

CHAPTER 11

Because He is El Shaddai, I Am Blessed

He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.”

—Deuteronomy 8:16-17

But Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

—Deuteronomy 8:18

Joyce Love tells a story about her grandparents in her devotional, *Memories from the Heart*. After three of her grandparents’ homes burned to the ground, they learned that possessions do not last. Consequently, they hoarded nothing and showered love and blessings on everyone who came to their door. Living by the railroad tracks gave them many opportunities to feed hungry hobos.

While the youngest son, Wilbur, was still home, he and his father went to town for lumber to build a small brooder house for chickens. On the way home an elderly gentleman hitched a ride. He was wearing a dirty, gray shirt and tie that formerly were very nice clothes.

Grandpa stopped and asked, “Wanna ride?”

The stranger climbed into the truck. As Grandpa neared his turn-off, he stopped to let the stranger out. “No,” he said, “I would like to ride some more.”

This happened again with another turn until they arrived at their house. Grandma was not surprised, as they often provided shelter for strangers. As Grandpa started building the small brooder house, the man said, “There’s no need to make such a small house. Let’s make a big one. Let’s go back to town and get more lumber so we can make a big building.”

“I can’t afford that. I can’t afford anything like that. We’ll just go ahead with this small one,” said Grandpa.

“Let’s build a big one. Instead of ordering 100 chickens, get three to four thousand!”

Grandpa laughed and said, “Naw, we’ll just make the little brooder house.”

That night, the stranger slept on the porch. The next morning he asked Grandpa who the neighbors were. Grandpa told him.

“How many acres on this place?” Grandpa told him he just rented the forty acres.

“We could build a new house and after we get that brooder house built, we could build whatever else you want. We’ll make a ranch out of this,” the stranger said.

The stranger went around to the property owners and found they did not want to sell. He said he was surprised because, “Money will usually buy anything you want.”

Again, Grandpa laughed at the stranger and tried to ignore him, thinking he was not responsible for his actions and out of his mind. The man kept making ridiculous suggestions and claimed to have a lot of money.

Finally, Grandpa asked the man, “Why are you dressed like that and why were you hitchhiking if you have so much money?”

“Well, I’ll tell you. A few years back I bought a brand new car and had a wreck. It really messed me up. I said to myself right then that I would never own another car. That was going to be my last one. And the only time I ride is when I get awfully tired. Otherwise, I just walk.” He later told Grandpa he used to own a lot of oil wells and had all the money he needed.

The visitor spent several days at Grandma and Grandpa’s table. Then one morning he quietly left. Later that same day he was struck by a car and killed. A large sum of money was found on his body, and they later heard he was a millionaire!

This story raises many questions. What would have happened if Grandpa had taken him seriously? Wilbur and Grandma believed him. Was the man looking for a home, for love? He received the latter, but what did he do with it? This is a sad story that deserves our attention. If Grandma and Grandpa, as well as the stranger, were being tested, who passed? Did any of them? These questions will be answered as we look at why and how we are blessed. In the process, we will find that *God alone is our only source of supply and security*—not the job, not parents, 401K’s or retirement plans, and not even a millionaire who happens by our door—only El Shaddai.

WHY ARE WE BLESSED?

What is God’s purpose for blessing His people? Deuteronomy 8:16-18, answers this question—*to confirm or establish His covenant*. But what is His covenant? This question was addressed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5 of Jehovah-Tsidkenu. In a nut shell, the covenant is God’s promise to

Abraham's seed, passed on to his children, next to his children's children, and eventually to the nation of Israel. To the nation of Israel, which the Father had prepared to receive His son, He sent His seed—Jesus Christ.

What is God's purpose for blessing us? That the whole world may know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the only Way, the Truth and the Life, and that no man can come to the Father except through Him. When we have this firmly established and settled in our heart and mind, Jesus gives his disciples what is called the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end on the age.

—Matthew 28:18-20

To go into all the world takes many resources. Before looking specifically at how this can be accomplished, we need to review how blessings to establish His covenant come to us. They come in two forms:

In the desert: with one-day-at-a-time manna. "He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you" (Deut. 8:16). Manna was supernatural, miraculous bread from heaven that fell every morning for the children of Israel to gather—only enough for one day. On the sixth day, they were to gather enough for two days so they could rest on the Sabbath. On the Sabbath, none fell. Being disobedient and undisciplined children, some gathered more than they could eat in one day during the week; thus, when hoarding it, they found it rotten the next morning—full of maggots and smelly.

Manna means "whatness," or "What is it?" because this is what the people said when they saw it. It could be ground or milled, baked or boiled, and tasted like honey wafers. On the sixth night they were to bake and boil it and keep it for the Sabbath. It did not rot this day. El Shaddai provided manna forty years while the first generation of Israel wandered in the desert until they died. In contrast, their children chose to enter the land of El Shaddai's abundance.

The desert was testing ground. Would the children of Israel follow God—the same God who delivered them from Egypt and met their needs one day at a time, when they did not know what was ahead? Would they be able to praise the one and only true God when times grew tough and real fighting battles erupted in the land? Would they allow themselves to become hardened to difficulties for the Lord's sake? Could they be trusted with more responsibility? The desert would tell.

In the land: with plenty, prosperity, and a plan to serve others, one day at a time. Prosperity

is more than money. It is defined as “to become strong and flourishing”¹² Its definition is from Deuteronomy 28:1-14, the Biblical definition for blessings: to be above only and not beneath, to be the head and not the tail, able to lend and not borrow, to be at the top, and not at the bottom. These are the desires of El Shaddai for all His children. Should it be so hard for us to believe that the God of the whole universe wants to bless His children even as an earthly father wants to shower on his children good things?

“Remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant” (Deut. 8:18). God is saying that after the time of hardship, recall those times when there was no doubt it was God alone who met our needs because we had nothing. He also tells us to guard against ever thinking we have produced any wealth on our own, because it all comes from Him.

Wealth comes from the Hebrew word *chayil*. “The main meanings of this noun, which occurs 244 times in the Heb. O.T., are strength, army, wealth.”¹³ It is also derived from the word *chayl*, additionally meaning “power, valor, military force, virtue, and honesty.”¹⁴ *Chayil* refers to the entourage of the queen of Sheba who visited King Solomon, the third king of Israel, David’s son, who built the temple in the land of Israel.

After King David’s death, Solomon worshipped the Lord. In that night, God appeared to him and said, “Ask what I shall give you” (2 Chron. 1:7).

Solomon responded, “Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (2 Chron. 1:10).

God said to Solomon,

Since this is your heart’s desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern my people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have.

—2 Chronicles 1:11-12

King Solomon asked for wisdom and God gave him wisdom *and* wealth. It was the queen of Sheba who pronounced how blessed everyone was who heard Solomon’s wisdom. Regarding the king’s wealth, she exclaimed, “Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you, setting you on His throne as king for the Lord your God; because your *God loved Israel establishing them forever*, therefore, He made you king over them *to do justice and righteousness*” (2 Chron. 9:8 emphasis added). She recognized Solomon’s true wealth, virtue and honesty. Then, she showered on him even

more earthly wealth, which he used to bless the people.

HOW ARE WE TO BLESS OTHERS?

According to the Old Testament: There are so many ways to bless others, most of which will be discussed in Chapters 16 and 17, when we take the responsibility of being salt. Our purposes here are to address how we can fulfill the Great Commission to reach our world for Jesus Christ in giving of our resources, rather large or small.

Have you ever spent one day without having to spend money for something? Our ancestors may have lived off the land and were able to do this, but it is unrealistic in today's society. Money drives our world; therefore, what we do with our own money defines our life and reveals *who we are*. God gives us wisdom in how to order our world aright by establishing the *tithe*.

For those living off the land the tithe is defined in Leviticus:

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the Lord.

—Leviticus 27:30-32

Wage earners can relate more to Malachi, the last book in the Bible:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the Lord of hosts.

—Malachi 3:10-11

When we follow God's way, the nine-tenths left is *blessed* because He will rebuke satan from it—the devourer of appliances, cars, money, and possessions. He causes it to s-t-r-e-t-c-h when we give the tenth off the top to Him. The Bible tells us not to put God to a foolish test (see Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:7). This is the only time God *asks* us to test him—to see for ourselves if He will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings until they overflow! He tells us to *try* it and see what He will do! This is not a foolish test. He even allows us to use that tenth for emergencies—with the stipulation that we can repay it later with twenty percent added.

The best definition of the tithe is the *first fruits of all thy income* (see Ex. 23:16, 19). The first fruits were to be brought to the house of the Lord, in other words, off the top, the first check written, not from what is left over. If you have had a garden, especially tomato plants, you know the first ripe tomatoes are the very best, the only unblemished ones worthy to give to God.

King David, Solomon's father, and his people gathered together all the materials (their tithe and more) for the building of the temple—God's house—that Solomon was to construct. In dedication, David prayed an enlightened prayer:

Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things, in your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all . . . But, who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

—1 Chronicles 29:12-14

David's prayer shows that we are to be *stewards*—giving back to God what comes from His hand. We are vessels He desires to bless with wealth and honor, not only for our own benefit, but mainly so we can bless others. Stewards are in charge of the Lord's trust. A trust can be defined as “a charge or duty imposed in faith or confidence or as a condition of some relationship; to commit or place in one's care or keeping.”¹⁵

God has placed in our care and keeping everything we have. Only if we are faithful with what we have, will the Lord bless us with more. Jesus tells a story about man going on a journey who entrusted his property to his servants. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to the other, one talent, “each according to his ability” (Matt. 25:15).

The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

—Matthew 25:16-17

The first two servants were told by their master, upon his return, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

The master told the man who hid his talent, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance” (Matt.26-28). The faithful will see *increase*.

Rob Leacock was a financial controller at Capital Christian Center in Sacramento, California. He counseled many people regarding their money situations. Even though he gave them sound Biblical teaching, most of them did not change their lifestyles. Only those who integrated financial planning with a lifestyle of *total discipleship* [as a condition of their heart relationship with the Lord]

realized improvement in their finances.

Leacock says, “Believers who connect prayer and Bible study with the use of their finances save more money, get out of debt and give and serve more in their local church.”¹⁶ Denise and Joe are good examples of a couple who did this. They learned stewardship through their relationship with the Lord. Without that relationship, they would not have seen any real blessings and believe they would have been bankrupt for a second time. They learned to tithe. Many months it was especially tough to do, but they were obedient. Giving is an act of the will. Giving demonstrates our belief God alone owns it all, and that God alone is our only source of supply.

According to the New Testament: The tithe is never specifically mentioned. Isn’t this interesting? Jesus came to bring a New Covenant, completing the old—not doing away with it. He gives a new principle of giving. He tells us that whatever we do will return to us—in the matter of judging, condemning, forgiving, and giving of our resources,

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

—Luke 6: 37-38

“For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” Without abolishing the tithe, Jesus gives a higher principle. The apostle Paul says it another way, “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Giving is like sowing seeds that grow, producing more seed from which to give. “Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of our righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and . . . your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:10-11).

A youth group in Arkansas learned that sowing seeds of forgiveness returned in good measure. They worked and saved for two years to go on a mission trip to Cambodia. When the youth director attempted to check with the travel agency to confirm the tickets, worth \$30,000, he discovered the mother and son team were gone. They had taken money from customers for six months after filing bankruptcy and skipped the country.

Radio and television stations found out about the scam and interviewed a couple of the teens. They asked the usual question, “How do you feel about this situation?”

One young man spoke up immediately, “We have forgiven them and are praying for them.”

Donations came flooding in—one for \$5,000 and another for the full \$30,000! Their church turned money away. The biggest lesson the youths learned that summer was that when they gave back to God in obedience to forgive without judging, He returned—pressed down, shaken together and running over. No one can eventually steal from a child of God *who* knows how to give and forgive. It has been said that when we do not forgive, waiting for an apology, we are *forselling*. We are not *giving* anything.

Need money? Give it. Need encouragement? Give it. Need food? Give it. Need clothes? Give some. Need love? Give it. Need a friend? Be one. “When what we have is not enough to meet our need, it becomes our seed.”¹⁷ But . . .

HOW DO WE MANAGE PROSPERITY WHEN IT COMES?

We are warned, “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me’” (Deut. 8:17), but *remember* it is the Lord alone who is our only source of supply to whom we give and from whom we receive, in order to establish His name on the earth. In reality, when we have abundance, we may feel the tithe remains enough to give, if we even do that.

Should we tithe from the gross or the net? Most pastors would say either, but first fruits come off the top, the gross. However, giving from the net is a good place for beginners to start, and then increase from there. God made a promise to the Israelites, “Little by little I will drive them [enemies] out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land” (Exod. 23:30). Little by little, no matter how large or how small our income, this is our promise—to see debts, etc., driven out, leaving more money to give to the Lord’s work in the land.

One pastor challenged his people to give a *double tithe*. Why not make twenty percent a long-range goal? Track what God does. This is easily done by taking each year’s income tax return, finding the amount of giving on Schedule A—Itemized Deductions—and dividing it by total gross wages. One benefit of tithing on gross wages means never having to worry about paying income taxes. Not only does the higher deduction help, but God’s return on money is a supernatural thing that cannot be explained.

Why not set a reasonable budget to live on and give the rest away? Jesus says, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his

possessions” (Luke 12:15). Without a plan, we will be tempted to spend any extra on extravagant living. And without a responsible plan it may not happen at all. Remember the verse in James 4:2, “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” The very next verse says, “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” God gives us richly all things to enjoy, but it is our motives we must always keep in check, because wealth is so uncertain (see 1Tim. 6:17).

WHAT IF WE DON'T BLESS OTHERS FROM OUR ABUNDANCE?

From the same passage of Scripture in Luke where Jesus discusses possessions, he tells a story about the rich fool. The ground produced him a very rich crop. He decided to tear down his small barn and to build bigger ones, and he said to himself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

“God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

“‘This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself and is not rich toward God’” (Luke 12:20-21).

Not rich toward God. The prophet Malachi tells us what that means:

“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’

“‘In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me’” (Mal. 3:7-9).

Not living rich toward God means not tithing.

Could it not be said this is what the millionaire in our story did? He robbed God by not giving to His loving servants— Grandma and Grandpa—with right motives. God seems to have said, “It is *enough*, today your soul will be required of you. Now, who will get what you have kept to yourself?”

The stranger had prospered in the worldly sense of the word at some time in his life, but he was not a blessed man. Fear, not faith, ruled his life. He hoarded his money and could not even part with a small portion to repay his gracious hosts for the food he ate from their table. It was obvious to him they could use it. And the car he feared to buy is what eventually took his life.

Did Grandma and Grandpa pass the test, or were they just unable to receive from this man as

from the Lord? The King James Version of Luke 6:38 says that *men* will give to our bosom. Certainly God uses other people to bless us. The Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy answers this question,

Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

—1Timothy 6:6-10

The money from the stranger would have been a *trap* for Grandma and Grandpa if they had accepted it. It was not blessed money from anyone wanting to bless them with it. The man was thinking only of himself. Leaving without reimbursing for gasoline and food proved that. Deuteronomy, Chapter 7, warns the people not to covet silver or gold from the ungodly because they could be snared by it, “for it is an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deut. 7:25). *Abomination* in Hebrew means “morally disgusting; things which belong to the worship of idols.”¹⁸ The man loved and worshipped his money believing falsely it could buy *anything*.

Grandma and Grandpa chose against the snare of money and passed the test. Better still, they gave of themselves to those who were unable to return the favor. During the Depression years and every difficult year, Joyce's grandmother had enough food for everyone who came to her door. This seemed unbelievable since her cabinets barely had anything in them. Like the manna, those who gathered little had enough—it stretched and multiplied. Grandma cherished the jelly she made and rationed it to her family. After it was destroyed in one of the fires, she resolved to never again withhold any food. She learned: when we come to an end of our own means, we will see the provision of the Almighty.

It is not by chance that manna and wealth are used in two sentences one after the other. The manna was to test us so it would go well with us in the end—when we gained wealth. Wealth is to be treated the same as we treated manna—not to be hoarded, lest it rot. Moses gave the instructions for manna, Jesus gives the instructions for wealth, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19-21).

Furthermore, James, the disciple of Jesus, warns those living in the last days, against hoarding wealth and withholding it,

Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon

you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence.

—James 5:1-5

Those who are rich toward God, who have placed their security and complete trust in Him alone, are those whom He will use. A harvest of souls will be brought into the kingdom because they will be blessed beyond measure by the Almighty—El Shaddai.

My Story

“Don’t spend those three dollars; keep it for the babysitter tonight,” Jim told me.

“Okay.” A friend was taking me to a women’s meeting the next morning and driving, so I didn’t need gasoline; I thought, *no problem*.

It was October 12, 1978, and our last payroll check had been spent. The last of our savings was gone, too. I totaled the bills: \$252.00! We had expected to have another job by now, but we didn’t. Jim and I prayed over the bills and gave them to the Lord.

The longer I looked at the bills, the more frightened I became. Jim was a picture of peace. Confused and desperate, I decided to take a shower. I didn’t know it would be with my own tears. *Fear* as I had never known enveloped me. I thought about the words of Jesus after he said not to worry about what we shall eat or drink or wear, “Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33). *But Really? How can this possibly be true for a time like this?*

After my shower, I put away the bills, got out my Bible, sat down, and turned to Ephesians 6. It read, “Wherefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

I said, “Lord, we have presented ourselves to you, no strings attached, and nothing has happened yet as we had expected. We’ve done all we know to do in order to obey you, and we will stand.” Immediately, peace flooded my soul. I thought: *this must be the peace that passes all understanding that the Bible talks about*, (see Phil. 4:7). I began to see that Jesus and His Word truly are one and the same.

The next morning my friend came to pick me up. The meeting was like nothing I had ever attended. The speaker spoke about victory in all our trials and that we will have many Jordan Rivers

to cross in our lifetime. At the conclusion, the attendees were asked to give an offering. Small envelopes were on the table for that gift. I thought about the three dollars in my purse and what Jim had said. Then, my thoughts wandered to the widow Jesus observed giving into the temple treasury. “Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny” (Mark 12:42). Jesus told his disciples that she had put in more than all the others. “They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Mark 12:43).

I wondered, *what happened to that poor widow who gave all she had? The Bible doesn't say.* So, without hesitating, I pulled out the three dollars and stuffed it in the envelope. After the meeting, I saw a hand, out of the corner of my eye, put something in my outside purse pocket.

Retreating to the car, heart beating wildly, I opened the envelope. There was \$11.00—a ten dollar bill plus one dollar for the tithe! I was overcome with the feeling I was in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene, who says that whoever believes in Him, streams of living water will flow from within him—a never-ending stream of joy (see John 7:38). I asked my friend if she had put that envelope in my purse. She had not.

Jim gave \$5.00 to our Bible study leaders (to God) that night, leaving \$5.00 for the babysitter and one dollar for us. After the meeting, our leader said, “It’s time we give our tithe to the Lord from the proceeds of these meetings. We do that by giving away one night’s offering.” Then he said it would go to us. We had not told him about our situation, but he said he would call us later with the amount. It was \$254.00—two dollars over our immediate needs we had written down and taken to the Lord, and one dollar was the tithe returned to us. I thought, *in determining our needs, why hadn't we added in the tithe?*

November 14 came and we were still in Carthage. “You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north” (Deut. 2:3). *But where, Lord? And how do we get across this Jordan?*

A couple verses kept haunting us: “. . . as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water’s edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing . . . the priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan . . .” (Josh. 3:15-17).

It became clear we could not keep our feet on the bank of the river if we were to reach the other side. We gave thirty days notice on our house; the neighbors rented it the next day. We got boxes and started packing and withdrew teacher’s retirement to help with the move. The check

arrived in one week, double the amount we expected. “But where are we going, Lord?”

“Northward,” was the answer we received, and then this: “The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes” (Deut. 1:30). Next, from the Amplified Bible, He quickened Isaiah 40:4, “Every valley shall be lifted and filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places a plain.” He would make our way straight— northward. December 13 arrived and we would be loading the moving truck the next day. We still did not know where *straight northward* was.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

El Shaddai [The All Sufficient One]

Interesting *who(s)* in the Bible *who* receive God's blessings for obedience. Fill in the blank:

1. Blessed is the man *who* _____, whose confidence is in him (Jer. 17:7; Prov. 16:20; Ps. 84:12).
2. Blessed are they *whose* _____, who walk according to the law of the Lord (Ps. 119:1).
3. Blessed are they *who* _____ him with all their heart (Ps. 119:2; Prov. 29:18).
4. Blessed are those *who* _____! (Isa. 30:18; Dan. 12:12).
5. Blessed is the man *who* _____ without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil (Isa. 56:2).
6. Blessed are those *who* _____; they are ever praising you (Ps. 84:4; Ps. 65:4).
7. Blessed is the man *who* _____, the man who gains understanding. (Prov. 3:13).
8. Blessed is the man *who* _____, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway (Prov. 8:34).
9. Blessed is he *who* _____ to the needy (Prov. 14:21).
10. A generous man will himself be blessed for he _____ (Prov. 22:9).
11. Blessed is the man *who* _____ or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers (Ps. 1:1).
12. Blessed are all *who* _____ (Ps. 2:12; Ps. 34:8).
13. Blessed is he *whose* _____, whose sins are covered (Ps. 32:1).
14. Blessed is the nation *whose* _____ (Ps. 33:12).
15. Blessed are they *who* _____ freely; their children will be blessed (Ps. 37:26).
16. Blessed is he *who* _____; the Lord delivers him in times of trouble (Ps. 41:1).
17. Blessed are those *who* _____, *who* walk in the light of your presence, O Lord (Ps. 89:15).
18. Blessed is the man you _____, O Lord, the man you teach from your law (Ps. 94:12).
19. Blessed are they *who* _____, who constantly do what is right (Ps. 106:3).
20. Blessed are those *whose* _____, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage (a sacred place) (Ps. 84:5).
21. Blessed is the man *whom* _____; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty (Job 5:17).

Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, is the formal treaty or contract between God, Israel, His people and us that we discussed in Chapter 5 of this book. Verses 15-68 list the consequences of disobedience. List the verse beside each consequence below:

<u>Curses:</u>	<u>Verse number</u>
Cursed in the city and the field	_____
Cursed in the kitchen	_____
In the fruit of your body and increase of livestock	_____
Coming in and going out	_____
Confusion in every enterprise	_____
Pestilence	_____
Fever, inflammation, mildew	_____
Brassy heavens, earth as iron	_____
No rain	_____
Struck down before your enemies	_____
Dead bodies food for birds	_____
Boils, tumors, scurvy and itch	_____
Madness, blindness, dismay of heart	_____
Oppressed and robbed continually	_____
Betroth a wife and another will lie with her	_____
Build a house and not live in it	_____
Animals and livestock violently taken away (means of support)	_____
Sons and daughters given to another people; no power to prevent it	_____
A foreign nation shall overtake you and all you own	_____
Boils on knees and legs	_____
You and your king forced to serve other gods	_____
An object of scorn and ridicule	_____
Locusts will devour crops	_____
Worms will eat vineyards	_____
No olive oil for cooking or eating	_____
Will not enjoy children because they are captive	_____
Trees and fruit possessed by locusts	_____
Aliens will rise higher, and you will sink lower	_____
Foreigners will be the head, and you the tail	_____
Hunger, thirst, nakedness and dire poverty, serving your enemies	_____
Yoke on your neck until destroyed	_____
A foreign nation will come against you	_____
You shall eat the fruit of your own body	_____
The most sensitive man will show no compassion while eating his own children	_____
The most sensitive woman will begrudge her own husband and children	_____
Plagues, prolonged disasters	_____
Severe and lingering illnesses	_____
Every sickness and disaster not recorded here	_____
Constant suspense, filled with dread day and night	_____
Back to Egypt to be sold as slaves that no one will buy	_____

I AM BLESSED

El Shaddai [The All Sufficient One]

Because I fully obey the LORD my God and carefully follow all his commands, the LORD my God will set me high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon me and accompany me if I obey the LORD my God:

I am blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

The fruit of my womb will be blessed, and the crops of my land and the young of my livestock—the calves of my herds and the lambs of my flocks.

My basket and my kneading trough will be blessed.

I am blessed when I come in and blessed when I go out.

The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against me will be defeated before me. They will come at me from one direction and flee in seven.

The LORD will send a blessing on my barns and on everything I put my hand to. The LORD my God will bless me in the land he is giving me.

The LORD will establish me as his holy wo(man), as he promised me on oath, if I keep the commands of the LORD my God and walk in his ways. Then all the peoples on earth will see that I am called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear me

The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on my land in season and to bless all the work of my hands. I will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.

The LORD will make me the head, not the tail. Because I pay attention to the commands of the LORD my God, I will always be at the top, never at the bottom. I will not turn aside from any of the commands, to the right or to the left, following after other gods and serving them (Deut. 28:1-14).

ENDNOTES

1. Spiros Zodiates, Th.D., Executive Editor, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, (AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 1990) p. 1782.
2. Adam Clark, LL.D., F.S.A., & C., *Clark's Commentary Volume I, Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Abington Press, New York., Nashville), p. 113.
3. Kay Arthur, *The Peace & Power of Knowing God's Name*, (Waterbrook Press, Colorado Springs, 2002) p. 39.
4. Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, Hebrew word 1293, p. 1717.
5. Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, "Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary," p.8.
6. Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1756.
7. Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1792.
8. Bruce Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez for Teens*, (Multnomah Publishers, Inc. Sisters, Oregon 2001) p. 32-33.
9. Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1782.
10. Ibid.
11. Adam Clark, LL.D., F.S.A., & C., *Clark's Commentary Volume I, Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Abington Press, New York., Nashville), p. 197.
12. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary-Eleventh Edition*, (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Springfield, MA 2003), p. 998.
13. Spiros Zodiates, Th.D., Executive Editor, *The Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, (AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 1990) p. 1725.
14. Ibid.
15. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 1344.
16. Rob Leacock, "Using Money God's Way," *Pentecostal Evangel*, No. 4580, February 17, 2002, p. 20.
17. Quote from Pastor John Hagee.
18. Spiros Zodiates, *Key Word Study Bible*, p. 1791.