the Love You Didn't Receive*, John and Kari remind us that hope is never lost when we place Jesus at the center of our lives. Having many times witnessed firsthand the transformative power of a blessing, I wholeheartedly recommend this book to the broken, the restored, and those rejoicing in their journey.

JOE PELLEGRINO, president of Legacy Minded Men

In *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed*, Dr. John Trent and Kari Trent Stageberg bring hope and a way home for the reader, regardless of the pain endured in your family of origin or adult relationships.

Their statement “In truth, way down to the very cells in our bodies, *we can reverse the curse*. We can move past having someone fail to be emotionally or physically present in our pasts—the people who chose to subtract from our lives” offers hope to countless people who have erroneously concluded, *I can never heal from the pain, abuse, neglect, and/or abandonment I have experienced*.

This book indeed offers a road map for your journey from hurt to freedom, hope, and blessing. God is able, and God will make a way, yet it starts with each of us being willing to surrender and make a choice. Picking up this book is not for the faint of heart, yet with courage and biblical truth, you will be given an incredible opportunity to join with God in giving you the freedom you have desired for years. We couldn't endorse this book with more passion than we are. Well done, John and Kari: This is perhaps your greatest work.

DR. GARY AND BARB ROSBERG, America's Family Coaches, authors, radio broadcasters, podcasters, and speakers

Dr. John Trent and Kari Trent Stageberg offer a timely guide for those who missed out on a blessing from an earthly father. Their practical insights shed light on how to overcome the crippling feeling of being unaccepted and unacceptable. Their words will encourage you and empower you to experience the unparalleled power of the Blessing.

REV. JOSHUA R. SHERRARD, chair of the Sherrard Institute and president and CEO of Strategic Navigators, Inc.

For those of you seeking healing and freedom from the brokenness in your life, this book provides a clear path to healing and freedom. *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed* gives us hope and provides a clear, practical path to healing and freedom in our hearts and in our homes. This book is for anyone who wants to know how to change their life and family—from broken to blessed.

SUSAN SOWELL, adult discipleship minister at Kingsland Baptist Church

In *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed*, Dr. John Trent guides readers through a process that begins with recognizing the absence of the Blessing in their lives and starts them on a journey of healing. By exploring the five key elements of the Blessing, readers are led through the process of rebuilding their emotional and spiritual well-being, which helps them move from pain and longing to restoration and empowerment. The true power of *Your Journey from Broken to Blessed* lies in its ability to help individuals get to a place of passing the Blessing on to others, creating a cycle of love and healing.

JEFF THIBAUT, president of Parenting Special Kids Network

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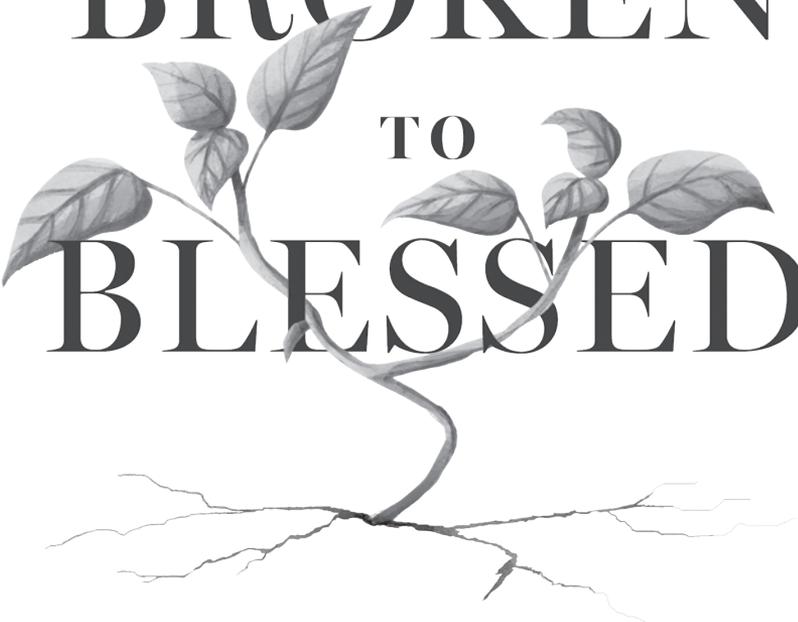
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Your Journey from Broken to Blessed: Finding the Love You Didn't Receive
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*A single picture has the power to stop us in our
tracks and reveal to us just who we are.*

MARVIN HEIFERMAN AND CAROLE KISMARIC,
Talking Pictures: People Speak about the Photographs That Speak to Them

CHAPTER 1

IN SEARCH OF THE BLESSING

Emma looked out over the darkly dressed crowd packed like sardines into every nook and cranny of the small church. She stalled for time as she adjusted the microphone on the podium and glanced down at the note card in her hand.

Could she really read what she had written?

Clearing her throat, she began, “My dad was . . .” But the rest of the words stuck in her throat.

Her dad was abusive. Her dad was a drunk. Her dad was mean, angry, and horrible to Emma, her mother, and her sisters. Her dad had single-handedly ruined her childhood. He’d done his best to ruin her adult life too. Her dad had never told her he loved her or said he was proud of her. And he never thought anything she did was good enough.

She had spent her entire life trying to get away from his abuse, and now that his life had ended, she was more than a little angry that she was supposed to put the truth of who he was to the side and say positive and loving things about a man who had made her life a living nightmare.

All those supposed positives were neatly laid out on the note card she held. Words that were essentially lies about what a great man her father had been and how well he had loved her and his family.

To the outside world, her dad fit the picture of a loving father and husband. He was active in church, served on multiple non-profit boards, ran a successful business, and was adored in her small town due to being a high school football legend turned winning high school football coach.

But none of them saw what had happened behind closed doors. None of them knew the pain and destruction he had caused. And now that he was dead, none of them knew the loss she was feeling over the fact that things were final. Her father would never change. He would never tell her he loved her. He would never think his oldest daughter was good enough. Their relationship would never be repaired.

Emma looked up and locked eyes with her mom and two sisters. And in that moment, it was as if everything she had been battling finally came to a head. She knew that if she went along with the lie here, she would continue to go along with it the rest of her life. And in that moment, she realized it was time to make a choice.

So she did something that shocked even her. She shook her head, embraced every emotion that coursed through her body, and walked silently off the stage.

To everyone in the church, it appeared as though the loss of her father was too hard for her to talk about. She was met with sympathy and kindness. But for Emma, it was much more significant.

She had finally made a life-changing decision. She was no longer going to lie about or cover up what had happened. She was going to heal and move forward, no matter what it took. She was determined to no longer be stuck in the darkness and brokenness her father had left behind.

What Emma didn't realize was that she was about to discover the healing tool she needed—one that would help her, her mother,

and her sisters. Emma was about to discover the Blessing. And on a deeper level, she would answer:

What if I never got the Blessing?

Your story may not look exactly like Emma's, but many of us find ourselves—regardless of our age, stage of life, or successes—asking the same questions. *Am I really loved? Am I really enough? Do I really matter? Why didn't he want me? Why didn't she love me? Why could I never measure up?*

Those of us facing these questions are often missing what we and the Bible call *the Blessing*.

But what is the Blessing? And how can it help you, Emma, and others heal and find solid, life-giving answers to the questions above?

Let me (John) describe where my story of the Blessing began. Then we'll move forward to *your* story of blessing.

The Night I First Saw the Blessing

More than forty years ago, I was an intern at a psychiatric hospital in Richardson, Texas. There I would hear a daily dose of broken dreams and shattered hearts as a part of each shift.

That's also when an incredible thing happened in my life.

I was at home. It was late on a Saturday night. I was gathering my notes, preparing to teach a Bible study for a couples' class my wife and I led at our church. We were going through the book of Genesis, and it was time to teach on chapter 27.

I'd read the story there before and heard it talked about numerous times, though never from a relational perspective. That night, it was as if the Lord took scales off my eyes and gave me a picture of something I'd never really seen before.

It was a picture of twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. I could relate because I'm a twin. And in this story, the brothers were desperately struggling to get the same thing.

They were both in search of their father's blessing.

That night, it was as if *I* were standing inside their father Isaac's tent.

I could see Esau's eyes light up when he heard that at long last it was time to receive his father's blessing. His excitement radiated as he ran out to hunt, field dress, and cook the meal that would signal his time of blessing.

*That night, it was as if the
Lord took scales off my
eyes and gave me a picture
of something I'd never
really seen before.*

I saw Rebekah gather her robes and run through the hot sand, grabbing Jacob, her favorite son. Furiously they invented a plan to deceive his father.

I could smell the meal that mother and younger son cooked up. And picture how Jacob brought it to his father.

Their plan almost failed because Isaac was doubtful and full of questions. ("How is it that you have it so quickly?" [Genesis 27:20] and "Are you really my son Esau?" [Genesis 27:24].) But then those questions gave way to Jacob receiving a wonderful blessing.

Then I saw Jacob go out one side of the tent, filled with joy. And at almost the same moment, I saw his brother rush in the other side with his own savory offering for his father.

Esau's face was lit with expectation.

"Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me" (Genesis 27:31).

His smile nearly split his face as he asked for his blessing.

But then his heart dropped. For he heard there would be no blessing.

His smile turned into a look of shock, then disbelief, and finally rage as the reality that he would never receive his father's blessing washed over him.

I saw all this in that snapshot of the Scriptures because I realized I was seeing it each day in the psychiatric hospital. But I also realized I had *lived* it in many ways over many years with my own father.

I had been carrying Esau's heart-wrenching cry, "Bless me, me as well, my father!" (Genesis 27:34), in my heart of hearts since I was a child.

The concept of the Blessing suddenly exploded before me like the very end of a massive fireworks show.

There it was! A biblical way of looking at my life that answered many of my inner struggles. Before that night, I'd had no name for it. Now I did.

My father had left my mother, my two brothers, and me when I was two months old. He never came back. I didn't know him. But it was my father's blessing I had sought a hundred times and more. I had longed for it. Lived for it for years. And yet it always remained just out of reach.

Esau's cry was not just an echo of my own heartache. It went to the heart of the life stories I was hearing every day in the psychiatric hospital. I knew now what many of them were struggling with. Men and women were saying, *crying, begging* in their brokenness, "Bless me, Mom. Bless me, Dad. Please!"

Have you ever said, out loud or in your heart, words like that? It's a cry to be seen and valued, loved and cared for, blessed and not cursed. Perhaps, like Emma, you have a hole in your soul so deep that no accomplishment or relationship can seem to fill it. *If so, this book is for you.*

What If I Missed the Blessing?

If this term, *the Blessing*, is new to you, this book will provide a powerful introduction to what the Blessing is and means—how important it can be in your life and with those you love.¹ But after decades of helping people give and live the Blessing, we turn our focus here to the thousands more whose cry growing up echoed Esau's cry of loss.

"Bless me, me as well!"

Our cry arises because that significant person in our lives, for

whatever reason, made a choice *not* to bless us. All parents make a choice, even if they're not aware they're making it, to bless or not to bless a child. And if we missed the Blessing, there follows a cascade of questions like these:

- *What was wrong with me?*
- *Why did my sibling receive it . . . but I didn't?*
- *Why now, after so many years, do I still feel so incomplete and downhearted about missing it?*

This is a book for those of us who grew up without the Blessing. It's also for those of us who have experienced trauma, loss, and pain that has done its best to erase any form of blessing we've received.

This book is for those of us who struggled (and still struggle) with feeling unloved or unwanted. Many of us were cut off from

*If we miss the Blessing,
our minds, hearts, and
bodies keep score.*

one or even both parents by divorce, circumstance, or choice. We are men and women who, even today, often experience a deep sense of loneliness in a crowd. We can struggle in making close friendships or relating well with others. And we can fight with psychosomatic or genuine

physical symptoms from anxiety, fear, or depression. For, as we'll see, *if we miss the Blessing, our minds, hearts, and bodies keep score.*

Missing and searching for a lost blessing can leave us with a lifelong, nagging sense of insecurity. While not formally named as a psychological ailment or affliction (though we believe it should be), the lack of a parent's blessing is undeniably real. It's often at the heart of why we struggle with depression. It can be the genesis of why we still feel so empty, no matter what award or success we've gained.

But all that hurt doesn't have to be our end or our only choice in life.

In truth, way down to the very cells in our bodies, *we can reverse the curse.* We can move past having someone fail to be emotionally

or physically present in our pasts—the people who chose to subtract from our lives (see Deuteronomy 23:5).

But, perhaps even more important, we can learn to be people who receive, give, and live the Blessing. We can, with God's help and strength, move past the negative pictures that haunt us and so change not only our stories but also the stories of generations that follow.

We can come face-to-face with our fears and hurts. We'll even see in the miraculous way God has wired us neurologically that *we can rewire our brains* with missing words of blessing! You'll receive those words of blessing in this book.

We can move from a frozen, yearslong *missing-blessing mindset* to one of being able to receive the Blessing and become people of blessing ourselves!