**COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS**

If I offered you $1 for every blessing you could name, do you think you could easily become a hundredaire? How about a thousandaire? Let’s push it up, how about a millionaire? (note: it will take you about 12 days counting non-stop to do this, so get a good night’s sleep and eat breakfast first). I doubt you could ever count a billion (that would take 79 ¼ years). In all seriousness, how many blessings do you think you could list? What if I helped you with categories, sort of like Jeopardy? (“Alex, I’ll take Physical Blessings for 100 please.”) Since Jesus “*grew in wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with man*” (Lk. 2:52) we could make our Categories:

Mental Physical Spiritual Social

1. My Library 1. Breakfast 1. My Bible 1. My BFF
2. 2. 2. 2.
3. 3. 3. 3.
4. 4. 4. 4.
5. 5. 5. 5.

There. That gets you started with 20 blessings just by filling in five from each category.

Many of us can quickly rattle off the usual blessings of food, clothing and shelter. Then list the obvious ones of family and friends. Then the church and the great fellowship we have in Christ. I’m sure most of us could easily reach 50 without stumbling too much. But what if you purchased a full notebook like you buy the kids before school starts, you know, the 3-hole punch ones with blue lined paper. While you shelter-at-home during this quarantine, what better way to “*redeem the time*” then to challenge yourself to count your blessings (Eph. 5:16). Each day write five new blessings God gave you today with the rising sun. Writing five per day for one year would result in … (give me a second, I’m using my phone calculator) … 1,825 blessings! That would make you a genuine thousandaire (I’m assuming that is a word). Then ask yourself, would you rather have a thousand blessings, or a thousand dollars? Ask that same question with a million. While you might struggle to list a thousand, please know that God would have no trouble at all filling out your notebook (open and read James 1:17-18).

To get your juices flowing I’ll give you some on my list. Using my five senses as a kick-start I try to think of various things I can see, smell, hear, touch and taste. A few years ago I suddenly got a blood clot that went to my brain that caused what the doctor called Sixth Nerve Palsy. It caused severe vision loss that left everything blurry. I couldn’t drive, read, or do most everything I had previously done when I could see. My whole world changed drastically. It lasted for three months until suddenly (mere seconds) it corrected itself and my eyesight was back to normal. Guess what I now thank God for daily? I now “see” (really see) colors, nature, words on a page, etc etc etc that I always took for granted. I try to see what a blind man wishes he could see.

The same goes for smell. Whether it’s the autumn scent of a bonfire or the odor of cows as I drive by a farm, I try to “smell the roses” that God put in the air. Do the same with hearing, touching and tasting that you would miss if you were suddenly deaf, paralyzed, or an ageusiatic (look it up, it means one who cannot taste anything).

Physically take your body and run through the various systems to see how you are “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Psalm 139:13-16).
The Skeletal System (I’ve had 19 bones broken, so I think about this a lot).
The Circulatory System (my doctor says think about this before I eat those Twinkies).
The Muscular System (at 67 I am forced to feel my aches and pains with just by moving).
The Nervous System (see Sixth-Nerve Palsy above, or my arthritis and tendinitis).
The Respiratory System (think Covid-19 pandemic).
The Excretory System (I’m forced to dwell on this at 2:15, 3:45 and 5:30 each morning). The Digestive System (my stomach is growling now saying “hey you up there, feed me!”)
The Reproductive, Lymphatic, Endocrine, Sensory, and Cardio Systems too.

Paul forces us to look more carefully at our spiritual blessings when he writes Ephesians 1:3-14. He starts out by saying, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*.” He then proceeds to list just a few of the countless joys we have as Christians. We are “*chosen… holy… blameless… predestined… adopted… accepted… redeemed… forgiven… riches of grace… inheritance… purchased possession*…” Paul makes my head spin with this incredible catalog of blessings. And he is just getting started.

Words like Salvation, Redemption, Justification, Reconciliation, Propitiation, Glorification, Sanctification, Conversion, Foreordination and all those other “shun” (tion) words cause us to reflect deeply on God’s Grace, Mercy, Love, Goodness, Patience, Providence, and 101 other attributes He has given us every day of every year!

In Malachi 3:10 God offered an ungrateful Israel a challenge. He offers it to us now. “*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”* Can you imagine that? God opening Heaven’s bank vault and depositing to our account so many blessings that our CPA would proclaim, “You’re a millionaire!”

Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney sang in the 1954 classic movie *White Christmas* “Count Your Blessings.” Old Bing crooned these lyrics to Rosemary:
“When I'm worried and I can't sleep I count my blessings instead of sheep,
And I fall asleep counting my blessings

When my bankroll is getting small I think of when I had none at all

And I fall asleep counting my blessings”

But that song pales next to Johnson Oatman’s spiritual classic which became my dad’s favorite hymn, and the motto for his life. When I think of him, and the legacy he left, I think of these words. I pray my children think of me what I think of him when we sing:

When upon life’s billows you are tempest tossed, When you are discouraged thinking all is lost.
Count your many blessings name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Are you ever burdened with a load of care. Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings every doubt will fly, And you will be singing as the days go by.

When you look at others with their lands and gold, Think that Christ has promised you His wealth untold.
Count your many blessings money cannot buy, Your reward in heaven nor your home on high.

So amid the conflict whether great or small, Do not be discouraged God is over all.
Count your many blessings angels will attend, Help and comfort give you to your journey’s end.

Until tomorrow… Count five blessings today.
 Then do it again the next day… and the next.

I love each one of you (see, I just counted over 300 right there!)

Rick