



# Words of Blessing

EMAIL ADDRESS: [wob@wordsofblessing.com](mailto:wob@wordsofblessing.com)  
OUR WEB SITE: [www.wordsofblessing.com](http://www.wordsofblessing.com)

## **Junior High School Weekly Words Pentecost Week 19: September 30, 2007**

### **Living the Word**

**Acts 6:3-7** [“]So then, brothers, choose seven men among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and we will put them in charge of this matter. We ourselves, then, will give our full time to prayer and the work of preaching.” The whole group was pleased with the apostles’ proposal, so they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a Gentile from Antioch who has earlier been converted to Judaism. The group presented them to the apostles, who prayed and placed their hands on them. And so the word of God continued to spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem grew larger and larger, and a great number of priests accepted the faith.

### **Partners: Leading and Supporting One Another In Life**

Friends are a gift to each person. A special friend—a partner who supports and leads you, as you do them—is a true gift. A spiritual friendship grounded in me is tested through good and bad times as you journey together. It is a blessed relationship that is not easy to keep, but the Holy Spirit will bless every effort of commitment and humility as you support one another to go out and sow the seeds of my love, words, and reality.

After Pentecost, the disciples and others went out as friends, partners, and fellow companions to share the Good News, to tell others my story and to share my love, words and reality. They were leaders, supporters, and partners together. They went out not knowing what would happen, only knowing that they would be there for one another as partners, using their gifts and sharing their witness. They would bring others to give their lives to me, as they had done. They were friends.

Today, you need friends who are also partners who will help and guide you, pray for and with you, and be your support in using your gifts. I ask you to help others so their gifts and call can go out. Be their partner in their call and ministries. In return, they will be yours. When you have to make daily decisions, turn to those friends who can give you the same wisdom that I would give you and who would give you support in the decisions, strong faith, gentle but firm honesty, and the prayers and words you need. Are those friends there? Is one friend there? Yes.

I supported my disciples in the Christian journey, and they supported each other and the people they met along the way. How do you support others in life, in church, and in the Christian journey? Be a faithful friend. Call them, meet with them, and pray with and for them. Listen to them as I would, and they will do the same for you. Be honest, caring, humble, strong in faith, and loving. Help them with decisions, affirm them, and point to the path I would have them take. Encourage them to follow their call. Help them with ideas and plans for a church project, a way

to build up others, or their prayer life.

Spiritual friend and partners will pray for and with you. They will be your anchor, and you will be theirs. They will see you through uncertain times, questions, and struggles knowing you are there for them, too. Give thanks that you have someone who can support you as you do them. A partner in the spiritual journey is a coach, teacher, parent, friend, child, companion, and my hands and heart. I don't want you to walk alone. You need others to help you, and you need to help others. A partner will help you see my vision for your gifts and call and show you the way forward. They will give you boldness, encouragement, hope, and joy, and you, in turn, will give them the same.

A friend and partner helps others to see beyond their limits and beyond the ordinary journey. Friends will believe in you and show you opportunities to use your gifts. They will grab hold of you and say, "Quick, take that opportunity to use your talents and help with that ministry! You can do it! I will help you." They challenge you, love you, help you, and support you in doing my work.

I call you to see the opportunities around you to be a friend and partner to others. Help others to know they are gifted, loved, and needed. Show others how they can lead people to me. Be a friend and partner, just as Andrew was to James and Martha was to Mary. Begin today. Many wait.

**Word for the week:** Partners

**Prayer question:** Take time to think of the people who have been partners in helping you, leading you, and supporting you in different ways in your Christian journey. Make a list and pray for these people. Be thankful for your partners.

**Action for the week:** Think of the people in your life who need encouragement in what they are trying to do for me and others and in how they are being witnesses of love and giving their time and heart for others. Send these people a note of love, friendship, and appreciation for who they are. See how you can be a support to one new person right now. This person can be nearby or far away.

**Witness my love and reality:** What are you doing with your gifts, call, and the ministries you are involved in right now? Are you busy? Overwhelmed? Do you feel you need support, prayers, wisdom, or help? Could you use a partner or a few partners? Pray, reach out, and don't be afraid to ask. Tell two friends about eggs, your own journey, and my words and what they mean to you. Tell them what you believe.

**Daily prayer for this week:** Lord, I know you have guided me to follow a path and use my gifts in the world. You have given me friends and partners to help me and inspire me by their own sacrifices, faith, and humble courage. I want to do the same for others. Show me where to begin. I come to you today because I know others need my support and friendship.

**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.**

- I have blessed you with the gifts of giving and helping. Your witness of using those gifts to share our love each day has blessed so many people in both big and small ways. The child needing reassurance, the friend needing guidance, or the stranger trying to carry packages or find his or her way—those are some of the many people you reach out every day. Your call has been to be my heart.

- My church needs healing and renewal. It needs hope and trust for the future. I need you and your gift of faith to guide others to a new place of living out their Christian lives. It will not be easy, and yet the place to begin is your own journey, church, school, and community. You need a small team of companions, much like the disciples. Gather them together. I will point them out, but you will see them clearly, for they will step forward to be your support. Begin with friends your age and maybe ask two or three adults. I am counting on your courage and evangelism.
- I ask you to use your gifts in school, with new and old friends. You are a good friend. You are caring, talented, and fun to be with. Your smile lights up the day for many people. I love your stories, although I may not get all your jokes! It's time to be a closer friend to one friend, a welcoming and inviting person to a new friend, and a listening friend to someone who may be struggling. Be an encouraging friend by sharing my story, the words, your story, and how real I am. This is a new year and time in your life, and it will be very, very special. Watch for me big time!
- You have been blessed with a special friend who is a witness and example of faith and humility. Your friendship is grounded in me, and the Holy Spirit blesses and empowers your gifts and work together and apart. One has the gift of prayer and one of faith. Together you are a great team.
- A church is a place where one finds opportunities to journey with special friends who become your supports or partners in the journey of faith and evangelism. They are friends who care for you in the tough times and decisions. They inspire and challenge you to be all you can be. They believe in you as well as me. Think of these people, of all ages, who see and believe in the best you can be. Pray for them and let them know you are grateful for their belief and encouragement.
- You have a friend who would not ask but who needs support and encouragement in his or her life and in using his or her gifts. Meet with this friend and offer your encouragement and help in any way. Be a caring listener and give your time to building this friend up and push your friend out of his or her safe nest. Your gifts of prayer and compassion are what this person needs, what the world needs. And give your friend a big hug!
- Do you have a spiritual friend, support, or guide? If you do, you are blessed. Give thanks for this person and continue to seek his or her prayers and wisdom more often. Everyone should have such a friend actively part of one's daily life. Without that support the journey would be very difficult. All of my disciples and followers had at least one such friend. Think of the people you know who are strong in faith, who are caring and humble, and who listen. Meet with this person regularly as a spiritual friend. Write to this person and know that I am using him or her to be a friend of faith.
- You have given up time and self to journey with me. We are companions on the road, much like my disciples and followers. Know that I have rejoiced each day of our time together, and that includes the times of learning, healing someone, meeting angels, seeing miracles, and showing someone I am real. I rejoice in who you are and bless you with the gift of unshakable faith.
- I have shown you a friend who is in need of guidance and encouragement for this friend is drifting and off course. Help this person by listening, praying for him or her, and offering guidance and support. Help this person make the right decisions. Be a Mary to a Martha, a Paul to a James, or a Barnabas to a Lydia. Give this person your time. Send him or her notes. Call and pray for your friend. Step out.
- What are you doing for or in the church and the Christian community? Are you there each week supporting and praying? Are you listening to others and offering your encouragement? Do you stay for classes or coffee hour? You are not too busy to be there in the church that needs you and welcomed you. We need your wonderful gifts. See the sign? "We need you!"
- Do you have an egg? There are eggs waiting to be asked for and simple but powerful needs to

be met through these eggs. If you don't have one, please ask for one today. If you have one, please get excited and do it with all your heart! There is an important work for you to do: the project in the egg. Eggs are kind of like butterflies: Once they are out of the shell they become beautiful and bless many.

- I saw you the other day. You were being so kind to a friend. You were listening with patience and love. Your friend was so touched by your friendship and help. You truly changed your friend's life on that day. You may not hear about it, but your friend made a life-changing decision based on your caring and help, and it was the right decision for this person. Please keep being the friend you are.

- Be a friend and partner to someone you know can use your inspiring kindness and faith. Listen to this person, pray for him or her, and be a cheerleader. Share the weekly words. You will both find the most wonderful answers and encouragement for your daily lives. Tell this person about eggs, and help each other with your eggs. Invite this person to church and activities. Love this person as I do.

- I was there. I was the person who needed a smile. I needed to know I mattered. You meet me each day. It is time to be bolder. Step into the world and out of the safe place where you say I am too busy, shy, or young. Be my hands in the world. Start with a smile, or say, "Hi, have a good day." New and stronger friendships are being created in your life right now. I will be watching.

- You are a good friend and are blessed with three really special friends in your life. They are a gift. Offer thanks and be there for them too. Share your time and day with them. Pray about what they are doing with their lives, gifts, and decisions. Offer words of encouragement, praise, and support. Let them know that "we" are praying for them. Do something special with them.

- I have an important task to do in the world and in the church right now. It is to make my love, words, and presence real to others. You can do this by using your gifts. Make a plan of at least one special way to do this. Next, invite two others to help you do this task. Figure out how and where to begin this task. Make a plan, share your ideas, and go for it. You be the evangelist, one can be the encourager, and one the leader. All ages are needed. You have six weeks. Smile!

- Part of the journey is forgiving others. That is what my death on the cross was about and what the disciples and followers had to live out in building up the early church. Think of the people you need to forgive. Maybe it was a big thing they did, or maybe it was actually small but you let the friendship go. Pray for a forgiving heart. Write to them or talk to them. Offer your apology for what you might have done. Forgive their words or actions and begin anew.

- Did you see that angel? You were busy talking to someone and listening with patience. You were very patient and caring. A group of angels smiled at you to encourage you to keep sharing the Good News, to be a friend, and to support others around you. They wanted you to know how much good you are doing. Their names were Rebecca, Luke, Simon, Katie, Rachel, and Lydia. I love angels! You will see another one this week. Watch for that smile: it is amazing.

- Big project! It is for your community, friends, school, and church. You have the gifts and talents needed for this ministry to happen. You have it "going"; now let's move it forward in a big way. You need more enthusiasm and some cheerleaders in this project. It is huge and will change lives. How about getting a group together to share the weekly words with the goal of each person knowing what they are to personally do next to get it going. Watch for me. I will be there, just as I was a few weeks ago. I will be in the school walking down a hall.

- This is an important time in school. Yes, things are just getting going and that means making new friends and keeping up with old friends. Keep your focus on the new friends I put into your life. You are there to help them and be a support in their lives. Make time to help them with homework or projects or to just take a walk, hang out together, and meet up with other friends. One new friend would love to hear about the words, angels, and me. Well? Talk it up!

- You have the gift of evangelism. I so need more evangelists of all ages. Use your gift to help others to know that I am real. Be a good friend, an encourager, and a support. Be ready and willing to tell people about me, the miracle stories, adventures, weekly words, and what you believe. Paul will be your inspiration, and Mary will be your source of prayer and joy. Need a partner? Ask your friend.

- My church struggles, and I weep. What can I do? I can send you. I want to send you to help and support those who want to keep my church strong and growing. Your faith, welcome, gifts, and courage are what everyone needs. Step out. Do more. Go to church, stay in touch with church friends, or offer to help in projects or with younger children. See beyond the limits that seem to be there. Begin today. Two people will help you. Your friend (you know who) and a new friend.

- Go out! Yes, pack up and go out two times this year and four times next year. Go out and reach out to the world. Visit places that need me, help rebuild lives, and heal people. Watch for me, for angels, and for blessings. Your companions will journey with you. Be passionate about these trips, just like my disciples were. I will provide all you need, including miracles, stones, and seashells.

- Life can get busy. Jobs, school, homes, and family can seem to have so many needs that you wonder how you have the time for anything. It can be overwhelming to meet those demands of time. I know how busy you are. I know how much time you give to others and your family. Bless you, for you are helping many with and in their lives. You are an inspiration. Keep believing all will be well.

- I love evangelists! I don't have to tell you to reach out to the world and others for you are always ready to share the Good News; tell people about my love, words, and reality; talk about my words each week; and even offer eggs. I want you to invite more people to church, to gatherings to share the words, to projects in your church, and to ask for an egg. Invite people to know me. Be patient, friendly, loving, and kind. Tell your story and witness. Then invite them.

- You hear my call to you in a special way. I was that friend who invited you to help me do something to help another person, to build up that group, or do a renewal workshop in the church. I was there when you looked my way and smiled. I was there when someone offered to help and you rejoiced in it. I will bless you this year in a real and powerful and miracle experience.

- Go out and heal, witness, evangelize, hug people, be a friend, and help people in their work, ministries, and lives. Begin where you are. Begin where you live, work, study, go to school, worship, and walk. Make plans with a small group to do something special and exciting.

- Reach out to people each day in simple but important ways. Show by your words and actions that they are loved. I need all people to use their gifts in the world to help others. You can send notes, cards, phone calls, stones, seeds, and words. Schools are great places. Everyone in school needs to be encouraged and befriended. Everyone in your church, town, and work needs a friend.

- You have the gifts of caring and listening. Use those gifts each day in school and watch miracles happen. You have one friend who really needs you—and me. How about telling your friend about the words, eggs, prayer stones, and your own gift of faith? This friend could in time become a lifelong friend who will do something very special with you for your friends and my people.

- Go out, this year, now. That means beginning tomorrow to go out as my disciples did to share my love, words, and reality. Smile at all you meet. Say hello. Be kind and caring. You can go to schools, jobs, churches, towns, nursing homes, hospitals, picnic tables, street corners, and where you live. Each day make a list of the people you reached out to. See if you can reach out to 100 before the end of this year. I know you can do it, and it will be so much fun. And watch for Charlie, Philip, Jenna, Annie, Kimi, Grace, Mike, Sarah, Morgan, Stephen, Meghan, Katie, and

Dominick.

- Life is about choices. Go to church or stay home. Make an excuse to not go or do what is right. Help a friend or go shopping. Listen to TV or take some time to pray. Help a friend with his or her egg or say you are too busy. You can take a walk with a friend, go to a movie, or just chat about your lives and listen to each other. Make some new friends and try to make one really new close friend or just sit home. Make good choices especially right now.

- You have one friend who really needs your support right now. This friend needs to be encouraged and included in things. Even in a group a person can feel on the outside looking in. Look at your friendships and the things you belong to. Who is standing outside? What can you do to open up the circle to bring them in? Loneliness is very real in a busy school, job, family, and life.

### **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.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

2 Samuel 7:8-11

Jeremiah 1:4-8

Isaiah 11:2-4 (end with helpless)

Zephaniah 3:17-18 (end with festival)

Psalms 96:1-3

Psalms 4:5-8

Psalms 25:4-7, 9

Psalms 115: 1, 11, 13

Psalms 65:1-2 (end with prayers) and 8-10

Mark 9:50

Acts 22:6-11

Matthew 28:16-20

John 4:26 and 34-38

Luke 5:5-11

Acts 16:1-6, 8-10

Matthew 5:14-16

John 15:16-17

Mark 8:4-10

Acts 15:33-36

1 Peter 5:1-5

Ephesians 6:17-20, 23-24

Galatians 1:1-3, 15-17

1 Timothy 6:12-14

Colossians 3:12-17

2 Thessalonians 3:1-5, 18

Romans 10:13-17

1 John 4:7-12

**Note:** For suggestions on how to conduct a weekly words sharing group, go to the Words of Blessing website at:

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