

#Blessed?



Are You Sure?



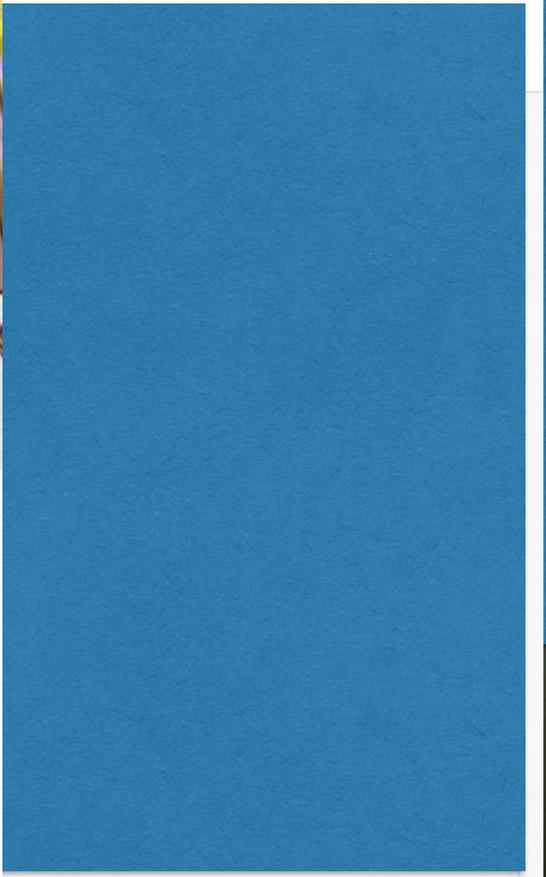
< #blessed



...e Italv ❤️ God I'm so blessed and I'm so



...ple don't understand how blessed they
...e thankful for what you have rather than
...n what you don't have.



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6,662 likes

... #special #day #begins
#gatewayschool #charity #event #sunday
#happy #life #children #kids #craft
#creation #innovation #art #learn #teach
#beauty #colourful #fun #gratefu #blessed

Are you really blessed?



Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me, Kate Bowler

I am a historian of the American prosperity gospel. Put simply, **the prosperity gospel is the belief that God grants health and wealth to those with the right kind of faith.** I spent 10 years interviewing televangelists with spiritual formulas for how to earn God's miracle money.



Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me, Kate Bowler

One of the prosperity gospel's greatest triumphs is its popularization of the term **“blessed.”** Though it predated the prosperity gospel, particularly in the black church where **“blessed”** signified affirmation of God's goodness, it was prosperity preachers who blanketed the airwaves with it. **“Blessed”** is the shorthand for the prosperity message. We see it everywhere, from a TV show called **“The Blessed Life”**



Death, the Prosperity Gospel and Me, Kate Bowler

Blessed is a loaded term because it blurs the distinction between two very different categories: **gift** and **reward**. It can be a term of pure gratitude. “Thank you, God. I could not have secured this for myself.” But it can also imply that it was deserved. “Thank you, me. For being the kind of person who gets it right.” It is a perfect word for an American society that says it believes the American dream is based on hard work, not luck.



In 2015 Kate was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer



**Assistant Professor of the
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Is our understanding of blessing nothing more than thinly veiled narcissism?

Is it our way of telling the world that God loves us because look at how much stuff/beauty/vacations we have?

**Blessing in the Old Testament is
covenantal and focused on Israel as a
nation. We can misuse those passages
when we forget the entirety of what
God is promising**



This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem **to the surviving elders among the exiles** and to the **priests, the prophets** and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had **carried into exile** from Jerusalem to Babylon. **vs 1**

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

I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “**and will bring you back from captivity**. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “**and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.**” **vs 14**

The terms for blessing abound in the Old Testament, occurring over 600 times. The major terms are related to the word meaning "to kneel" since in earlier times one would kneel to receive a blessing.

In the New Testament, however, the emphasis is more on **spiritual rather than on material blessings.**

Blessing Isn't Stuff/Health

But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—**they will be blessed in what they do.** James 1:25

Now listen, you rich people, **weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.**

Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. **You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.** James 5:1-3, 5

Wealth isn't a blessing, it's a test

Blessing is Jesus

There is no greater blessing than
Jesus (person, path, future)

For the grace of God has appeared that
offers salvation to all people. It teaches
us to say “No” to ungodliness and
worldly passions, and to live self-
controlled, upright and godly lives in
this present age, while we wait for the
blessed hope—the appearing of the
glory of our great God and Saviour,
Jesus Christ, **Titus 2:11-13**

Blessing is from the Spirit

If blessing isn't physical then it must be something "other"

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Ephesians 1:3**

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, **you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,**
vs 13

But we have this **treasure in jars of clay** to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. **We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus**, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. **For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.** So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

vs 16-18



Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. **James 1:12**

