

KENDRICK BROTHERS'

SHOW ME THE FATHER



DISCUSSION GUIDE – A FATHER'S BLESSING



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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This guide contains spoilers, and is intended for use after a group has seen the film.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE – A FATHER’S BLESSING

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Have you ever thought that blessings seem outdated? If you have, you’re not alone. While blessings contain roots in ancient history, they still serve a very purposeful role in our world and even in your life.

Dr. Tony Evans describes it this way in the movie, “In the Bible, the blessing was everything. That blessing was the covenantal transfer of the favor of God for the future of the child.” In biblical times, there was nothing more monumental than receiving a blessing from your father, so it’s worth taking a closer look at the Blessing.

Have you ever given a blessing? Have you ever been blessed? Those are questions that all too many children and adults would have to say no to. As a result, we often end up living as “practical orphans,” striving to make a name and a story for ourselves. But how do we break this cycle and offer what we’ve never been given?

Enter **Kendrick Brothers’ SHOW ME THE FATHER**. Everyone has a unique father story. Whether positive or painful, it’s always personal and can deeply affect the core of our identity and direction of our lives. By providing a fresh perspective on the roles of fathers in today’s society, **SHOW ME THE FATHER** invites you to think differently about how you view your earthly father, and how you personally relate to God.

This resource is designed to help us all understand the power of a Blessing and how it can radically transform us. Whether you have or have not received or given a blessing before, there’s something here for you. When used together, the movie and this Discussion Guide can provide a great teaching opportunity.

In September of 2021, **SHOW ME THE FATHER** was released in theaters across the US. Set aside a time to see the movie with your family or group, then use this resource for an informal discussion about it afterward. Take the challenge even further by inviting other families to join you. There’s truly something for everyone in this film.

What is true about all of us is that we have a Creator God, who craves an intimate relationship with each of us. Anyone anywhere who places their faith in His Son Jesus and can come to know God as their perfect Heavenly Father.

We’re excited about what God is going to do for you and your family! Learn more and find a theater near you at **ShowMeTheFatherMovie.com**



CHILDREN NEED A FATHER WHO CHOOSES TO BLESS

Verses

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:18

"Behold, I set before you a choice. Life or death. The Blessing or the curse."
Deuteronomy 30:19

REFLECTING ON THE BLESSING: *Children need a father who chooses to Bless*

Three voices speak at the beginning of a hugely important documentary film called **SHOW ME THE FATHER**. Each is a father. Each is a man of deep faith. Each will go on to share key aspects of the importance and what it means to be a father.

The first speaks of one of the deepest needs for every child, in every home.

"One of the greatest needs God has put into the heart of every human being is for a father ..." Stephen Kendrick

We know that's true in our own life story. Down in the deepest part of our heart, we long to know our father. Even more, we long to be loved and affirmed by him. For all of us, that word, "Father" can bring home the reality of a choice our own father made with us. Did he choose to give us his blessing? Or did he choose to withhold it from us—so we missed the blessing?

"All of us have a fatherhood story. We can either share about how much he meant to us, and how much he loved us. Or how deeply he hurt us." Stephen Kendrick

There was a time when Almighty God laid before His people a choice. Much like the choice each father has in his home. *“Behold I set before you a choice. Life or death. The Blessing or the curse.”* Deuteronomy 30:19

What about your story? Did you come from a home where you saw a father choosing life in Christ? Where he worked hard to add life and blessing to your life story? Or is your story one of subtraction and hurt? Perhaps the absence of any father at all. Or even the presence of an unkind one, whose words and actions were full of cursing, contempt, or silence, but never a blessing.

There are so many children in homes today who are desperate for their father’s blessing. It’s so important to understand what the Blessing is, how to give it, and why it’s linked so closely to that “life or death” choice. But know this as we begin to look at the Blessing, pictured so powerfully in **SHOW ME THE FATHER**. No matter what kind of family we came from. No matter how much we didn’t receive from our own father. The reality is we have a Heavenly Father who loves us. Who speaks Blessing over us, not curse. He can reverse the curse. Choosing life in Christ can instruct and empower us to bless our own children and change the course of their lives—and ours.

As we begin our look at a Father who gives the Blessing, take to heart these words from a loving pastor in the film, *“If you’ve been looking for a father, wanting a daddy. If you want to experience what it is to be fathered by God. Your perfect Father in Heaven can change the trajectory of your life. Your Daddy wants to restore you ...”* Dr. Tony Evans

Your Heavenly Father made that choice to bless you. Once we get His blessing, we can choose to give it to someone else. Even if we never got it growing up, once we get God’s blessing, we can even choose to give it to someone—even those who never gave it to us. All because of the reality of these words and promise in scripture, that in Christ, there are no orphans.

“I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:18

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. When you hear the word, “blessing,” what thoughts come to mind? What does a blessing mean to you?
2. Why do you think a blessing is so important in Scripture?
3. Do you connect more with receiving a “blessing” or a “curse” from your father? How do you think that has affected your life? What does Jesus’ offer of a blessing mean to you?



THE BLESSING OF A FATHER'S EMBRACE

Verses

"Then his father Isaac said to him, 'Please come close, and kiss me, my son.'"
Genesis 27:26

"And after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" **Matthew 3:16**

REFLECTING ON THE BLESSING: *The Blessing of a Father's Embrace*

In **SHOW ME THE FATHER**, an incredible story unfolds as we meet two NFL football stars, Sherman Smith and Deland McCullough. As we learn their individual stories, their combined story together is woven throughout the film. Captured perfectly by Smith in the words, *"This is a story for God's glory."*

One athlete came from a home with a father who was there for him. Growing up, each day, Sherman Smith had a father who loved, disciplined, inspired, and blessed him. Deland McCullough grew up in a home where his father's name was not even on his birth certificate. Never having a father to model love or blessing or anything positive before him.

But what exactly was it that one man grew up with—and the other didn't? There are five "elements" of the Blessing you see in scripture.

Go slowly through this list. As a way of helping you do this, think back and get a mental picture of the home you lived in *when you were 10 years old*.

It's evening and you're standing outside. There's a family gathering. Everyone in your family is there. As you look through a window, would you have seen any of these five elements happening in the interaction between you and your father? Were there two? Or all five? Or, if you're like me, and grew up without a father in the home, was there anyone in your 10-year-old life placing these five elements into your life?

- Appropriate meaningful touch
- Spoken or written words, that ...
- Attached high value to what they saw inside you
- Picturing for you a special future
- All given with genuine commitment

We'll look more closely at each of these elements that you'll see in the film as well. But let's look at just that first element now. *Appropriate meaningful touch*. Growing up, did you have someone lay their hand on your shoulder when you needed it there? Were you given a hug in times of great happiness or sorrow? Did your father sit next to you? Or shake or hold your hand? Or just by his presence, let you know he was there for you, and proud of you?

Whether you received all 5 elements of the Blessing or you never saw a single one in your home, know this truth: God is reaching out to you. You have a Heavenly Father. One who, like He did with His own Son, chooses to Bless you. Chooses to put His hand on your shoulder when you need it most.

"And after being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Matthew 3:16-17

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. When you were 10 years old, how did it feel to get a hug from your father?
2. Of the 5 elements of a blessing mentioned above, which do you feel you received more of? Which do you feel you received less of?
3. Have you ever seen evidence of God being a Father to you in your life? Do you recognize every breath, every heartbeat, and every new day as a gift from Him? What other ways has God been a Father to you?



THE BLESSING OF A FATHER'S REDEMPTION

Verses

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope.’” **Jeremiah 29:11**

“Be strong and courageous!” **Joshua 1:9**

REFLECTING ON THE BLESSING: *The Blessing of a Father's Redemption*

In **SHOW ME THE FATHER**, we meet all three of the Kendrick brothers. And we learn and see pictures of three more elements of The Blessing lived out as well. But their story is also a “show me the father” story.

We meet their father, Larry Kendrick. Tall. Strong. Having grown up in an alcoholic home, without clear direction from his own father. But a man who had come to know Jesus.

He'd been given three wonderful boys to raise. However, at 42 years of age, he was told that the lack of feeling taking over his limbs was MS (Multiple Sclerosis), a disease that would push him into a wheelchair. And with bills to pay and an uncertain future, that despair would also shove him into depression as well. Like Elijah the prophet, he even came to the point of despairing life itself. Until the day he cried out to Jesus, asking for forgiveness for being so afraid. And in that moment, the love of his Heavenly Father broke through the darkness and gave him light for a special future—even with MS and all the challenges before him.

Have you ever been there? When times were so tough to the point of despairing life? Or at least at a place where it seemed like you had no future or hope? Are you there now?

I hope and pray that if such a day comes, you know you can look to a Heavenly Father's love. For when you do, like Larry Kendrick, you'll find the One who can turn sorrow into gladness. He didn't change every circumstance of Larry's life, but God changed his heart, his faith, and outlook for the future. For God's love can indeed help a father in times of darkness see a great light ahead. Even to begin to love again. And to choose to bless his sons.

With Larry's life restored by a God who blessed him, we get to look in on a specific "blessing" for each of his three sons. Each blessing was carefully written and spoken over each son by their father at their wedding. In churches filled with people, we see a blessing, and learn about three more elements of the Blessing in the process.

From his place up front, before this couple, he chose to use "spoken words" of Blessing over each son. That's the second element of the Blessing. And it's like a river of life being spoken over that son.

And we see the third element of the Blessing. Words that "attach high value" to each son. He tells each of them of the great worth he sees in them, the strengths and gifts that he believed God had placed in their lives.

Finally, he pictures for each of them the fourth element of the Blessing: a "special future." This Blessing from a father to a son and his new bride infused a fresh hope for them while inviting God to help bring it about in their lives.

Larry grew up in a home with alcoholism and anger, not the Blessing. But he chose to bless, not curse what had happened to him in the past or any pain being felt in the present. And in doing so, he modeled a love that has not only impacted his sons, but launched them into doing what they're doing today to change people's lives through film.

That's what the Blessing can do for a child. The Blessing unleashes us. It tells a child that through God's strength, not their own, they can run through their own challenges. It can reverse curses. It can communicate unconditional love. It can free and motivate a man to bless his own family. It can fill someone up so much, they're ready to go out and change their world, even in the toughest of times. Just like they saw in their father.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- 1.** Who do you most often go to when you need advice, encouragement, or counsel? What causes you to choose that person?
- 2.** How have you seen redemption play out in your father's life? In your life?
- 3.** If you could say anything to your father right now, what would you say?

THE BLESSING OF A FATHER'S COMMITMENT

Verse

"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption..." **Romans 8:15**

REFLECTING ON THE BLESSING: The Blessing of a Father's Commitment

In the first three discussions of the Blessing, so powerfully pictured in **SHOW ME THE FATHER**, we've looked at four of The Blessing's five elements. From meaningful touch, to spoken words, to attaching high value to a child, to then picturing a special future for him or her. In the film, there's yet another powerful picture of the fifth and last element of the Blessing as well. *Genuine commitment*. This is seen in Mia's story.

Five times in the New Testament, the word "adoption" is used. Like in Romans 8:15, when a person has placed their faith in Jesus, then God replaces our spirit of fear with His love and a "spirit of adoption" instead. What does that mean?

Were you ever lost from your parents when you were young? Even for a few moments? We were created for connection. For a young child, unexpected separation from a loving parent can bring on nothing short of what clinicians call, "primal panic" in a child. But countering that fear of being alone (that is so hard to live with), is a spirit of adoption.

Think about that idea of someone choosing you for a moment. Can you think of a time when you stood, reading the list for a team you tried out for—and your name wasn't there? Or you waited for that call to come to be asked to go to that big dance, but it never came? Or that letter of acceptance that you know others got, yet it never arrived at your house to set a path for your future? There is so much hurt and pain that goes along with *being so close to being chosen*. Wanting it so much but having someone or something so important to us pass us by.

In many ways, you can compound those feelings of loss if you're an orphan. Imagine being Mia and your basic needs are being met, but you are not feeling loved like a son or daughter. You're not chosen, and feel like there is little chance of ever being chosen. Not just because of the sheer number of orphans, but also because of your severe heart condition. And it's causing people to take one look at your story—and then drop your file and pick up another.

But then a couple came, who didn't look away, in this case Stephen and Jill Kendrick. Already with a family and the gift of children in their home far away, yet God miraculously moved them to adopt. They flew across the world to China to "choose" little Mia, a girl with a "broken" heart needing surgery.

These parents committed to love and care for someone they'd never met. But when it comes to a father's blessing (or in this case, a couple's), genuine commitment isn't just using words. Rather, it's going all in on giving and living out each element of the Blessing.

It's not just saying, "You have such great potential with musical talent" while never providing a piano to play or voice lessons. Ask any adoptive parents, and they may say that mere words are not enough. There is no "partial" adoption. It's being all in from the jump. In their case, from the time they put their thumb print on the adoption papers, that child became fully theirs.

What a blessing on that child. What a responsibility for those parents. And what a picture of God stepping into our life. Choosing us even when we were broken and without value to others. This reality demonstrates the fact that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

Hopefully you've rarely been passed over. But many men and women have felt like orphans in their own homes growing up. Not that they didn't have parents, but they never had a father walk up and put his hand on their shoulder when they were hurting. He never said he chose them. Never set up a special time to bless them. Never committed himself to moving that child from a spirit of fear (that all children have of being alone) to a spirit of being fully chosen and blessed as a beloved son or daughter.

Ask yourself a hard question: is there a chance your children are feeling like orphans at home? It could be because you're honestly so busy or preoccupied, or because you never got the blessing yourself. Or have they experienced your blessing? That with your touch and your spoken words, they have a strong sense of high value and a special future in your eyes, and God's as well. And most of all, are they sure of your genuine commitment to be there for them, through every new season of life, and every new challenge as well? Oh Lord, as we learn about the Blessing, may our children know that when they reach out for someone to love them, we'll reach back!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- 1.** Describe a time when you felt "passed over" or not chosen? What was the message you heard in that experience?
- 2.** In what ways do you live your life as an "orphan," trying to make your own name and your own story?
- 3.** Describe a time when God's faithfulness and commitment to you was especially palpable?

THE BLESSING OF BEING ABLE TO “REVERSE THE CURSE.”

Verse

“But the Lord your God was not willing that the curse rest upon you. But the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Because the Lord your God loves you.” Deuteronomy 23:5

REFLECTING ON THE BLESSING: The Blessing of being able to “reverse the curse”

“God has a tracking system. ... He knows how to turn things around.” Tony Evans

We started our look at the Blessing by laying out a “choice.” Life over death. Blessing over curse. It’s time to look now at that terrible word, curse. In Hebrew, it literally means, “To dam up the stream.” It pictures a muddy trickle. It’s the purposeful choice someone made to block life-giving water from flowing down to others.

A curse devalues someone and sets them up for failure. It is the very opposite of the Blessing - which adds value and hope to our life. The curse is when someone chooses to stop that flow of words and actions from pouring into our heart and life, leaving us with subtraction, emptiness, the feeling like a desert. This leaves us with that deep thirst for the Blessing.

Thank you for reading about the importance of giving the Blessing to others in this guide, but especially those of you who know they themselves never received the Blessing. Those who grew up with subtraction far more than addition, with curse over blessing. PLEASE know that if that’s your story, or the story of someone you love, there is hope.

Having seen **SHOW ME THE FATHER**, you’ve watched Jim Daly’s heartfelt story of loss and subtraction when it comes to a father who abandoned him. But you’ve also seen him coming to understand, even in that brokenness, that through Jesus, he could have a Heavenly Father who didn’t leave him, who never abandoned him. A Heavenly Father who WAS enough. And in fact, he learned that his Heavenly Father’s love and Blessing is the only thing strong enough to break the curse. That’s because the Blessing we long for from our earthly father, at its heart, is a longing for God the Father’s love that was ultimately demonstrated in Jesus’ love for us.

The Blessing is so much a part of what Jesus did in loving us.

In Mark 10:14,16, knowing the great need of a child, we read, “And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, but the Disciples rebuked them.” But Jesus wouldn’t stand for that. “He (Jesus) took them (the children) in his arms, and began blessing them, laying his hands on them.”

In Mark 14:22, knowing of the great fear and uncertainty surrounding His Disciples on that last night before His crucifixion, we read “And while they were eating, He took

some bread, and *after a blessing*, He broke it and gave it to the Disciples, and said, “Take, eat, this is my Body.”

And can you guess the very last thing Jesus did for His Disciples on earth? After His resurrection, literally as He was being lifted up into Heaven, we read “*While He was blessing them*, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.” (Luke 24:51)

If we missed the blessing as a child, Jesus’ love is the one thing strong enough to fully, completely, “reverse the curse” of that terrible subtraction. If we’ve faced huge trials and uncertainty in our lives, including the loss of important others, Jesus’ words of Blessing can bring us genuine hope and courage. At the most important moments in our life, Jesus is there with His Blessing.

That’s because the Blessing Jesus offers us is *personal*. Read this verse (dare I encourage you to memorize it). Look at the underlined words that are repeated. And repeated.

“The Lord your God was not willing that the curse rest upon you. But the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Because the Lord your God loves you.” Deuteronomy 23:5

That’s the message that cries out from the film, **SHOW ME THE FATHER**. In the film, this is beautifully pictured in the “Blessing” service at Dr. Tony Evans’ church.

It was a time for men to gather. Where Pastor Evans preached on the Blessing. And then he called those who had never received a Blessing to come forward. *And you see most of the room move forward*. And your heart breaks at the sorrow and reality of how many of those men never got the Blessing. Yet there are tears of joy as well as so many who were once under a curse, are now receiving a Blessing.

It reminded me of a time several years ago, when I spoke with Tony at an early Promise Keepers conference in Indianapolis. There were 63,000 men there that day at the RCA Dome where the Colts played. I had spoken about the Blessing of their earthly father and about their need for their Heavenly Father’s Blessing. And then I asked every man there who had never received a Blessing from his father to stand up. And while it would have been impossible to get a precise count, *at least two-thirds or as many as 40,000 men in that stadium stood up*. It’s a picture I’ve never forgotten.

Then, I asked each man who DID receive the Blessing and was still sitting down, to stand up. Then, I had them walk over and put their hand on the shoulder of one or more men around them who needed the Blessing. Then we prayed a prayer together over those men. A prayer like the one I’d like to pray over you right now.

If you missed the Blessing, I sincerely wish I could reach out and put my hand on your shoulder right now and pray over you. But since I can’t, then please know this prayer of blessing is for anyone who reads this and is willing to receive it.

A PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO MISSED IT

Heavenly Father, I lift up everyone who is reading this prayer right now. First, I thank you for creating each of us, for being patient with us in our sins against you. I thank you for sending your Son Jesus to earth and that He overwhelmingly showed us Your Fatherly love in every way. Thank you for Jesus' example, His teachings, His compassion, and His sacrificial death on the cross to redeem us from our sins. Thank you for raising Him from the grave to open up a way for us to have eternal life as a free gift of your love. And Lord, thank you for being willing to adopt anyone as your child who places their faith and trust in Jesus.

So Lord, I pray that everyone reading this will fully turn to You and trust Your Son Jesus as their own personal Lord and Savior. May they know the truth, that no sin, curse in our past is too strong to be overcome by your love. No loss from our past is too great to block us from that Blessing you willingly offer. Today Lord, right now, I ask You to bless each of us with mercy, grace, strength, success and a hopeful future. May we know all the fullness of your love and grace that your Fatherly blessing brings. And may we be filled with Blessing ourselves and become someone who fully shares with others what we've received. That we would bless our children, our spouses, our loved ones and friends, because of Your perfect example to us.

Help us experience the freedom that comes from being forgiven ourselves and granting forgiveness to others who have hurt us- regardless of who they are. You are Judge, not us. We release them to You. Help us to fully forgive our earthly fathers for any sorrow or sins they have committed against us. Set us free from all bitterness and help us to move on in love and joy. Father, we place our lives and our futures into your hands. Bless us and make us a blessing to others! In Jesus name, Amen.

"That goes for all of you. No exceptions. No retaliation. No sharp-tongued sarcasm. Instead bless—that's your job, to bless. You'll be a blessing and also get a Blessing."
1 Peter 3:9 (The Message)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

1. Have you longed for a blessing in the past? Can you remember a time when you were extremely thirsty for water? What was it like to finally get a drink? How do you think it feels for children to finally receive a blessing from their fathers?
2. How does it make you feel to know it's possible to "reverse the curse"? In what ways does that need to happen with your children? With you?
3. Look at Deuteronomy 23:5 again. What are the implications of God repeatedly saying, "the Lord your God"? How does that change your perspective of God as your Father?

