

WEEK SEVEN
DAY TWO

God shall bless us,
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Psalm 67:7

God

אֱלֹהִים 'elohiyim

– (plural) can mean rulers, judges; in this case the supreme God

shall bless

בָּרַךְ barak

– to kneel, bless, or be blessed

us

כֹּל kol

– the whole; all, any or every; whosoever

let all the ends

אֶפֶס 'ephec

– cessation, an end (especially of the earth), uttermost part

of the earth

אֶרֶץ 'erets

– the earth, ground, land, world.

fear him

יָרָא yare'

– to fear, be in reverence

Journal

WEEK SEVEN
DAY THREE

**God shall bless us;
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Psalm 67:7**

The word “fear” is one of the most fascinating and repeated words in the Bible, used hundreds of times and in what can at first seem to be contradictory ways. Are we to fear not? Or, is fear a good thing? The answer is simple: we are to fear God and not fear man (Matthew 10:28).

Psalm 67:7 proclaims: “God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!”

The Psalmist wants the world to know the awesome, life-changing, power-imparting kind of fear—the fear of the Lord. This is the type of fear Adam felt when he had a confrontation with God in the garden and had to confess his sin. This is the type of fear Sarah had when she overheard God say she would bear a child in her old age. She lied to God about laughing, because she feared Him. This is the type of fear that even Pharaoh’s servants had just before a confrontation with the Almighty God that killed all the livestock left outdoors overnight in Egypt. This is justified fear of a God who is terrifying in His power if He chooses to use nature, our enemies, or any other force in the universe to chasten us.

But He is also the God who uses these confrontations with His power to open our eyes to our sin and to show us how to properly align with Him. He shakes us with His power occasionally because we drift; we forget who is Lord over our lives. In each of the confrontations above, our loving Father restored the person, took care of the person’s needs, and even blessed each one. When Adam saw His nakedness, the Father clothed him. When Sarah lied to the Lord, He still gave her the son her heart had ached for over many decades. The servants of Pharaoh who experienced the fear of the Lord and took their livestock inside were protected; those who did not properly esteem the extent of God’s power lost every animal. Often a confrontation with God’s power initially results in loss, but, for a believer, there are riches to be had from these fear-inducing experiences. We grow closer to Him. We understand His character more, and we get to know Him intimately, as our closest family member.

In this verse, the psalmist wants “all the ends of the earth” to experience the fear so they can fully know the mercy. The psalmist knows that an encounter with God, though it can frighten, will also give them a glimpse of His true identity. They can know Him. This form of the word fear, “yare,” can also mean to revere or honor; it can indicate awe and reverence.

What do women fear most? For some, it is letting down a family member or a close friend. A woman may agree in her mind that the fear of God should trump the fear of man, but what happens if God calls her to do something that demands the sacrifice of time, and she has small children, or teenagers, or adult children who need her? What if

the pull of friends or community involvement continues to take her away from church attendance or service God has called her to? Oswald Chambers says this in *My Utmost for His Highest*:

If we obey God, it is going to cost other people more than it costs us, and that is where the pain begins. If we are in love with our Lord, obedience does not cost us anything— it is a delight. But to those who do not love Him, our obedience does cost a great deal. If we obey God, it will mean that other people's plans are upset...

We can disobey God if we choose, and it will bring immediate relief to the situation, but it will grieve our Lord. If, however, we obey God, He will care for those who have suffered the consequences of our obedience. We must simply obey and leave all the consequences with Him.

Is there anything in your life you are putting before God in the use of your time, money, or devotion? Pray that He will reveal this to you. You may have your own confrontation with the Lord and experience the sweet peace of restoration and greater closeness than you have ever known.

~ Casey Hawley

WEEK SEVEN
DAY FOUR

**God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!
Psalm 67:7**

Don't you love verses that talk about God blessing us? Most of us turn eagerly to the Psalms when we want to be encouraged and feel loved on and optimistic about what God is going to do. The English Standard Version of Psalm 67:7 states emphatically that "God shall bless us." This is a promise every believer can count on, but why will He bless us?

Is it because we are so good? We know our sin is like filthy rags.

Is it because we are sweet children? Our hearts can be so hard that at one point (Genesis 6:6) "The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."

No, He blesses us for reasons that have nothing to do with who we are and everything to do with His incredible capacity for love and forgiveness and generosity. He wants to give us everything He has, and there is no limit to what He will do for us. This is not a merit system. It is a grace system.

Psalm 67:7 also implies that He blesses us because our blessed state will inspire the awe and reverence and fear of Him in the rest of the world who might not know Him yet. Several versions of the Bible say that God blesses us "so that all the ends of the earth will fear him." In any version, it appears that God's blessing His children is closely related to his desire that people in all the ends of the earth come to revere, fear, and know Him.

He wants others to see His love shining out of our lives. Unbelievers won't learn about grace by reading about it; they have to see a walking testimony of it in our lives. They have to see the blessing that only knowing God can radiate. We should be so filled up with the love of Jesus and our constant gratitude for that greatest of all blessings that the world around us can't miss it. They will see something different about us, something good, and they will want that.

As you go through your workplace, your neighborhood, or wherever you walk, are people seeing the blessing of your salvation on your face and in your conversation? Or do you first have to get them up to date on the traffic, the bills, and the other inevitable obstacles you have recently encountered?

Time is short. Don't waste time on the small stuff. Tell them about the blessings that walking with the Lord can bring: peace, joy, direction for their lives, and eternal life. Tell them how He did that for you. They will be drawn to the Jesus they see in you.

~ Casey Hawley

WEEK SEVEN
DAY FIVE

**God shall bless us;
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Psalm 67:7**

Psalm 67:7 says, "God shall bless us." Do you really believe that? Are you keenly aware you are going to be blessed by God? Does that fill you with excitement so much that you are like a kid at Christmas? Is your heart leaping at the thought and you are filled with anticipation to see how He will bless you and when He will bless you and what that blessing will look like?

Not so much? If you are not living in this state of anticipation, you are not alone. Life gets in the way. Circumstances get in the way. Well, here is another exciting thought: the very circumstances that are your barrier to happiness may be what God will use to bless you. It happened to Joshua (Joshua 3-4).

The Jordan River provided one of the physical barriers to the Promised Land for Joshua and God's children. But when God knew the time was right, the riverbed of the Jordan was the very path into the Promised Land. The spectacle of the Israelites marching into their blessing is an encouragement to anyone who has ever waited on the Lord to deliver them from oppressive circumstances or hardship. Joshua 4:11-18 describes the following triumphant scene when God at last allows His children to take possession of their blessing:

And when all the people had finished passing over, the ark of the LORD and the priests passed over before the people. The sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh passed over armed before the people of Israel, as Moses had told them. About 40,000 ready for war passed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they stood in awe of Him just as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life... And when the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the LORD came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

The majesty of their procession into "the land flowing with milk and honey" is magnificent. The way God heaped up the waters to give His children a dry and easy path for those last steps of their journey is miraculous. And the way He finally lifts up Joshua and gives him great honor and reward is a poignant and heart-affirming scene.

But just as in Psalm 67:7, we see the reason God accomplished this miracle the way He did and at the time He did in Joshua 4:23-24:

For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried

up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.

What circumstances do you see in your life that appear to be barriers to greater blessing? Financial hardship? A loss of a friend or relationship? Separation emotionally or geographically from family? This circumstance may be needful. It may be the detour in the path that takes you from the blessing you want to an even greater blessing that God can foresee and that you cannot.

How do you prepare yourself so you are ready when your day of blessing comes? The hard work has already been done by Jesus Christ who paid for all your blessings in advance when He died on the cross for you. But note what Joshua did when the day of blessing was near. He prepared the children of God just as we would prepare a child for a special birthday party. He said, "Then Joshua said to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you'" (Joshua 3:5).

What does that look like today for God's people? John Piper exhorts us to be like Paul who knew He was cleansed and purified by the blood of Jesus, yet he was always pressing on to know God better and more intimately and to experience the power of God in His life to its fullest. In a New Year's Eve message, Piper challenged his congregation to approach the new year in this way:

The more satisfied you are with yourself the way you are and with the world the way it is, the less you will pray. But the more you desire all the fullness of God, the more you desire to know the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, the more you desire to be strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit according to the riches of God's glory, the more you desire to know the hope of your calling and the riches of the glory of your inheritance, and the more you desire to be holy and pure and compassionate and patient and kind and tenderhearted and bold and fruitful, the more you will pray and the more passionately you will pray. Little prayer signifies little desire for God. Perfunctory prayer signifies a perfunctory relationship with God...

And I invite you—I plead with you—to consecrate yourself to God in some extraordinary way as this new decade begins. Tomorrow morning, as the new decade begins, give notice to your old nature and to the devil and to the world, by an act of holy consecration, that you belong to God and that you desire all the fullness of God more than you desire anything in the world.

Prepare yourself for the blessing God has prepared for you by spending more time alone with Him, talking to Him, listening to what He is telling you, and letting Him know that you trust His sovereignty over any barriers that seem to be in your way. God will bless you. Be ready.

~ Casey Hawley

