

# Conversation Starter

For the week of June 29 to July 5, 2008

This week's theme: God's Blessings

Reading #1: Ephesians 1:3  
Reading #2: Jeremiah 17:5-10  
Reading #3: Matthew 5:1-10

There are some people who expect God's blessings regardless of their lifestyle choices, their attitudes, their spiritual beliefs, the way they treat others and/or their level of faithfulness to Him. Somehow God is viewed as One who is at their personal "beck and call" to meet not only their perceived needs, but their wants and desires and according to their timetable. And guess what can happen when God doesn't respond right away or in a way that they might have already predetermined? There can be anger towards God ... resentment and bitterness towards Him ... a moving away from Him emotionally ... a belief that He has let them down ... and yes, even rejection of Him. God does want to bless us. In fact, God does bless us even when we don't expect it. God's blessings for us are far greater than what our deeds deserve. As the apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians: *[He] has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3/Reading #1.)* However as we learn from Readings #2, to have greater access to His blessings, God is concerned about our lifestyle choices, our attitudes, the way we treat others, our faithfulness to Him and so on. As Jesus said: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth...blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy...blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God ...blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (See the BEATITUDES in Matthew 5:1-10.)*

1. What are some ways God has blessed you, your family, your ministry?
2. Have you ever prayed about something and God's answer to your prayer was done in a way that you would have never expected? Did this surprise you? Did you see this as one of God's blessings? Explain your answers.
3. Based on Jesus' words in Matthew 5:3-10 (Reading #3), who are more likely to be the recipients of God's blessings?
4. In what ways is the one who trusts in the Lord blessed?
5. Who are the "poor in spirit"? Why are they blessed?
6. Why are the "meek", the "merciful", the "pure in heart", and "peacemakers" blessed by God?
7. How has God's blessings reached you through someone else?
8. How has God used you to bless others?

Prepared on: Wednesday, May 28, 2008

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