



*Sowing Seeds for Eternity*



**MINISTRY  
UPDATE**

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## Joe's Burden for His Family (part 2 of 3)

—by Joe Keim

Dear Friend,

*In the August Ministry Update, Joe shared his burning passion to see his parents come to saving faith—faith grounded not in works, but in grace through faith. He spoke of six individuals who have shared his burden to pray for and witness to his parents.*

At this point, I would like to go on a rabbit trail. Please don't lose me. I promise to circle back and continue where I left off. The following took place in 2023 and beautifully connects with what God is doing in our family.

In 2022 and 2023, my dad's health declined significantly, and he was hospitalized multiple times. In a way only God could orchestrate, both he and Mom were placed in a care program in Mansfield, OH, nearly **190 miles** from their home in Pennsylvania, but just **15 minutes** from ours in Ashland. God is so good! With them so close, we were able to visit regularly while they stayed at a house in Mansfield.

For many years, I carried a deep longing to receive my father's blessing, the kind we read about in the Old Testament. In today's world, that might not seem like a big deal to some, but to

me, it meant everything. I yearned for my father to lay his hands on me, my wife Esther, our children, and our grandchildren, and speak words of life and blessing over us.

I've always believed there is something very special, very powerful, and very meaningful in a father's blessing. Even Jesus, God's only begotten Son, received His Father's blessing, not just once, but twice. Perhaps it's the simple truth that there is life in the tongue. When a father speaks words of life over his son, it not only becomes an unforgettable and profound moment, but has an eternal impact on the son's life on earth.

Before leaving the house to visit Dad and Mom in Mansfield, I grabbed a sticky note and jotted down the following references:

### ⇒ **Shem and Japheth**

(Gen 9:26-27) After the flood, Noah blessed Shem and Japheth, but not Ham. His words had long-term consequences for their descendants.

### ⇒ **Isaac blesses Jacob**

(Gen 27) Isaac, believing he is blessing Esau, unknowingly bestows the power-

ful firstborn blessing upon Jacob. This moment underscores just how serious and irrevocable a father's blessing was in biblical times; once spoken, it could not be undone.

### ⇒ **Jacob blesses his 12 sons**

(Gen 49) As Jacob nears death, he gathers his twelve sons and speaks a personal word over each one. Some are words of blessing; others are warnings or prophecies.

### ⇒ **Jacob blesses Joseph's sons**

(Gen 48:8-20) Jacob places his hands on Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to bless them. In a deliberate act, he crosses his hands, giving the greater blessing to the younger, Ephraim.

### ⇒ **Moses blesses the tribes of Israel**

(Deut 33) Before his death, Moses, like a spiritual father to the nation of Israel, gives a blessing to each tribe, similar in style to Jacob's blessings.

### ⇒ **At Jesus' Baptism**

(Mt 3:16-17) When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, God the Father publicly affirmed His only begotten Son with a spoken blessing in front of all who were present.

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(continued from front) **Joe's Burden**

⇒ **At the Mount of Transfiguration**  
(Mt 17:5) When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, His face shone like the sun. Speaking from a bright cloud, the Father affirmed His love for the Son and also commanded the disciples to listen to Him.

I took the sticky note with me and sat beside my dad. I said, "Dad, would you bless me? Would you bless my children and grandchildren? You don't have to give me an answer right now. Just think about it. Read the passages I shared with you and let me know." I added, "Dad, I would be willing to bring our whole family to PA if you would give us your father's blessing."

He sat quietly, staring at the wall. He looked deep in thought, but gave me no feedback, no words, no reaction. Just silence. We left that day, thanking God that He had given us one more opportunity to connect with my parents, who are now in their eighties.

Then, several months ago, in April, **two full years** after I handed him that sticky note, I received a letter from my dad. (...continued in October)

As a young mother considering homeschooling, I was deeply impacted when another mother shared her faith with me. Shortly after, a local church followed up with a tract. Just before the birth of my third daughter, I accepted Christ as my Savior, by grace through faith, while lying in a hospital bed.

During my time in the homeschooling community, I was drawn to the close-



knit families I encountered. Fellowshiping with these "plain" families stirred a burden in my heart for the Amish people. One day, I boldly proclaimed that I wanted to become a missionary to the Amish.

I first discovered MAP while painting a house near Beyond Measure Market. I often stopped in, and one day I picked up a flier for the Step Out of the Boat Conference. After attending the conference, I learned of an open staff position at the MAP office, and now, here I am!

My responsibilities at MAP include running bank and post office errands,

**Welcome Jennifer!**

printing tracts and booklets, organizing Beyond Measure Market's Yard Sale, and entering data for the SonLight Club. I am genuinely grateful to be surrounded by such a kind and supportive group of people. Everyone is so sweet, and I'm excited to see what the Lord has in store for me here.

Being a follower of Christ is not without its challenges, but the journey is incredibly rewarding. Trusting Jesus with eternity often feels easier than trusting Him with the daily struggles, but He remains faithful. I'm thankful for His forgiveness, even when I stumble daily.

I love spending time with family and friends and find joy in anything that involves serving the Lord. We all need encouragement, and I strive to be a blessing to those in need whenever I can.

I also enjoy learning about healthy cooking and take delight in preparing nutritious meals for others. I'm always on the lookout for a cozy coffee shop and a good cup of Joe!

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