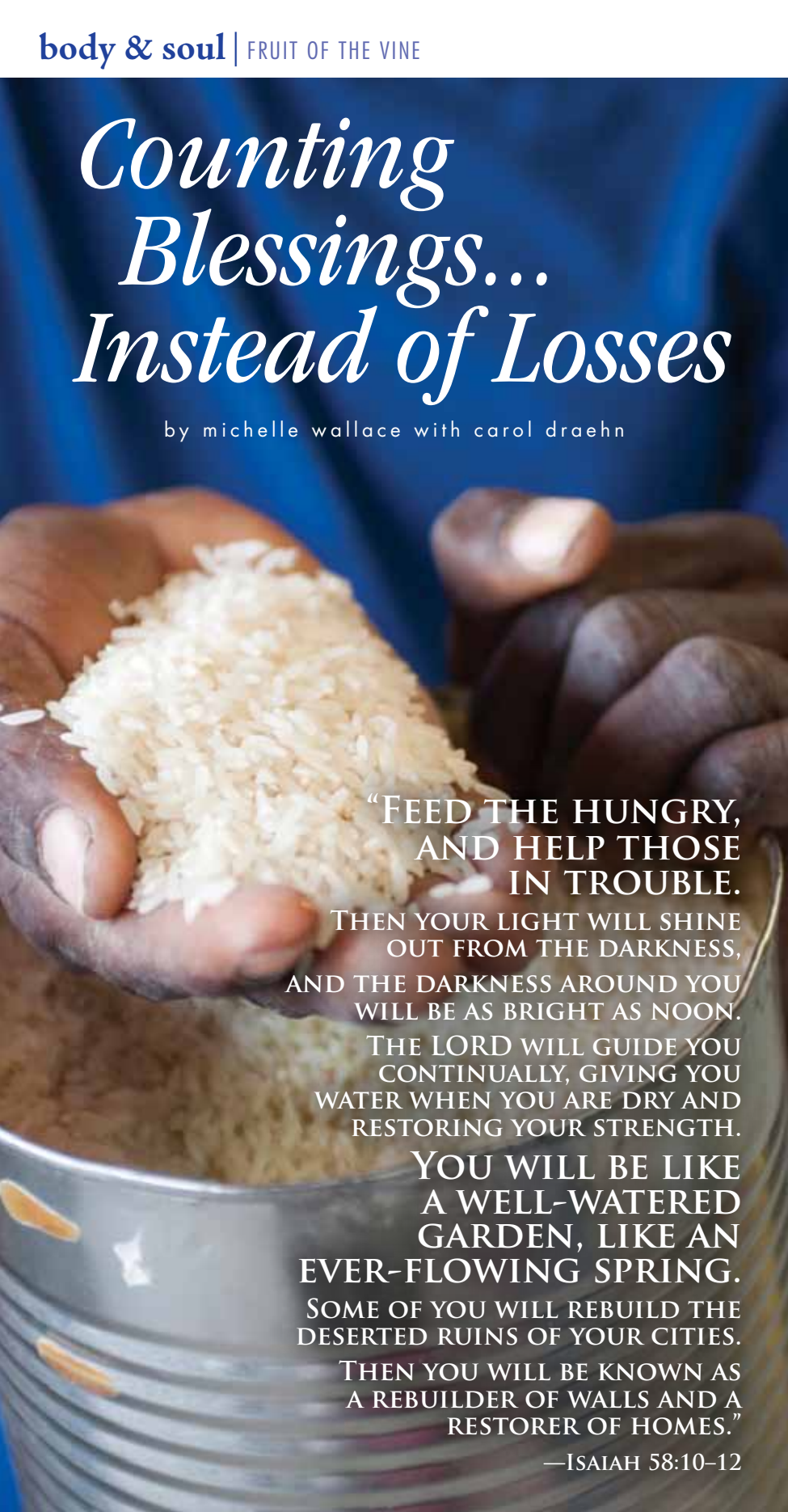


# Counting Blessings... Instead of Losses

by michelle wallace with carol draehn



**“FEED THE HUNGRY,  
AND HELP THOSE  
IN TROUBLE.  
THEN YOUR LIGHT WILL SHINE  
OUT FROM THE DARKNESS,  
AND THE DARKNESS AROUND YOU  
WILL BE AS BRIGHT AS NOON.  
THE LORD WILL GUIDE YOU  
CONTINUALLY, GIVING YOU  
WATER WHEN YOU ARE DRY AND  
RESTORING YOUR STRENGTH.  
YOU WILL BE LIKE  
A WELL-WATERED  
GARDEN, LIKE AN  
EVER-FLOWING SPRING.  
SOME OF YOU WILL REBUILD THE  
DESERTED RUINS OF YOUR CITIES.  
THEN YOU WILL BE KNOWN AS  
A REBUILDER OF WALLS AND A  
RESTORER OF HOMES.”**

—ISAIAH 58:10–12

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

—James 1: 27 NLT

**A**s my husband and I were looking for our first home, we found an awesome house that had been used as the model. We were very excited and put in a bid. The inspection report came back that there were problems with the roof and our insurance company would not cover the home unless the roof was replaced. Since we couldn't afford a roof, we asked the seller, but they were unwilling to give an allowance or to replace it. At the time I was very discouraged. We ended up moving to a neighboring community and building a new home, though it wasn't as big or nice as the other one.

We lived in our first home for many years. We raised our children there. We became great friends with all our neighbors; we actually became like family. The community with the home we lost turned into mostly rental properties and really went downhill. I realized how fortunate we were not to get that home and like the song says, sometimes, I thank God for unanswered prayers.

Someone recently sent me a devotion by Wendy Blight of Proverbs 31 Ministries. She shared an amazing testimony of something that seemed like a huge loss being used for God's purpose in her life. Wendy writes:

*“In 1997, when I still practiced law, a group of ladies at my Dallas, Texas, firm decided to pool money and buy lottery tickets. They offered me the chance to participate, and I agreed but had no cash in my wallet. Should I borrow the money to go in on the ticket? I wondered.*

*“The ladies were planning to do this every week, so they assured me there would be plenty more opportunities. I didn't participate that day. They won. Thirteen women split \$33 million dollars!!*

*“I cannot even explain what it felt like to be so close to winning that much money, or, more accurately, what it felt like to lose that*

*much money. Day after day I went into the office and the women shared their plans for their winnings. Jealousy filled my heart. I longed to have what they had... to feel what they were feeling. Going to work became more and more difficult. Why didn't I have any cash in my wallet that one day? Why didn't I simply borrow \$5?*

*"I focused on what I lost and what I could have had. What I should have had. Looking back now, it is so clear where the desires of my heart lay.*

*"Thankfully, the Lord moved us from Dallas to Charlotte, North Carolina. I quit practicing law to stay home with our children. In those years, He stripped away many of the material things we had in Dallas because we could no longer afford them. He led me to my first Bible study. In that study, He ignited a passion in my life to study and teach His Word. Eventually, He called me into ministry with Proverbs 31 Ministries."*


The enemy would like to keep us focused on the things that are going wrong or on the things we have lost. But ultimately we choose how we respond to the losses we face in life. Oscar Odhiambo Nyangwesoh was orphaned as a young boy. By the time he was 17, his parents and both brothers had all died, and Oscar was left alone. Living on the streets of Kisumu with no one to help him, he finally found one true friend, who came alongside him and provided for all his needs. This Friend, Oscars says, was Jesus. Through the grace of God, Oscar found work and was able to make enough money to go back to school and complete his education. His Friend never left him and always made sure Oscar had everything he needed. He was no longer alone or afraid. The hardships Oscar faced while living on the streets gave him a heart for homeless children. Today, he walks through Kisumu, looking for kids who have been left alone. He wants every child to know his Friend, to know there's someone who cares. That's his ministry; his heart's burning desire is to give them hope.

Oscar and his wife, Emma, live about 10 miles southwest of Kisumu (Kenya) in a remote village. Along with three small children of their own, they care for 12 orphans, providing total support—food, shelter, clothing, tuition and medical needs. But most of all, they give these children love. God has continually worked through Oscar to provide for the needs of this small ministry. A few weeks ago, the building they had been using as a shelter for the children began to collapse due to the heavy rains and was no longer safe. Oscar and Emma brought the 12 children into their very small home until another hostel can be built. The \$10,000 cost of construction seems overwhelming for a ministry that struggles just to have food each day, yet Oscar has faith in his Friend. He always makes a way.

Each of us has been given a unique opportunity for ministry. The hostel may not be the need that God has placed before you, but if you open your eyes and listen with your heart, He'll show you your place of ministry. People always say, "If I won the lottery, I would do

so much good." Today, Wendy and her husband wholeheartedly believe if they had won the lottery, they would have stayed in Dallas and missed the opportunity for ministry where they have been able to touch countless lives. "I never would have made my heart available to hear the call. God moved us to redirect the desires of our hearts," said Wendy.

I'm not sure why God planted you where you are, but I know it's not by accident. Acts 17:26 tells us that from one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. I believe God planted me in one of the wealthiest nations on earth so that I could reach out to Oscar who He planted in the middle of an impoverished nation to care for these precious children. But please understand, this is not a message about money. God knew if Wendy won the lottery, it wouldn't do the most good. This message is about doing the most good, whenever, wherever and however we can. God wants us to be agents of blessing on the earth, especially when we see someone lost and hurting. And the Lord says as you water others, He will rain down showers of blessings on you. (Isaiah 58: 10-12)

We might not understand why we're in a certain place. At the time it might seem like a loss. But when we're able to lay aside our plan and accept God's plan, we will stand amazed at what the Lord will do! Oscar believes... do you? 

*Praise God Mom,*

*We are doing well and we hope all of you are well too. We are still praying and we believe that our Heavenly Father is able to provide all our needs; he is loving and he cares to his children. Our kids are going on with school well. I have been at home since this rain started due to the poor and risky condition of structures in our centre; the walls are risky and I have been forced to be present all the times to make sure our children do not play near these buildings.*

*All of us are praying and I am very sure that God is going to make all the changes. He's able to do anything appearing difficult before us. He can't fail! Let's pray and kindly let all of you join us in these prayers. Thanks a lot and be blessed, greet all our friends, we love you all.*

*Son,  
Oscar*

For more information about Oscar and the children, e-mail [michellewallace@suddenlink.net](mailto:michellewallace@suddenlink.net).