

## Palisades Community Bible Church

### Online Sunday School

# Why Does God Bless Me?

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Remember the movie; “Bruce Almighty,” with Jim Carey and Morgan Freeman? It was an interesting view on what might happen if God gave divine powers to a human.

In the story, Bruce Nolan (Carey) is a not-so-accomplished field reporter who gets passed over for advancement. His petulant backlash at his employer gets him fired. In his misery, Bruce turns to God and says HE is the one who should be fired.

So, God (Freeman) meets, personally, with Bruce and, after much discussion, God gives Bruce some divine powers to use as he sees fit.

If you’ve seen the story, most of the movie depicts Bruce using those powers entirely on his own lusts and for his own benefit; orchestrating events and miracles that served him alone. Predictably, human selfishness that has unlimited satisfaction produces the greatest form of emptiness. (who among us cannot name several celebrities who “had it all,” yet committed suicide?)

More miserable than before, Bruce calls on God to take the powers back and he return him to his simple, mortal life a much happier, more enlightened, man.

I thought this fictional story might serve as a backdrop for answering our question: “Why does God bless me? The movie, in a way, started out with the question; “Why DOESN’T God bless me?”

In other words, this self-absorbed fellow was so angry that things weren’t going his way that he lashed out at God. After all, isn’t one of God’s jobs to make our lives happy and successful, as WE define them??

If you answered “Yes,” please send me the scriptures that tell us this. I’ve not been able to find them.

So, in the story, God satisfied Bruce's desires in an excessive way; he could cause miracles to happen. Strangely, nothing really changed in Bruce's life. He had supernatural control over his events, and he messed them up just as badly as before!

Bruce had "won the lottery," but, as with 70% of all lottery winners, he was BANKRUPT within a very short time (did you know this?).

Let's back up to Adam and Eve in the Garden. These two had everything. They had full-time access to the creator of the universe. God had given them perfect health, surrounded them with perfect beauty, gave them unlimited sources of perfect food. They were created in the image of God, and had many of His characteristics.

The trouble was; God gave them free will. Eve was deceived, and Adam was watching. They chose to disobey out of lust. God had blessed them in an unlimited way, and they turned away from Him. They turned from their Father and toward Satan. We are pretty familiar with all the rest....

So, if we figure out why God blessed Adam and Eve so richly, we might have a clue into why He blesses us.

**Genesis 1: 26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."**

We see that God had created a beautiful earth teeming with life, and He wanted someone IN HIS IMAGE (like Him) to rule over it all. To help my mortal mind to grasp this, I think of a father who owns a large, very productive farm. He wants it to be managed, or ruled over, by someone very much like himself. So, he grooms his son for the job.

Let's back up a few verses to see this:

**Genesis 1:20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.**

**24 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.**

There is a lot going on, here! The earth is bursting forth with life in every environment possible and God wants someone to “rule over” it all. God has taken care of the way that animals, fish, birds, fish, etc., reproduce after their kind...in order to populate the earth. Now, He wants someone to RULE OVER it.

In order that this ruler might have every advantage:

**27 So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female He created them.**

“...in His own image, in the image of God He created them;” That’s the first major advantage, or blessing, if you will. Mankind was created in God’s image. There is a lot unsaid, here. We can only suppose that Adam and Eve were not only physical representations of God, but they had the rest of God’s attributes that were necessary for what they had to do.

This might go well with the example of the farmer. The son has all the physical characteristic of the father. Perhaps the son’s capabilities; mental, emotional, intellectual, etc., might need some grooming by the Father. So, too, might Adam and Eve have needed such grooming; hence the evening strolls through the Garden with God.

**Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”**

How does one rule over the fish and birds? How does one rule over the land animals? Surely God had plans for this to happen, and He gave his first set of humans what they needed (blessed them) to do it. And, what was the evidence of God blessing them so that they could do this great task?

**Genesis 1: 29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.**

**30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.**

**Genesis 2: 15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.**

God gave them all the resources they needed to do a job. They had been created with divine capabilities. Their physical needs were met. God met with them daily; their spiritual needs were met. God created them; man and woman, to be perfect help mates for each other. God made sure they were fully blessed, equipped, in every way for the task at hand. Then, He gave them that job to do.

God blessed them because he wanted them to PRODUCE something for Him.

Let's fast forward to today, and our question: "Why does God bless me?" Perhaps we're getting an idea. As with Bruce Almighty, and lottery winners, we see that God does NOT bless us so that we might spend those blessings, or resources, upon our lusts. As with Adam and Eve, God DOES bless us to do His work.

Think back to the parable of the Talents (some translations say "bags of gold"):

**Matthew 25: 14 'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.**

Jesus told this parable to illustrate that God entrusts us with aspects of His creation, and He expects us to do our part....based on our abilities. Read the passage above, focusing on the underlined portions. The passage says the man "entrusted his wealth" to his servants. That may mean that he entrusted some, or all, of his estate into their hands. In doing so, there were correspondingly important expectations upon his return. We also see that the master did not expect the same thing of every servant.

Speaking of 'ability' it is extremely seductive for Christians to assume that, since they are not graduates of a university of divinity, or cannot command a congregation's attention in a great oratory, or that they do not have other special abilities.....that they cannot make a contribution to the kingdom of Christ. This is a false...and often,

lazy...perspective. In this passage, we see that our abilities are not all equal, but our work for the Lord is equally important:

**1 Corinthians 12: 4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.**

This man, preparing to go on his journey, had entrusted his wealth to three servants, according to their unique abilities. The first, who received five bags of gold, might have been a shrewd and skillful money manager. The third, who received one bag of gold, might have been very good at managing livestock and less skilled at money management. So, the master gave resources measured out accordingly.

We know the outcome of the parable; the master returned and found the first and second servants had invested their master's gold wisely, and returned to him a healthy profit. The master gave them additional responsibilities because they had demonstrated their productivity. The third had simply buried the one bag of gold, then returned it...

**Matthew 25: 24 26 'His master replied, "You wicked, lazy servant! So, you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned, I would have received it back with interest. 28 "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

What we are seeing here, is something that not a lot of Christians want to see! When God blesses us, He expects us to produce. Think of your own finances; suppose you hired a painter to paint some rooms in your house and you gave them a 50% deposit. Would you have some pretty specific expectations? How would you feel if they did not show up, as promised? Would you be upset if you came home to find paint tracked all over the carpets?

If a hired person is to expect payment, they must produce the agreed upon outcome! If you are the person hiring...and paying....wouldn't you agree? If so, how could you expect anything different from God? Read another parable:

**Matthew 24: 45 'Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47 Truly I tell you; he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, "My master is staying away a long time," 49 and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50 The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

God's warning is not to be taken lightly; He expects us to be doing His work. Now, lest there be anyone reading this who is from a background in which a works-based salvation is taught, THIS IS NOT THE SAME THING! We are talking about SAVED, born again, Christians here. Our salvation is secure, only through Jesus' work on the cross....not our good works. However....

This is important: God does not save us just so we can warm a church pew once a week. He saves us from the curse of sin so we can carry out the job of spreading the Gospel. God is a missionary God! He wants His people carrying forth the Gospel with passion and purpose. If the gospel message stopped at you, that would be 100% contrary to God's plans and character ("Be fruitful and increase in number").

**Daniel 7:14 And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**

**James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not**

doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. **7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.** **8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.**

**Revelation 7:9** After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

Do you get the theme? All nations, all tribes, all tongues... Jesus will NOT return until every single people group has had a chance to respond to the Gospel. And, yet, the recent census has revealed that America is, officially, a “Post-Christian” society. There are, now, more non-Christians than Christians in America. The nation that has been blessed beyond all others has squandered those blessings on lust. Where is the value, the productivity, the benefit, of the Christian Church in our nation? Why should God bless the Christians who do no more than ride the bus?

Answer that question honestly.

Sometimes, I learn a lot about something by studying its opposite. The question before us is “Why does God bless me? Let’s examine the opposite of the question: “Why would God NOT bless me?”

I can look at the problems in America and answer the question; “Why would God NOT bless us?” It’s because the Church became inert, ineffective, neutral, passive, in the face of social de-volution. We have offended God by allowing the idols of the heathens among us to become OUR idols.

“Why would God NOT bless me?” Same reason.

**Jeremiah 10:21** For the shepherds have become stupid and have not sought the Lord; Therefore, they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered.

**Ezekiel 33:31** They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain.

**Isaiah 64:7** There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You; For You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities.

God 'would not bless us' if, like Bruce, we are too busy blessing ourselves. If we are too consumed with the vain trappings of our own pursuits to be bothered with Jesus' work, where would God's blessings fit? Think on these:

- When is the last time I shared Jesus with someone?
- When is the last time I invited someone to church?
- When is the last time I sat with a child and told them about Jesus?
- When is the last time I prayed for the Holy Spirit to open someone's heart to the Gospel?
- When is the last time I gave my support to another Christian while they were working in a ministry?
- When is the last time I was gracious to an enemy?
- How often have I resisted participating in a ministry because I'm too busy?

If you're feeling a bit judged, go with it. Then, CHANGE IT!

You don't buy a house to let it sit empty. You don't buy a car sit in a garage. You don't hire a plumber to just come over and have coffee with you. You invest in something to get value from it. God is no different.

Why does God bless (invest in) me? This is important: Because He wants me to be fully fitted for the job He has called me to do. His blessings are the enablers, NOT THE REWARDS. They are the resources I need to do His work. And, when God calls me into a work, a job, a form of service, He gives me every resource I need to accomplish it. I am never so blessed as when I am in the center of God's will, doing the work he has purposed for me to do. As with Adam and Eve, so it is with me.

Consider this passage:

**1 Corinthians 10: 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide an escape, so that you can stand up under it.**

It's a well-known passage to most Christians. So, let's use the system of opposites and expand it a bit. We'll use the principle found in the parable of the bags of gold. Take the underlined phrase in the passage and make it an opposite: 'And God is faithful, He

will provide resources necessary for you to do the job.’ Try that phrase in the passage and see if it amplifies a bit.

If you aren’t working, why would He give you a tool? If you ARE working, and you need something to carry out His will, He will provide it.

If you are feeling like God is not paying attention to you, or He is distant, or your walk with Jesus is not what it should be, start by praying for clarity on the job you should be doing. Seek the counsel of other mature Christians, as well. Then, get to work. If it is to support someone else in ministry, if it is to step up to a need, if it is to witness to a coworker, whatever it is, get busy. God will bless you (provide the resources) to do that job.

In closing, I want to REALLY make us feel guilty by exposing the number one excuse used by folks do not follow the Holy Spirit’s prompting: “I’m too busy.”

So, I ask you to start telling God about what keeps you ‘too busy’ to serve Him. Tell Him why you are ‘too busy’ to witness, to read your Bible, to help someone in need. Tell God of your busy, busy schedule and ask Him if it is His will, or yours that you chase all day.

When He tells you to drop one thing and do another, He will supply the blessings that are needed to get the job done.