



# Words of Blessing

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## **High School/College Weekly Words Epiphany Week 2: January 14, 2007**

### **Living the Word**

**Isaiah 9:6-7** A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Eternal Father,” “Prince of Peace.” His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace. He will rule as King David’s successor, basing his power on right and justice, from now until the end of time. The Lord Almighty is determined to do all this.

**Acts 1:8-11** But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, he was taken up to heaven as they watched him, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They still had their eyes fixed on the sky as he went away, when two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them and said, “Galileans, why are you standing there looking up at the sky? This Jesus, who was taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw him go to heaven.”

### **Follow Me! You Can Change the World!**

Think of the manger scene. Each person there already had gifts and a work, but a new task was given to each one that night. Each, in his or her own way, both alone and with others, would bring my love, words, and reality to the world. They changed the world.

The innkeeper never forgot the simple family that came looking for shelter. He had the gift of giving and provided that shelter they needed. And while Mary and Joseph were in the stable awaiting the birth, the innkeeper prayed for them and provided for their warmth and safety. His wife had the gift of serving. She sought nothing more than to help weary travelers as they sought shelter each night. People came to them first because of her kindness in helping countless people. They changed the world.

I tell you this story to remind you that each person, including you, has gifts and talents. You may already have a call, a job, activities you are involved in at school, a ministry, places where your gifts are used, a church, and a place of worship to support each week and in many ways. You may feel you know exactly what I would have you do with your gifts and how, where, and when you can change the world.

Kings also came that night, following a star. One king came bringing a gift of gold. He had the gift of wisdom. He was a king who helped others with their problems and decisions. One king came with incense. He was a king with great courage who also had the gift of administration,

which he used well in his country. And the third king came with a map. He was a great leader who inspired his people to learn and to teach others. He also had the gift of knowledge and taught people how to make wise decisions. Each king had gifts that were needed in many places and way. They used them, taught others, helped people in their work, and trusted in me. They went out that night, believing in me and following me. They changed the world.

This is what I have for you right now in your life. You may already have a gifts, a ministry, and plans for your future and what you will do. That is wonderful! Don't give it up. But there is more for you to do with your gifts, and more gifts are waiting to be opened and used by you. Maybe you have the gift of encouragement or the gift of faith. Maybe you are also called to be part of prayer team, to be a leader in an outreach to the poor, to help with the music programs, or to organize support for a shelter in your town. Maybe in one ministry you use your gifts mostly on your own, but in other ministries you are on a team supporting others and doing the work together. You can change the world.

The call is to follow me. You can change the world as you use your gifts more. Maybe you are meant to work with others in helping teach a class of children on Sundays or to work with seniors in a nearby retirement home And everyone's goals and focus should be on going out and bringing and welcoming others to church each week. Gifts and calls go together with evangelism and building up the church. And when you bring someone to your church, see that they are introduced to others and included in everything. For like a plant that needs water each day, so do these people need to be welcomed, encouraged, befriended, and made a part of things so they grow each and every week. You need their gifts, and they need to find and use their gifts. Community grows through each person, and each person changes the world.

Sharing gifts is important. It begins when you say something like, "I have the gift of evangelism, and I am called to bring and welcome others to church or to my youth group, but I am also called to use my gift of faith to be part of a prayer team that is just starting." You *can* do more than one thing! In one ministry you may be in charge and in another work you may be part of a team. Don't worry about how many ways your gifts and time can be used to share my love, words, and reality. Just say yes to following me and accepting my call to you to use your gifts. Your egg holds the beginning of a ministry that will go out farther than you can ever imagine this year. You can change the world in my name. I can't wait! It is almost time. How about in the next few months?

**Important:** I ask you and want you to read these words many times. I ask you to share these words with others. If you have a group, share the words with them, but also share with other groups and individuals or get a new group together, especially for those who are not sharing the words with others right now. Go to church each week and offer to share the weekly words and eggs with others. Everyone needs to share the weekly words with as many others as they can in the year ahead. You should not be reading and working with these words alone. My love, words, and reality are meant to be shared with others. Eggs and words just sitting in a box will do nothing, and I know the important and exciting things you can do to save lives in my name. Make the time; you have it and can do it. This is a gift to you, and it is very important. My words in the year ahead will change your life and the lives of everyone around you. The words I give you will show you how you can use your gifts, just like those who came to the stable, to change lives. You will see the same star, miracles, and blessings, and you will know what a difference your life and ministries can make. Keep thinking about that night at the stable, and you will see

yourself standing next to a shepherd or maybe a king. Then you too will go out and use your gifts to bless lives in my name. These words are a special gift to you. I chose you. You are a beautiful, special egg.

**Eggs:** What eggs can mean in your life and journey as well as in the lives of everyone you reach out to will unfold in the next few weeks. It will begin a powerful life-changing time for you and for what you can do for others and the world. You will not be alone. The hens in the henhouse worked together and supported each other; so too you will have people to walk with you. You will be blessed beyond what you can imagine. Just as Mary, Joseph, and all those present the night I was born, there is a special work that you are called to do, and you will be empowered and blessed to do this work.

**Word for the week:** Yes!

**Prayer question:** What call and ministry do you believe you have been given to do now? What call or ministry do you think God has laid out for you to do in the near future? What signs have you been given about this call?

**Action for the week:** I ask you to share these words with others. Invite people to a meeting and offer the words as a way for them to deepen friendships, learn about their own gifts and call, and see me as real in their lives. Do this each week with some of the youth from your church *and* with some friends at school and other places. It would be even greater and more fun and exciting if you mixed people from both groups so everyone could make some new friends. I promise miracles and great friendships. I promise that each one's ministries, talents, and gifts will unfold as signs of my presence. Angels will visit, and you will all experience miracles and blessings. Just say yes! Pray about whom to invite and step out in faith to ask people. Be a witness of my love, words and reality.

(*Note:* Directions for how to share these weekly words of blessing in a group setting can be downloaded in pdf form from the Weekly Words page on our website [[www.wordsofblessing.com](http://www.wordsofblessing.com)].)

**Witness:** Think of two people in your life who are using their gifts in wonderful ways. Affirm their witness of faith, and tell them what their ministry and gifts mean to you and others.

**Daily prayer for this week:** Jesus, I would have liked to have been at the stable the night you were born. I would have offered the gift of my love and then returned to tell others what I had seen. Thank you for miracles that you still give us each day. Yes, I will go now and tell others about your love.

**The following words are for you. You will know which ones speak to you and answer your questions or prayers. These personal words are guidance for you in your journey today.**

- Go out! You can change the world. I see you traveling near and far, offering these words and your powerful witness of faith in your life. Your gift of evangelism is needed because so many do not know that I am real; I am not important in their daily life. Each evangelist is different, yet all bring people to know and love me as they do. You witness by sharing how I am real in your life.

It is your "yes."

- The church has a need for you and your gifts. This special work needs your faith and courage. It is time to step out and be a friend, leader, prayer, and source of encouragement to those who are looking for me and who need me to be real in their lives. In time, this simple work will lead to an important invitation to do something really, really big. Is it a yes?

- It is a busy time in school and thus in your life. Everything you do, from classes to activities,

has a part in your future, gifts, career, and plans, so it is important to try to do your best and have good friends who share your vision and values in life. You have those friends.

- Gather a team together. You will see where to do a special project that can change the world. Yes, you can do it! It will be very clear. Think of the people near where you live who most need to know people care about them. You can change their lives and thus the world. Go!
- Follow me! It is time to step out. The kings went back to their countries ready to share the Good News and offer people the new hope they had found in that stable. You can do the same. You are a strong, inspiring leader with the gift of faith, yet humility is your strength and witness.
- I am giving you a box of blessings to use this year. I want you to keep it with you at all times. Make it big enough to hold 10 blessings at a time and keep refilling it. Pray and listen to me—you will know what to put in the box. Every time you see someone who needs a blessing, give him or her something from the box. You will see and experience miracles every time you give a blessing away.
- You passed someone who was going in the same direction. This person looked tired, and you wondered if it was a sign. Yes, it was a sign of hope and new peace as you make some decisions with faith in me. I love you and ask you to just let go, believe, and follow the star. A new path is there, and it holds an invitation for you to use your gifts to help others, especially those nearby.
- School holds new challenges every day. How do you do your best, know what to do with your life, make and keep friends, and make time for others and responsibilities? My child, you can meet the challenges and decisions in your life today and in the next five months. You are a faithful, bright, courageous, and caring person. I will give you one special blessing this week. Okay?
- I give you the gifts of hope and peace. In the year ahead you will receive an invitation to experience a special new time of joy and confidence in your life. You will do the work you want to do and are ready for. This will enable you to use your talents, share your gifts, and tell my story. I can't wait for springtime! Just say yes and go! I will be working at your side.
- You can change the world! Just step out more and trust that you have the gifts that are needed to support a ministry and work that bring healing and hope to others. You can pray, listen, bless, comfort, hug, encourage, and heal many in my name. Don't hold back. Go. Follow me, and I will show you where, how, and when to begin. You are in the right place, so you can begin now. The door is open.
- New friends, new year, and new opportunities to grow and use your gifts in many ways. How about sharing these words with a group inside and outside your church? You can do it on your own or you can bring people to church. These words each week are a gift to you, and I want you to know that when you commit to sharing them each week with new and old friends, miracles will happen.
- I was there. Did you see me? You saw me sitting there and wondered. I smiled at you and gave you a blessing: "Father, bless this very special child with renewed confidence in his or gifts and what this child can do to change the world." Well, God heard me and the confidence you need will grow through inviting others to share these words and talking to more young people about me.
- Just say yes and follow me in a really, really big way right now. I will give you opportunities to bring a friend to church and/or to your youth group, to start a group to share these words each week, and to follow a special path in the world that will use your gifts of evangelism, prayer, and faith!
- You make me smile! You loved the new things I put into your life this year. If you thought Christmas was great, just wait to see what gift you will receive soon! It will be an opportunity to see where your talents and gifts can best be used to change the world, to help people see my

reality, and to help people believe in their own goodness and importance to me and to others. Smile!

- Your humble spirit is the example others need in their lives. You always point the way to me and away from self. You do so much, but you also take the last seat and turn from praise. I want you to know that your humble example and great faith serve as an inspiration to everyone. Bless you. You will be the way teenagers and young people see me as real and set out to follow me.

- One person who was almost overlooked that first Christmas night was the camel driver who traveled with the kings. He felt important in the simple task he was called to do. Know that the simple things you are called to do in helping another, especially in school, can lead to a powerful moment of faith where your life is blessed forever. What you do now and in this year will be important in many ways. Go out. Your kindness and smile will light up the heavens! Bless you.

- You have a friend who needs more friends and support. Your friend needs a group of kids to be with, work with, and have fun with. I think you know who I am talking about. This friend looks up to you. Invite your friend to be part of your group at school and your group at church. Know that it is okay to let this person know that you care.

- Eggs come in all ways—cooked, boiled, and scrambled. Like people, each egg is different. Reach out and offer support, compassion, acceptance, and praise. Listen and be an encourager and source of faith to two people in your family, two old friends, one new friend, and one stranger you will meet at school, where you work, where you are eating, or where you are exercising. I will be near. Go! Talk!

- Prayer filled the stable when I was born. I hear your prayers today and every day and hold each one close to my heart. This will be a year of miracles in your life. You will see an angel who will show you how to be the best you can be as a Christian and friend. And Lucy the angel will show you how you can change the world, beginning in your church, with your friends, and in your math class.

- You have many talents and gifts, and it is just a matter of you realizing how important they are and how much they are needed in the world around you. One of your gifts is kindness. One is humility. You are caring to one and all, and it means so much to those whose lives you touch. You helped someone this week through a simple kind deed. It was an angel in disguise. She blessed you!

- I was there. Did you see me? I was the person who looked at you and smiled. I wanted to tell you that this year is the time to go out in using your gifts and sharing my love, words, and reality. I need you to see me everywhere you go. The mission is for now! Look for a battered coat. Grab hold of my hand and keep believing in joy, new beginnings, and special friends.

- Prayer filled the stable when I was born. I hear your prayers today and every day and hold each one close to my heart. Prayer each day brings us closer together. And the peace and guidance you seek will be there, just like it was for the three kings and the shepherds. This will be a year of prayer and miracles in your life. It will be a time of healing and new life. Watch for an angel nearby.

- An invitation will come to you to step out and use your gifts and talents in new ways. Just follow me! A community of faithful, prayerful, and caring believers will be your anchor and your inspiration. Trust in this new time and beginning in your life. Together you will change lives.

- You have the gift of friendship. Like eggs in a nest or hens in a hen house, each friendship will be different. Look at the friends in your life. Some are old and some are new. Make time to deepen some friendships by taking time to listen to your friends and sharing my words with them. I ask you to reach out to two old friends and three new friends in the months ahead. You will be blessed in so many ways.

- Trust in my plan for you and for your call and gift. That is what I say to you today. Follow. Go out. Change the world in my name by making me real to others and by praying, helping, loving, teaching children, listening, healing, and meeting the needs of the poor in your town. The Holy Spirit will fill you as you go out and begin. You have the gifts of faith and witnessing. Wow!

- I know the past year held some challenges and tough decisions, but you were strong and your faith was ever growing. Know that I was with you each step of the way. I am opening some new doors now, so be ready to step out and look at new opportunities to use your gifts. Ready?

- God's light, such as the light that shone over the stable, is comforting, healing, and welcoming. My light has guided you to the place you are in now. Your journey has brought you to me and to the work I need you to do in my name. Share your gifts. Light the way for others to come to me.

- I ask you to give a gift to someone who cares about you. Give this person your time (once a week) to find out how he or she is doing and to discern how you could support or help this person. Pray for this person each day and always ask for a particular blessing on his or her life for that day. If you cannot decide on just one person, you can pick two or three but no more. That is a lot of praying and doing!

- All those who gathered at the stable had to put themselves last. They gave up comforts to travel and left busy schedules, homes, and friends to go out that night. I ask you to be willing to give up some comforts for me and for others this year. Maybe you could just call or listen to a friend from school or church. You can help many in my name. I will be with you and will provide what you need. This year will be the most powerful growing time in your life and spiritual journey. share it!

### **Read and pray my words to you**

Please note that the Bible verses are drawn from the Good News Translation (or Today's English version), so references to a particular stopping place may not match your translation exactly.

Isaiah 25:1 and 8-9

Jeremiah 1:4-9

Daniel 2:20-23

2 Samuel 23:2-4

Isaiah 43:10, 18-19

Zechariah 4:6-7

Psalm 26:3 and 8

Psalm 51:15-18

Psalm 107: 1, 7-9, 22

Psalm 16:5-8, 11

Psalm 91:11-12

Psalm 138:1-5

Acts 9:32-36

John 2:1-5, 11-12

Mark 1: 35-39

Acts 4:29-31

Matthew 28:16-20

Luke 18:1 and 17:14-19

Acts 17:1-4

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:1 and 13

Ephesians 4:11-13, 16

Colossians 1:9-12

1 John 3:18 and 22-23  
Hebrews 13:1-2 and 16  
Galatians 6:2, 9-10  
1 Timothy 3:1 and 4:11-14

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