

## MARK HOLMEN'S STORY

When my daughter was between two and three years old we attended a Family Blessing Take It Home Session at our church. Now before going any further, you need to realize that the idea of blessing your child was a completely foreign concept to both my wife and I. After receiving some biblical teaching about the significance of blessing your children the leaders then introduced to us a man by the name of Rolf Garborg and he began to speak.

Rolf Garborg, author of *The Family Blessing*, shared with us that he started a ritual of saying a blessing over his daughter every evening. When his daughter was an infant he would go into her room every night and say a blessing over her. **“May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you. May the Lord continue to make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord continue to look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. I love you. Amen.”** As his daughter grew older, he continued the ritual all the way through the teenage years. He did admit that there was a period of time when she was a teenager that he would wait until she was asleep to give her the blessing but he continued the ritual all the same.

His daughter continued to grow older as daughters do and it came time to send her to college. He and his wife dreaded the day that they would have to leave her at college, but they made a plan to unload her stuff, say their goodbyes in the dorm room and then they would grab each other's hands and head for the car with no looking back. The plan worked to perfection. The teary goodbyes had been said in the dorm room and Rolf and his wife were well on their way across the parking lot to the car when all of a sudden in the distance behind them they heard a familiar voice crying out, “Mom, Dad, wait.” They had not planned for this contingency! They stopped in their tracks, turned around, and as their daughter came running up to them with tears in her eyes she said, “You forgot to bless me.” And there in the parking lot they huddled together and said, “May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you. May the Lord continue to make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord continue to look upon you with favour and give you peace. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We love you. Amen.”

When Rolf got done sharing that story, there wasn't a dry eye in the room. And guess what happened next? My wife and I raced home to see who could get to our daughter first to begin the ritual of blessing her each evening! My wife won and every evening before my daughter goes to bed my wife will say, “May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit. I love you. Amen.”

My daughter has been hearing this blessing every evening since she was two years old. When I was leaving for a trip to speak in Canada, I went into my now eleven-year-old daughter's room at 4am to give her a kiss goodbye. I didn't think she would wake up, but to my surprise she did. And when she saw me, she reached out her arm from underneath the covers and extended it to me and then in her groggy, half awake voice said the following words: “Daddy, as you go on your trip may the Lord bless you and keep you. May He make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and keep you safe. I love you, Daddy! Amen.”

In Genesis 12:2 the Lord says, “I will bless those who bless you.” The Lord has truly blessed me with an incredible daughter that we have prayed God's blessing over since she was two. I take none of the credit for how she has turned out as she is a way better kid than I ever was. Yet every day I thank the Lord for the way He is blessing her and that's why every day my wife and I will continue to pray the Lord's blessing over her. May the Lord bless you as you bless your children in His name.