

Blessings

1. What are some blessings in your life? Take time to think through all God has given you.
2. Do you or have you sometimes mistaken success as a blessing? What if you aren't successful by societies standards, are you then not blessed as much by God?
3. According to the Key-Word Study Bible, "The Greek word *blessed* means to be fully satisfied. It refers to those receiving God's favor, *regardless of the circumstances.*" What might it mean to be fully satisfied?
4. In Matthew 5:2-12, Jesus is talking to Jewish people that are being oppressed by Rome. Now read Matthew 5:2-12. If you were being oppressed and you heard Jesus say this to you, how would that make you feel? Is this what you would want to hear or would you be hoping for something different?
5. When you hear the word "blessing," do you often think of who is blessed in Matthew 5:2-12 or do you think of more successful people or those that are better off according to society?
6. According to Vaneetha Risner, "Scripture shows that blessing is anything God gives that makes us fully satisfied in him. Anything that draws us closer to Jesus. Anything that helps us relinquish the temporal and hold on more tightly to the eternal. And often it is the struggles and trials, the aching disappointments and the unfulfilled longings that best enable us to do that." Have trials often draw you closer to God? Are you now in a tough season of life and need to be blessed?
7. Henri Nouwen offers two practices to accept blessings. Prayer through listening to the blessings God wants to give us (pushing the "I am no good or not good enough out of your head) and "attentive presence" which is receiving the blessings from others and noticing that we are blessed "through words of gratitude, encouragement, affection, and love." Are these two practices something that you do in your life? If not how can you start? If so, is there away to grow those practices? Also can who can you share those practices with?