

Receiving God's Provision - Counting Your Blessings

by Philip H. Page, Jr.

Have you ever counted your blessings? Have you ever just sat down and listed the blessings that you can think of one by one? Well, I haven't either. Even though I've rejoiced when it's mentioned in a song or reflected when I've heard it in a sermon, it's never made sense to me to actually do it. Of course, I think about the goodness of Jesus and I praise Him for His many blessings. But it never made sense to put this into a formal list.

Well, as I go through the hardship of unemployment coupled with the financial expectations of Christmas, it's hard for me to continue taking God for granted. It seems as if the situations in my life get more and more trying while the Lord keeps blessing me in unexpected and miraculous ways. At times, I am literally in awe of His limitless power and overwhelmed at His expressions of love. It becomes apparent that my casual praise is insufficient and I must reach a new dimension of worship to honor the Lord for what He's done. And in order to get close to praising Him fully, I must start by 'counting my blessings'.

I'll give you an example of this by looking back to Dec. 20th of 2002. As I mentioned before, I am still unemployed so I don't have the traditional office Christmas party to attend. Miraculously enough, my sister invites my wife and me to her Christmas party. (Blessing #1) Later I find out that it's not actually her Christmas party, but the party of an

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affiliate office. (Blessing #2) They intend to play Yankee Exchange (it's called White Elephant in some parts of the country) so we have to bring gifts that cost \$10 each. I panic for a second until my sister tells me that she already bought gifts for us to bring.

(Blessings # 3 and 4)

When we arrive at the party, everyone is friendly and talkative but no one asks that fateful question “So, where do you work?”. (Blessing #5) Before we eat, they decide to have door prizes. The first door prize of a \$20 gift certificate goes to me. (Blessing #6) Dinner is served and included on the buffet are homemade fresh greens, sweet tea, pulled pork with hot sauce and both sweet potato and pecan pie for dessert. These are all non-traditional Christmas items that are among my personal favorites. This food is even more special to us because my wife and I have not eaten out in about a month. (Blessings 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11)

After dinner, we went into another room for some dancing. Since I don't normally dance, I was concerned that my wallflower imitation would be a damper on the group. But the DJ played The Electric Slide (the only dance I really know) and taught me a similar version of it called The Cha Cha Slide. (Blessings # 12 & 13) I worked up a pretty hardy sweat and became worried that I had ruined my clothes as I normally do when I'm hot. Somehow, the suede shirt I was wearing did not display any sweat. This is a non-issue to most people but, to someone who suffers from chronic sweating, this is very close to a miracle healing. (Blessing #14).

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When the dancing was over, we played Yankee Exchange where everyone gets called to choose gifts from a table or take gifts that have previously been chosen. I was one of the last ones to be called so I had the option of choosing from almost all the gifts. Since my sister bought the gift that allowed my participation, I chose a small gift off of the table figuring I was already ahead. The gift turned out to be lottery tickets. (Blessing #15) And even though five people were called after me, I managed to keep the gift without anyone taking it from me. (Blessing #16, 17, 18, 19 & 20) Now keep in mind that the lottery tickets are special between God and me because I've never bought one. I've always said that the only way I would ever win the lottery was if I found a ticket or someone gave it to me. Well, despite whether the tickets are winners, this is another clear example of God's unending power. (Blessing #21)

After the Yankee exchange, we dance a bit more and prepare to leave. There is plenty of food left so the caterers tell us to take home as much as we want. I pack up a modest sized plate that turns out to be my lunch and dinner for the next day. (Blessing #22 & 23) All in all, we've had a full night and go to sleep feeling blessed.

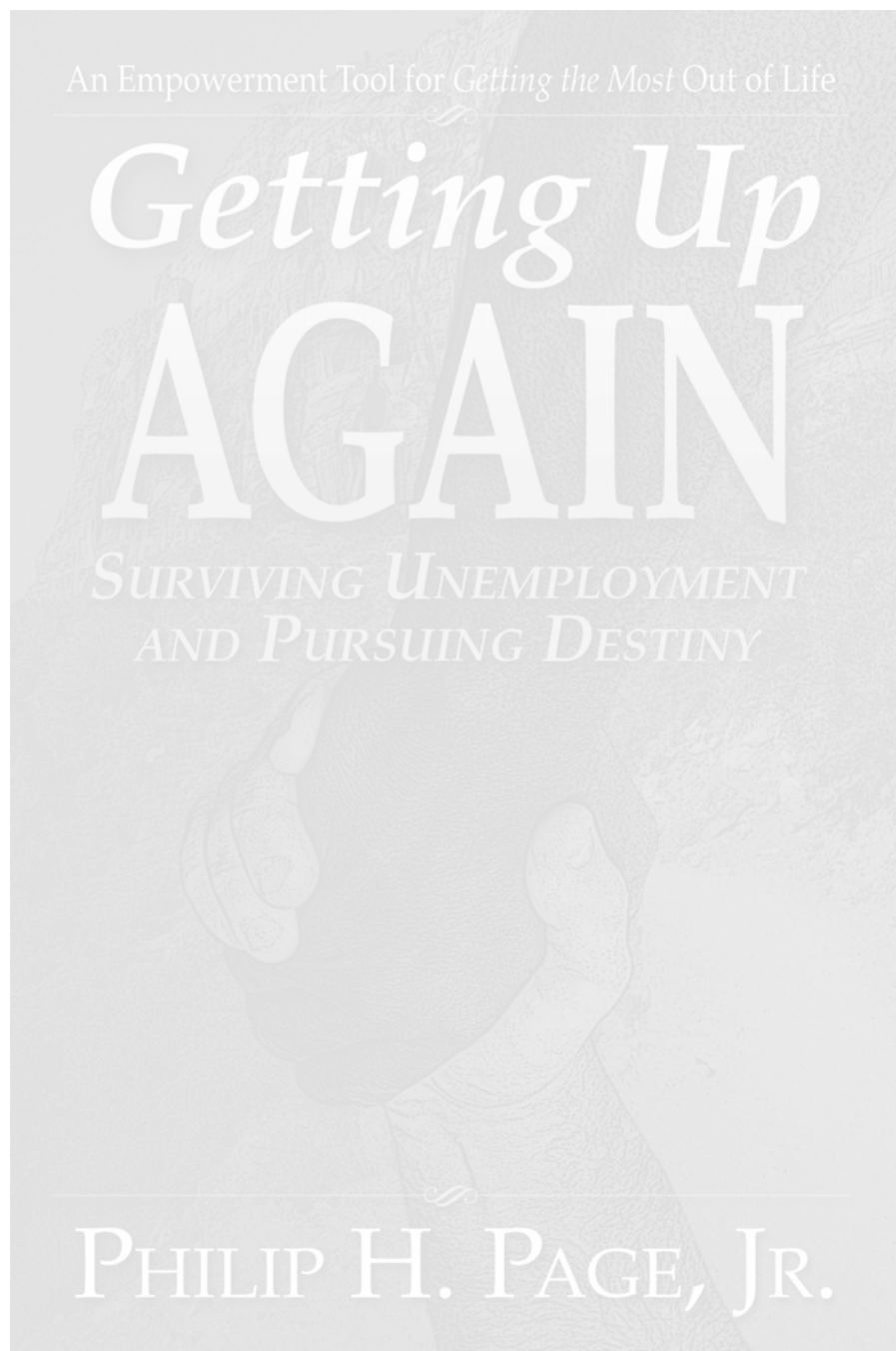
Now that I have my list, I realize that it is indeed impossible to count all of the blessings that God has given us. Over a short, four-hour time frame, I managed to count 23 customized blessings. And this doesn't include the continuous, and priceless, gifts of life and health. Nor does it include the countless things that could have gone wrong but didn't. Although, my list covers a short time in my life, it gives me more than enough

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reason to praise Him. He is truly worthy of all our praise and nothing in this world compares to Him.



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