



# REFLECTIONS

February 7, 2016

**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last.**

*John 15:16*

## Portrait of a Family Blessed

The family portrait captured the beauty of a family blessed. The love beaming from every face sends warmth to the soul. And the image will yield a lifetime of memories. I know. We have such a portrait too—one of a family blessed. I remember the day the photographer lined us up and snapped the shot. He timed it just right.

The smiles range from broad to slight, but when the picture was snapped even the most solemn faces are filled with joy. And as I fix my eyes on each loving face today, another family portrait emerges in my mind.

Though imaginary, I can see the faces of our parents standing among us. They assumed stately poses just as they always had before a camera, but the warmth of their love glows from their hearts as they stand among their heirs. And there is more.

In the background, our grandparents stand with great grandparents we never knew. They were the torch bearers that passed the light among the six generations found in my imaginary scene. The blessings we enjoy today are traceable to the way they lived their lives—ways that have grown to become the portrait of a family blessed.

Then, knowing there are still more generations that didn't fit in the camera's lens, I pause to gaze into each ancestral face. Among them I discover traits that form their fruit that endures today. There is the face of love, expression of joy, countenance of peace, and the visage of patience. I see the features of kindness, conscience of goodness, strength of faithfulness, warmth of gentleness, and the discipline of self-control. These are fruits of the spirit composed in today's family portrait—a portrait of a family blessed.

So as I gazed upon a family portrait not our own, the similarities leap from the canvas. The imaginary family portraits awaken the responsibility that God entrusted to us all—to bear lasting fruit. It is one of modeling God's love for all to see. God's love is shared in the examples set, not the words spoken. He blessed each one of us with spiritual gifts to nurture, inspire and support those who look to us for guidance. These are inheritances received. And they are legacies to leave.

Over the years the images in the family portraits will change. New faces will someday reflect fruits from the lives we have led. Those lives will be shaped by lessons *we* lived just as our lives have been shaped by the lessons lived before us. When our lives reveal God's love for all to see, our fruits will be displayed in family portraits yet to come. And those too will be a portrait of a family blessed.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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