



# BLESSINGS

By Jeri Mertes

Thanksgiving was just around the corner and Mikah and Noelle were busy making placemats and napkin rings for the 'Turkey Day' celebration.



That was one of the things they loved about being home-schooled. It meant that they got to do a lot of craft projects and artwork, something they were both quite good at, actually.



Noelle had a real talent for drawing and she had filled a whole sketch pad full of animal pictures and drawings for every holiday she could think of.

Mikah on the other hand, loved to go into the woods or out onto the desert and find 'things' he could bring home to use in some of the various craft projects they created.



Their grandmother was a good teacher who encouraged them to think 'outside the box' whenever possible. And Grandpa had a special hobby of his own that he was also willing to share with Mikah and Noelle. He had lots of tools in a special room in the back of the garage where he cut and

sawed and even carved things out of cactus wood and any other chunks of wood he could get his hands on.



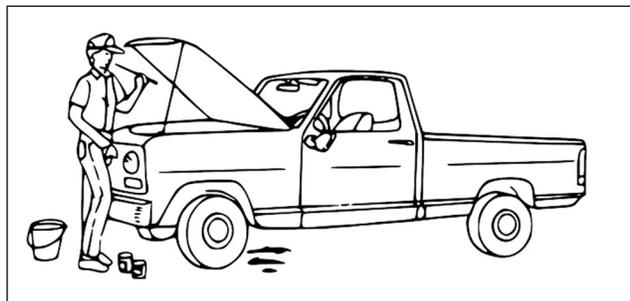
Grandpa was a good teacher too, and he would spend hours showing Mikah how to use the power tools he had in his special work room.



Mikah had even begun to make a few creations of his own, like a birdhouse to hang out on their patio.

Sometimes Grandpa would let Mikah help him with repairs around the house, too, and both Mikah and Noelle were learning how to fix things that go wrong with the family truck.

Noelle didn't care so much about working with power tools or repairing a leaky sink, but Grandma had told her every woman should know at least the basics about taking care of an automobile.



Being home-schooled had other advantages, too. Both Mikah and Noelle were being taught all kinds of things in the kitchen. They were not only learning how to cook, but also how to do a good job of cleaning up the

kitchen after the meal. They were learning about fractions when they had to measure the exact right amount of certain ingredients that went into their favorite meals – like homemade breads, muffins and especially desserts.



As the family sat down for their evening meal, Grandpa asked Mikah if he would do the honors of asking the Lord’s blessing for their food.

Mikah had heard his grandfather pray many times and sometimes



Grandma prayed for their meals, too. He noticed that they always asked God to bless the food and make it nourishing for their bodies. He got to thinking about that as he pondered saying the blessing.

He decided to ask a question about that. “Why do we always ask God to bless our food? What if we didn’t do that before every meal?”

“Oh my,” said Gramma, “those are very important questions.”

“There are many places in the Bible where we read that Jesus blessed food before eating it or sharing it with others. Your Grandpa and I believe that when we ask Him to



bless our food, He literally does bless it, meaning he gives it a blessing. There is a lot to discuss about how that works, but since our dinner is getting cold, let's just ask Him to bless the food right now, and then we'll eat, and later we'll do a little Bible study about blessings, OK?"

The whole family pitched in to help that night.

After the dinner dishes were done and the kitchen all cleaned up, Mikah asked if they could talk more about the reasons for blessing the food.



So Grandma got on her computer and looked for some verses about Jesus blessing the food. "Now write down these verses in your journals and we'll look them up and then talk about them." Here are the verses she gave to Mikah and Noelle to look up.

**Exodus 23:25**, "You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you."

**1 Timothy 4:4-5**, "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer."



**Matthew 26:26**, "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

**John 6:11**, “Jesus then took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted.”

**Matthew 14:19**, “Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves



and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowd.”

“So you see,” she told them, “Jesus always prayed for the food to be blessed before they ate.”

“Well,” Noelle began a question, “what is a blessing really?”

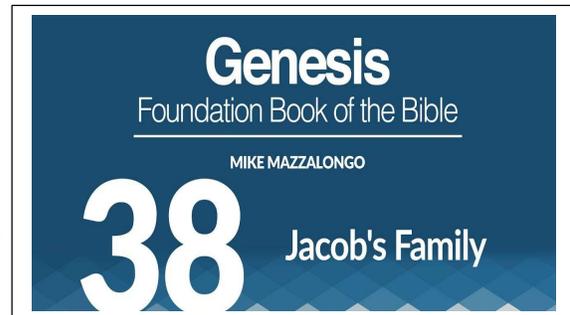
Grandpa said, “Let me take this one. After all I am the Patriarch in this family – that just means I am the oldest man in the family, I think.”

So Grandpa told them that in the Old Testament, the Patriarchs, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all gave blessings to each of their children before they died. And the blessing given to a person was extremely important to them.

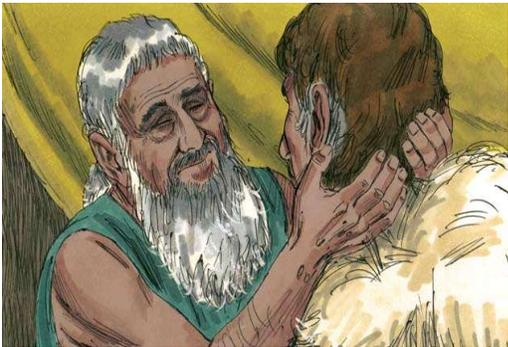


It was so important that they sometimes fought over who would receive a certain blessing. In the tradition of their times, the oldest son always got the best blessing because he was the first-born. In the story about Jacob and Esau, their mother wanted her younger son, Jacob, because she loved

him the most, to receive the best blessing from their father, Isaac. So she came up with a sneaky plan to have Jacob steal Esau's blessing from his brother. I want you to look up that story in your Bible reading tomorrow and read the whole thing. It's in the book of Genesis, Chapter 25, I believe."



By then it was time for bed, so their grandmother told them they could make the study of blessings part of their school-work for tomorrow.



The next day, when study time began, both children were quick to remind their grandparents that they wanted to read all about Jacob and Esau. They found that story beginning in Genesis 25:19 and took turns reading it from their Bibles.

"Wow," said Mikah. "I would be angry, too, if my own mother and brother did that to me."

Noelle agreed with him. But then she turned to her Gramma and said,

"But, my question still hasn't been answered. What is a blessing really?"

"Let's see what the dictionary says. Get your dictionaries and let's see who can find it first." Noelle, being the fast reader that she is, quickly found the

word and they all discussed what the word blessing means.

Mikah said, "The dictionary says that the word bless means to have God's favor and divine protection."

Noelle added, "It's something that makes a person happy or content"

Then Grandpa chimed in. "So to be blessed is to be granted special favor by God that will bring you joy and prosperity."

Grandma, who had been looking in another book, added "In religion, a blessing is the infusion of something with holiness, spiritual redemption, or divine will. Essentially, blessing is God giving power to something or somebody to do that which they are designed or intended to do."



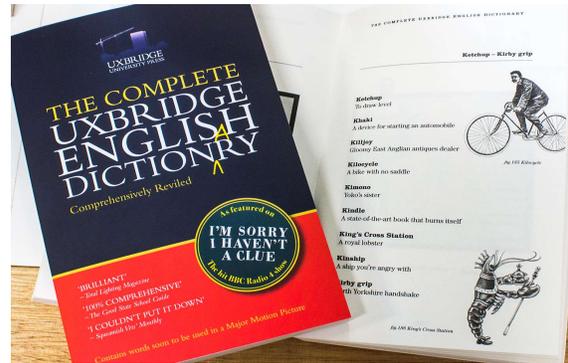
Mikah jumped in with a comment: "So it gives us more power to eat blessed food! So if we eat super foods, we can Be like Superman!"

"Grandpa said, "Well, I guess that's one way to put it."

Then Gramma asked them, "Since that definition says 'power to do what something is intended to do, what do you think our food is intended to do?"

Noelle responded, "help our bodies to grow and be healthy, right?"

"Right - so when we ask God to bless it, he makes it perfect for us to eat. If we don't ask His blessing, then we are eating food filled with imperfections,



like chemicals, GMO's, fertilizers, preservatives and other things that were put in there by man. Most of the food people buy in stores today is not the food God made. It's been modified and changed. That's why it's best to buy organic foods, or grow as much of your own food as you can,



like we do. But even then, the soil may not be as good as it used to be, so to be safe, we should always ask God to bless our food. Does all of that make sense?"



Mikah was still a little puzzled. "But what about when we go out for fast food sometimes, like when we're on



the road? Can God even make that food healthy for us? "

"Grandpa and I believe He can bless any food, and if we ask Him to bless every single thing we eat, even our snacks, which I admit I sometimes forget to do, He will make it all good for us."

"Now," Grandpa added, "do you see why it's important to always ask God to bless the food?"

Noelle had one more question.

“Does that mean we can eat junk food whenever we want and just ask God to bless it?”

“Well, I think you might want to discuss that with God,” Grandpa answered. “Sounds to me like that would be kind-of like deliberately jumping

off a cliff and asking God to catch you on the way down, wouldn't it?”

Grandma added, “It's really just common sense, don't you think? God might not honor our prayers or requests if He knows we are deliberately doing something we know we shouldn't and then asking Him to cover it for us.

After all He is omniscient, isn't He?”

“What does 'om-mission-nent' mean?”

Well, that's a good assignment for you for tomorrow, isn't it?

“I want Him to bless me, too.”

“Don't worry child, we pray for you every day that God will bless your whole life.”



## **Study Guide:**

1 Look up the word 'omniscient' and discuss what it means.

2 See if you can find any more verses about Jesus or other 'patriarchs' blessing people or food, and write them here (or in your journal, if you keep one):

3 Blessings can also be provisions from God to us. Can you make a list of blessings from God that you are personally thankful for?

4 If you aren't in the habit of asking God to bless all of the food you eat, including snacks and eating out in restaurants, how can you change this habit? (Experts say it takes 21 days to form a new habit, but only 7 days to get 'out of the habit' of doing something.)

5 Could praying for your meal in a restaurant be a good testimony to the people eating near you? Explain why: