



# EQUIPPING U

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION/FEBRUARY 2014

## Matthew 5:1-12

[1] Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. [2] And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: [3] "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

[4] "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. [5] "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. [6] "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. [7] "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. [8] "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. [9] "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. [10] "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



## Recognizing God's Blessing

We had just finished dinner when I asked my 5-year-old neighbor whom I was babysitting if he wanted to watch a video about Jesus. "I hate Jesus!" He declared with all the venom he could muster.

I was stunned. I didn't know what to say and quickly asked the Lord for wisdom. Kneeling down and looking right into my neighbor's eyes, I said, "Wow! You sure are mad at Him. What did he do?"

"He took my grandma."

Sometimes on our journey of faith, we have a head-on collision when our circumstances do not fit our understanding of the goodness of God and we find ourselves living in the midst of disappointment, unanswered questions, and unmet desires.

We may not declare our hurt as my neighbor did. But we may ask... 



**TEACHING TIP.** Use your gifts and talents to be an encouragement to others. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another; as good stewards of God's varied grace." (1 Peter 4:10)



**TEACHING TIP.** Poor attitudes in the classroom must be responded to in grace and with love. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21) So as you correct bad attitudes, watch your own.



**TEACHING TIP.** Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, and it is recorded for us in Luke 11:1-4 and Matthew 6:9-13. Take some time to review these passages and be encouraged as you praise God and call on Him to meet your needs.

- God, can I trust you?
- God, do You love me?
- God, are You good?
- God, are You just?
- God, why did you allow this to happen?
- God why won't you bless me, like you've blessed them?

Why do we tend to question God's goodness or doubt that He loves us when bad things happen? I think it stems from a misunderstanding of what it means to be blessed by God.

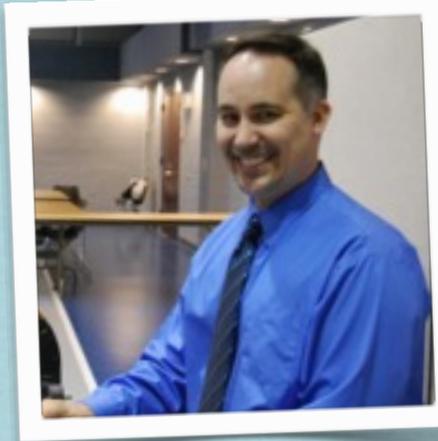
I had a paradigm shift when my young neighbor told me Jesus took his grandma. I understood his anger and confusion. Today, I want us to have a paradigm shift (a fundamental change in our underlying assumptions) about what it means to be blessed.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans instructs, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...." (Romans 12:2a) We need our underlying assumptions to be based on God's Word, not on our culture and not on our feelings. So rather than defining God's blessing as the fulfillment of our American dreams, we must look to Scripture to see how God defines His blessing.

"Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit." (Psalm 32:1-2)

"Blessed is the man whom you discipline (yacar: to correct by words), O LORD, and whom you teach out of

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**Mike Collins**

*ICEA is a volunteer staffed ministry. Each month Equipping U highlights and honors one of our faithful volunteers.*

Serving in leadership as one of our board members, Mike is willing to help wherever there is a need to be filled. You may see him transporting books for the Second Time Around exhibit, running the soundboard for the general sessions, or leading conference attendees in worship. Mike, thank you for your willing heart and for using your many talents in serving the needs of equipping others.

## FROM THE EDITOR

In our Facebook culture, we have the tendency to see things from the quick perspective of whether or not we "like" it.



If you are in the midst of a trial, something you don't naturally "like," I pray that you will have the eyes of faith to count it all joy and see yourself as blessed.

I hope to see you at our February 22 training. It's sure to be a great time of fellowship and equipping.

Serving with U,

Kimberly von Oeyen  
EquippingU@iceaOnline.org

your law." (Psalm 94:12)

"Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (Psalm 34:8)

Through the Word of God, we come to see what the blessed life really looks like. It has very little to do with our expectations and aspirations, and everything to do with God's loving-kindness to:

- Forgive our sins
- Correct us by His Word.
- Allow us to take refuge in Him

May we have eyes to see how blessed we truly are.

### ARE YOU REGISTERED?

February 22 is the Summer of Purpose VBS  
• Summer Ministries Training at Ward Church in Northville. If you haven't registered, make plans today at [www.iceaOnline.org](http://www.iceaOnline.org).

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**Request a free electronic subscription by e-mailing [EquippingU@iceaOnline.org](mailto:EquippingU@iceaOnline.org)**

### CONTRIBUTORS

Writer  
Kimberly von Oeyen  
Photographers  
Sheri Dillon  
Pat Kush  
istockphoto from:  
s-cphoto  
hsrvs  
dbligh  
nautilus\_shell\_studios