

The Life-Changing Purpose of Blessing

Psalm 67 begins by responding to the prayer Aaron and his sons gave as a benediction upon God's people: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace" (Num. 6:24–26).

A comment from God follows explaining why He gave the words to this prayer: "They [the priests] will put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them" (Num. 6:27).

Purpose of Blessing

What does it mean when you put your name on something? It indicates ownership.

God puts His name on us. How do you respond? Do you want that to happen? Do you desire to be owned by God?

That's where this psalm comes in. It opens with a willing acquiescence to what God himself wants to do in our lives: "May God be gracious to us, and bless us, and cause His face shine on us" (Ps. 67:1).

Why do you want God's blessing? All kinds of reasons pop into my mind. Humanly, I would appreciate unlimited fulfillment. I prefer to pray, *"Lord, it would be nice if You gave me whatever I ask. I don't like frustration or disappointment. Keep sorrow from my life. It would be wonderful, Lord, if an unknown rich distant relative left me his entire estate. Can You arrange that, Lord? Could You help everyone around me see it my way? And, could You rescue me from having to do anything I don't want to do? Also Lord, if You could—I would like to live the lifestyle of the rich and famous while being humble and godly. Please give me roses without thorns, and break both*

arms of anyone who tries to hurt me."

Is that why God wants to put His name on me or you? So that we may have ease and comfort? I'm afraid not.

The psalmist has a deeper drift in his prayer. He does not end the sentence after "shine upon us"; rather, he gives the rationale for asking God to put His name upon him—"May your ways be known on earth, your salvation among all nations" (v. 2).

God puts His name on us to advance His own agenda in this world. He wants me to be Christ-centered rather than self-centered.

Lord, whose lives will touch mine today? Will You grace me so that they can pick up something from me of Your presence? By Your being with me today, may I help them to know Your ways. I don't want to just do my own thing. Help me to be transparent and to have no agenda for this day other than Your will.

You do want to bless me and shine through me, Lord, but for Your reasons and not mine. You give me freedom to regulate the degree of Your shining in me. I choose the extent of Your blessing. If I abandon myself to you, relinquishing all claims of privilege, if I release myself to You this day as your servant—then Your ways do become known through me. Do bless me, Lord, today—not just for my sake, but for Yours.

When you live and pray rightly, a great uplift fills you. You want others to join in as well—and that's the focus of Psalm 67:3-5, "Let the peoples praise you, O God."

But satisfaction in doing God's will often comes only after seasons of great struggle. Fully surrendering, consciously letting Christ live in you, may require a long battle with God over whether you will say, "Not My will, but Yours, be done" (Luke 22:42).

Only when we obey do we find words of praise arising from the heart. When we are in disobedience we have nothing to say to God.

What is the end result of letting Him own you? “Then will the earth yield its produce, and God, our God, will bless us. God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear Him” (Ps. 67:6-7). Your efforts pay off and you are rewarded abundantly for your investment of seed and work.

One of my mother’s favorite hymns has now been mostly forgotten: “It pays to serve Jesus; it pays every day; it pays every step of the way.” That’s the spirit behind the closing words of this psalm.

When you permit the Lord to own you and thereby bless you, you become productive. There’s a harvest resulting from your life. You may not always like God’s way of making you more useful to Him and others, but you will always be gratified when you receive His paycheck—when you see the end result of what the Lord did through your obedience and faithfulness to Him.

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