

## What if Your Blessings Look More Like Curses?

“So if God allows suffering – it must be to allow something He loves even more than He hates suffering? Sometimes God allows what He can hardly stand – to accomplish more than we understand.

“And when we say we could write the Story better than God – we are saying that we are better than God. We only think we might write the story different because we don’t know the same things the Storyteller knows.

Who knows why the Storyteller allows heartbreak, but the answer must be important enough, because the Storyteller allows His heart to break too.”

Ann Voskamp

## Birds of Prey

“And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.” (Genesis 15:11)

These unclean birds were attempting to tear and devour the visible part of the covenant-confirming ceremony. God could have caused the birds to go away. However, God gave Abraham the responsibility to drive the birds away.

While Satan may not be able to take away from us what is promised. He will do whatever he can to defile the evidence of God’s covenant.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7 ESV)



## What Does That Really Mean? -- Blessings

“It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone’s life is in his power.” Job 12:10 (TEV)

“Long before he laid down earth’s foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love.” Ephesians 1:5 (MSG)

“God’s purpose took into account human error, and even sin.”  
Rick Warren

“For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love.”  
Romans 8:38 (TLB)

“The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;” Psalm 138:8 (ESV)

“He said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away...When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,’”  
Genesis 15:9-11, 17-18 (ESV)

## How Does Jesus Establish a Covenant with Us?

1. Jesus saved us from sin

“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8 ESV)

2. Jesus sustains and empowers us by the Holy Spirit.

“Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?” (Romans 8:32 NLT)

3. Jesus then justifies us from sin to set us free.

4. Jesus intercedes for us

“The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ’s love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture.” (Romans 8:34 MSG)

## Blessings

If we only think of God’s blessings as material provision and health, we can lose the fuller meaning of being blessed by God.

“For everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power, and everything is for his glory.” (Romans 11:36 TLB)

“Essentially, blessing is God giving power to something or somebody to do that which they are designed or intended to do. The creatures were supposed to fill the earth and multiply – so God gave them his blessing – his power – to do it. Human beings were also supposed to multiply numerically, but also to take care of the rest of creation. And God gave them power to do that too.” Philip Litle

## God Blesses Abram in Order to Bless the World

The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

“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.  
I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you.”  
Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)

## Biblical Pattern of Blessing Others

“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.” (Matthew 10:8 ESV)

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32 ESV)

“who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:4 ESV