



# Harvest Warriors NEWSLETTER



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Warring to Harvest

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# Why Should God Bless You?

By  
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**H**ow many of you would like God to bless your life? Should you ask God to bless your life, or is that selfish? In Bruce Wilkinson's book, *The Prayer of Jabez*, he elaborates on an obscure figure mentioned in 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles, arguing that we should seek God's blessings always. In 1 Chronicles 4:10, we read:

**“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, ‘Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ so God granted him what he requested.” 1 Chronicles 4:10**

Why did God grant what Jabez asked? What is the reason for God's blessing? There are many ways we can answer these questions with scriptural support: He loves His people, He delights to do them good, He is good.

I believe there is ONE fundamental reason that God blesses His people and this reason is closely related to the evangelistic calling of the Church.

# So why should God bless you?

We turn to Psalms 67 which begins in a way that sounds similar to the prayer of Jabez. (Actually, it more echoes the blessing that Aaron and his descendants said over the people of Israel, as recorded in Numbers 56.) But Psalm 67 goes deeper than the prayer of Jabez, telling us why God blesses His people. Let's look at the first two verses of Psalm 67:

**“God be merciful to us and bless us,  
And cause His face to shine upon us,  
Selah  
That Your way may be known on earth,  
Your salvation among all nations.      Psalm 67:1-2**

The psalmist asks for blessing so that God's ways may be shown on the earth. The psalmist is saying, in effect, *“Bless me so that I might glorify you; bless me so that I might show your power, your love, your majesty, and your goodness to all the nations.”*

Look at what the psalmist is NOT saying:

He is not saying: *“Bless me so that I can be comfortable.”*

He is not saying: *“Bless me so that I don't have to work hard to make a living.”*

He is not saying: *“Bless me so that others will be envious of me.”*

He is not saying: *“Bless me so that I can be successful in the eyes of the world.”*

Now look at this carefully: He is not even saying: *“Bless me so that I can bless others.”*

Yes, one of the reasons for God's blessings, is made explicit in His call to Abraham (Genesis 12). God blesses us and gifts us so that we might serve and bless others. But still, this is not the underlying, fundamental reason for God's blessing. ***God blesses us first and foremost so that we can bring glory to His name.***

Let's look at this further, first in Psalm 67 and then in other scriptures.

Much Hebrew literature is structured with a central point in the middle, and ideas that parallel each other the further away you get from the center. This struc-

ture is sometimes subtle, but in Psalm 67 it is particularly obvious. For example, verses 3 and 5 are not only parallel, but identical. Verse 4 is thus the literary center of the Psalm, and as such is emphasized for an important reason. (We will come back to this.) Moving further away from the center, we would expect verses 1 and 2 to be parallel with verses 6 and 7. Look at the Psalm as follows:

- 1   **“God be merciful to us and bless us,  
And cause His face to shine upon us,      Selah**
- 2   **That Your way may be known on earth,  
Your salvation among all nations.**
- 3   **Let the peoples praise You, O  
God;  
Let all the peoples praise You.**
- 4   **Oh, let the nations be glad and  
sing for joy!  
For You shall judge the people  
righteously,  
And govern the nations on earth.  
Selah**
- 5   **Let the peoples praise You, O  
God;  
Let all the peoples praise you.**
- 6   **Then the earth shall yield her increase;'  
God, our own god, shall bless us.**
- 7   **God shall bless us,  
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.**

## Psalm 67

The Psalm begins by asking that God will bless us, and ends by underlining that He will indeed bless, in part through an abundant harvest of food, then concludes by once again giving the reason for the blessing: *that all the ends of the earth will fear Him, revere Him, and hold Him in awe.*

So this Psalm begins and ends with the statement that God's blessing leads to His glory. That is the reason God blesses us.

But this idea is not limited only to Psalm 67. You can find it throughout the scriptures. There are many passages I could cite, but I want you to briefly look at only two.

The first is 1 Kings 8:60. The Israelites have just completed the building of the temple. King Solomon offers a lengthy prayer, in part asking that God would

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meet His people's needs. He then gives the reason why God should bless His people in this way: "So that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other." (1 Kings 8:60)

Solomon asks for blessings, so that ALL people everywhere might know that there is only one God, and that all other so-called gods are false. That God is, and that the God of Israel is the true God. He asks for blessings so that the true God might be glorified.

The second passage concerns Jesus Himself on the night before the crucifixion. Jesus is faced with a dilemma. All of His humanity rebels at the thought of the spiritual and physical suffering of the cross. How should He pray to God? What should He ask for? Does

he say, "Father God, bless me! Save Me from this horrible death!" NO! John records for us Jesus' thoughts and prayers at this time:

**"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 'Father glorify Your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, saying, 'I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.'" John 12:27-28**

Jesus does not ask for physical safety or comfort; He does not ask for worldly success or status in the eyes of others, He instead asks for what? For God's glory, and God responds, "I have glorified My name in Your life, and will glorify it even more in Your death."

Jesus rejected the blessing of a longer life on earth and being kept safe from oppression, for He knew that those blessings would not lead to God's greatest glory. *We need to say with Jesus, "Lord God, if this blessing is not going to lead to Your glory, don't give it to me!"*

So Psalm 67 and indeed all the Bible emphasizes that God blessed His people for the glory of His own name, so that His goodness, mercy, and love would be recognized and praised by man and angels.

This is just plain biblical truth, but unfortunately we don't hear this very often in our churches. It becomes so easy for us to think of God as a heavenly social worker, the One who is up there to serve us, to provide for us, to comfort us, to care for us. We turn our focus on man's needs, so that we perceive God as a tool to meet our needs and wants.

*But God is at the center of everything. It is His glory that drives His purpose.*

A long time ago I read the first question asked in the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "What is the chief end of man?" and the answer was, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and serve (enjoy) Him forever."

This is a wonderful summary of biblical teaching. ***God does not exist to meet our desires and needs, rather, we exist to glorify Him.***

***So why should God bless you? God blesses you so that you might fulfill your chief end: to glorify Him.***

*We need to say with Jesus, "Lord God, if this blessing is not going to lead to Your glory, don't give it to me!"*

## ***Glorify His Name Among Whom?***

Let's go to our second question: God blesses us so that we might glorify His name among whom? Among those who are already believers? Among those who call themselves Christians? Among other Americans, or citizens of your particular nation? Among those who

are similar to yourself?

The second part of Psalm 67, verses 2 & 3 show that God's goal is much broader:

*"That your salvation may be known among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, let all the peoples praise you."*

God aims to glorify Himself not only among those already identified as His people, not only among those who are similar to His people, but among ALL nations, among ALL the peoples.

Doesn't that last word "peoples" sound kind of strange? If this is not a grammatical error in Psalm 67, what, then, does the psalmist mean by "peoples"? Rev. 7:9-10 helps us to understand this word. John here has a vision of the eternal state, where God's people are around His throne praising him. Note the types of

people found here:

**“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb?’”** Revelation 7:9-10

In this vision of the vast multitude around the throne of God, John sees those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation praising God. No group of people is left out; every cultural group, every language group is represented before the throne of God.

Why is it important for God to bring to Himself people from every group? Think: if any group was left out, then someone might say, “the cultural barriers between Christianity and my people group was too strong; it was too difficult for me to believe in Jesus. Indeed, God doesn’t care about my people, about my race, about my nation, my father, my grandfathers – all my ancestors were Moslem, or Animist, or Buddhists. So we cannot become Christians – so God has no right to judge me for not believing in Jesus.”

God will glorify Himself by not letting anyone make that false argument. As Rev. 7 shows, He will bring to Himself a vast number of believers coming from every cultural and linguistic group. Thus, for us the task of missions is not complete until there is a true Church among every people group on this planet. We must, therefore, reach out not only to those in our own culture, but also to those who are different from us. We must spread the gospel in our own neighborhoods, and also cross-culturally, with millions of people having no Christian witness from anyone in their own culture. We must focus missionary efforts on reaching these unreached groups.

Thus God gives us a mandate, and He promises to empower us to fulfill that mandate, so that believers will come to Him from ALL the nations.

So, Psalm 67 tells us that God blesses us so that all the peoples will praise Him name.

I’ve asked two main questions, and given you two answers:

**No group of people is left out; every cultural group, every language group is represented before the throne of God.**

**We must spread the gospel in our own neighborhoods, and also cross-culturally, with millions of people having no Christian witness from anyone in their own culture.**

Q: What is the purpose of God blessing His people?

A: To bring glory to His own name.

Q: God desires to be glorified among whom?

A: Among ALL peoples.

## *What is The Impact On The Peoples?*

Some of you might be thinking, “I thought missions was about helping people, meeting their physical and spiritual needs. By saying that all this is for the glory of God, aren’t you diminishing the importance of these people themselves? Aren’t you down playing the importance of meeting real human needs?”

Verses 3 & 4 of Psalm 67 answer this question – and remember, verse 4 is the literary center of the psalm, and this is emphasized heavily in the original language:

**3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;**

**Let all the peoples praise You.**

**4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!**

**Psalm 67:3-4**

When the peoples praise God, when God is glorified in their lives, what happens to them? What happens to the peoples? *Praising Him leads to gladness and joy!* Those who don’t praise Him, those who are walking in darkness, those who are bound by fears of false gods and idols – those people are without joy. The rest of verse 4 explains, in part, why this is the case:

**4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!**

**For You shall judge the people righteously,**

**And govern the nations on earth. Selah**

**Psalm 67:4**

No other ruler, no other god, will be just, straight, and upright in his deal-

ings: no other ruler, no other god will guide them in the paths of righteousness. We find the same Hebrew word translated “guide” in Psalm 23:3:

**“He restores my soul;**

**He leads [guides] me in the paths of righteousness**

**For His name’s sake.” Psalm 23:3**

Atheists, animists, Moslems, Buddhists, and even nominal Christians – all those who are without a vital relationship with the *only living and true God* – do not have what the Apostle Peter calls “*Joy inexpressible, the deep gladness and joy of knowing God Himself.*”

For if God is the center of all things, if He is the most beautiful, most loving, most powerful of all beings, recognizing WHO HE is, being in relationship to Him, being led and guided and governed by Him, is the source of the greatest joy imaginable.

So there is no conflict between glorifying God and the gladness of the peoples. The peoples have joy as they glorify God. The more joy they have in Him, the more they glorify Him. As John Piper suggests, we can underline this truth by changing one word in the answer to the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: **Q:** “What is the chief end of man?” **A:** “*The chief end of man is to Glorify God by enjoying Him forever.*”

**Ask God not to give you any temporal blessings that won't give Him glory.**

## Last Thought

Let me ask you three more questions:

1. Do you know Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as Savior and Lord? For without Him, all other blessings – health, wealth, life itself, — are brief, and temporary, and of no lasting value. He is the only way to true blessings. If we reject Him, as the author of the book of Hebrews writes, our prospects are only a terrifying expectation of judgment.

So recognize Him! Savor His goodness and beauty! Ask God to break through your thick head and tough skin! Ask Him to remove your heart of stone and replace it with a heart of flesh! Fall before Him, asking, praying, saying, even crying, “could You save even me? Can You change even me?” Yes, and He will do so. A broken heart He

will never despise.

2. Those of you who know Him, who recognize Him as your Lord and Savior, do you crave God's blessings? I truly hope you do! Be like Jabez, knowing that unless God blesses you, you have nothing at all.
3. But why do you seek God's blessings? Do you acknowledge that your chief end is to glorify God and serve (enjoy) Him forever? Ask God to bless you in such a way that you can bring great glory to Him:

Ask God not to give you any temporal blessings that won't give Him glory.

Ask God to bless you in such a way that peoples who have never praised the only living and true God might do so.

Ask God to enable you to witness boldly and lovingly to the thousands you encounter every month who are by nature “children of wrath,” who are walking in darkness, who are without hope, without God in the world.

Ask God, “Is it I, Lord? I will go, Lord wherever you lead me.”

Ask God to help you send and support others.

Ask Him for all this, so that God might be recognized and proclaimed as supreme in every language on this planet, to the great joy of the peoples.

*“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.”*

**“Praise the Lord!”**

# ***Our New Project***

God has just reached down into our lives and started us on another large project. You see, the house we moved out of four years ago was just burned to the ground by the neighbors who had given us so much trouble. Actually, they did us a favor as we had been unable to sell it, and we maintained full insurance on it. The insurance company paid us the full price for it without any difficulty. Praise the Lord! So Daniel and I decided to use the money to build a house here in the valley. We have been living in a small singlewide mobile home all this time. I (Rebecca) was delighted, to say the least. To live in a real house is my heart's desire. As we were happily looking through house plans and calling contractors about a house, the Lord moved in.

One day we received a call from a business acquaintance of ours. He said, "Daniel, I heard that you were looking for some land to build a drag strip on. Are you still looking for land? If so, I have the perfect piece, 41 acres just off the highway."

Daniel was shocked as the man went on to tell him, "Because it is you, I will sell the land to you more cheaply than its appraised value. I will finance it for you myself and sell it to you for zero down."

Is this from God or what?! For the last year or so we have had a dream of build-

ing a drag strip where the youth could come and legally race their cars and trucks. This is for an evangelistic outreach to them. There is absolutely NO effective evangelistic outreach to the youth in our area, and NOTHING for them to do but get into trouble. When Daniel told me about his conversation with this man, he said, "Rebecca, I'm going to leave this decision up to you. I know how badly you have wanted a house, and if we do this, it will take every penny we've got and then some to build the track. Plus, we will be taking on another large debt!" I didn't have to think very long. Who am I to use all that money for my own pleasure when it could be used to build God's kingdom? We bought the land and have started construction. It is our goal, Lord willing, to have opening day on July 4<sup>th</sup> of this year.

This is a perfect match for Daniel. He loves cars and racing, and knows just about everything about both. The youth flock to him like bees to honey, and Daniel is tremendously gifted in evangelism. He also plans to build a large building set up so that the kids can come and work there on their cars if they want. We know several Christian brothers who are experts in various areas of car building and repair who are willing to come help in this project, who are also able to talk to and counsel the youth. I know it won't be long before we start to teach bible studies there on the track property.

Daniel has named it the *Two-Lane Blacktop Drag Strip*. God has just been opening door after door. I was

concerned that there might be obstruction from either county government or neighbors. The county government is totally in favor of the project! The county sheriff is also completely in favor of the project. This is from God, as most everywhere in the state of Arkansas, the county governments have blocked this type of project. I always love watching a plan of God come together. It all happens so smoothly and quickly. Daniel had been putting up advertisement throughout our area. This has created a lot of excitement and enthusiasm.

It is our prayer that this drag strip will be used to bring MANY into God's kingdom. We will be expanding as soon as we can to include lawn-mower races and go-cart



races. I have to laugh and shake my head at many of Daniel's plans be-

cause they are clearly a "guy thing." I simply don't understand much of it. But, I will just purchase a stout pair of earplugs and go run the concession stand, or do what ever is needed.

Please pray that our Lord will intervene mightily for us as now some of the people in the area are threatening to take us to court to stop the track from opening because they don't want the increased traffic in their area. We believe God has opened this door for us, so we are going to press forward with the project

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***We are warring to harvest!***