

New Website Offerings

Excerpts Only

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MONTH OF JULY

MINI-MESSAGES

OH' TO BE BLESSED

Here's the difference, really, between being blessed and being worldly successful. I can experience God's blessings "even in darkness." Even when things aren't going well, even when I've messed my life up, even when I'm not smart enough or strong enough or good enough or brave enough, I am still one who is "blessed." Even when I don't feel blessed, it's no less true.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," Jesus proclaimed. "Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek, and those who hunger and thirst for just a taste of righteousness. Blessed are those who show mercy and the pure in heart and those who put themselves on the line to bring people together. Blessed even are those who are persecuted, insulted, and accused for no reason other than that they try to live lives that please their God." That list is very different from a list that those with whom we work and go to school, those who live down the street from us, maybe even those who go to church with us, would make of those who were "successful." It sounds ludicrous to say that those who are poor in any way are blessed. It's downright contradictory, isn't it, to say that those who mourn are blessed? In a world that values assertiveness and aggression, it's hard to imagine the meek inheriting anything but leftovers or those who make peace being anything other

than doormats. And surely, if living for God brings pain and hardship, one might want to reconsider if He's a God worth living for.

But Jesus says those folks are blessed exactly for the reason that it's not obvious that they're blessed. They are people who choose not to set their hearts on the world's definitions of success and so they find themselves on the outside looking in, misfits who don't seem to have a place in the world's economy. But that's because they have their eyes on God's kingdom instead.

WANTED!

People pay big bucks to have a new look. But few believers would ever consider a make-over. The apostle Paul, however, insists that every believer should have a lasting transformation — not by scalpel, injection, laser correction or liposuction, but through the transformational power of the Holy Spirit:

Do I have the new look from the Holy Spirit?

- A face with fewer frowns, but more full of joy!
- New eyes that don't look down on people, but more upward to Him!
- A new mouth which is less critical and sarcastic, but more praising and encouraging!
- A new nose and chin, not to be stuck up, but more humble!
- A new body that begins to resemble Jesus!

YOU ARE SOMEBODY

With our real friends, we do not have to win anything anymore. We can dare to be ourselves. They love us, knowing us. That is never a license for bad behavior. We love them and we seek what is best for them, but we do not have to hide our

wounds, our weaknesses, or our deficiencies. There's nothing to prove! I call them 'open friendships.'

The difference that we experience with our "open friends" is that we are never loved less and we never love them less because of what we find in our vulnerability. Our real friends are the embodiment of the love of God in the flesh. They are steadfast. They know us and they still love us!

Our hidden fear is that if we lost all of the trappings of life — if we were no longer a librarian, or stock broker, or electrical engineer, or an interior decorator, or that successful person living with our fine families in neatly ordered lives — that we would still be loved. If we are afraid of that, it is because we are under-practiced in our exercise of openness. Our unadorned self is an amazing gift. Friends treasure such a gift and give it back in return. All masks can be removed.

IT'S ALL ABOUT BALANCE

You read a great deal these days about living a balanced life. Many sociologists and counselors emphasize the need to have balance in all areas of your life. And many people are realizing that there is more to life than just making a living. It is important to put attention on the important relationships of your life, to take care of yourself physically and to stay mentally sharp. In fact, many are even emphasizing the need to pay attention to the "inner man."

Long ago, Jesus gave us the pattern for a balanced life.

"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52 NIV)

ENTREPRENEURS-WHAT TECHNOLOGY DOES MY NEW BUSINESS NEED



**Once your business is established there are
Six things you must have to succeed
Local Technology Consultant
High-Speed Internet Access
Computer Upgrades
Data Security
Website
E-Mail**