

## Blessings Jar

As God's Beloved, we are blessed. According to Henri Nouwen, in his book "Life of the Beloved", to give (or receive) a blessing means to acknowledge this "belovedness" of God. Nouwen gives an example from the story of Christ's baptism in Matthew. He writes, "God gave Jesus a beautiful blessing when Jesus was being baptized. As He came up out of the water, Matt 3:17 tells us, "and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." That blessing sustained Jesus through the next 3 years of His ministry and His walk to the cross.

God wants to bless us and sustain us in our relationship with Him today. He may use His word, circumstances, or the words of others to show us how beloved we are. Acknowledging these gestures from our Father in heaven can draw us deeper into a personal connection with Him and lift our spirits!

Start a "blessings jar" to collect blessings from God. Think of the things that have made you feel loved by God and by others. Write them on slips of paper and put them in the jar. Add more as you begin to look for them and experience them in your day to day routine. During your quiet time, draw one of these blessings out of your jar at random and meditate on it, thank God for it, write about it, and then find/create a visual expression of that blessing.



Things you might include:

1. Scripture verses that include promises, blessings, words of love from God to you.
2. Special moments in your day that have been particularly enjoyable or meaningful.
3. Words from friends or family members that encouraged you.
4. An unexpected gift you received.
5. Acts of kindness that were directed your way.
6. Answered prayers that brought you great joy.

Here's one to start you off: *...the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him.* (Isaiah 30:18)