

PANDEMIC

"CONTAGIOUS JOY IN THE GLORY OF GOD"

PSALM 67:1-7

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Faith – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes. Ephesians 6:19, 20 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

Christ commissioned his disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). When we hear the word "nations," we naturally think first of political groups, e.g., Americans, Germans, Russians, and the like, but the term, *ethne* (sing. *ethnos*), used by Jesus and translated "nations" here likely refers to ethnic groups, i.e., people with a unifying ethnic identity; in other contexts it connotes "Gentile individuals" as opposed to Jews (see John Piper, "Discipling All the Peoples," in *Perspectives*, 3rd ed., 113-17). Christ's commission raises a question regarding God's interest in the salvation of people other than Jews. Did it originate with Jesus, or is it evident in the Old Testament?

According to one writer, it is evident in the Old Testament. "Probably the last thing a person is likely to think about in connection with the Old Testament is that it is a missionary message to the Gentiles and the nations of the world. That mission begins, we are usually assured by less careful readers of the Old Testament, in the New Testament after our Lord gave

The goal of the Old Testament was to see both Jews and Gentiles come to a saving knowledge of the Messiah who was to come.

– Walter C. Kaiser

the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15) and the promised Holy Spirit had come on the disciples (Acts 1:8). Of course this New Testament Great Commission was not simply a one-time statement in these two Gospels but a repeated emphasis in the life and ministry of our Lord and in the Gospels (Luke 24:44-49; John 20:21). But is this correct? It is not! The Bible actually begins with the theme of missions in the book of Genesis and maintains that driving passion throughout the entire Old Testament and on into the New Testament. If an Old Testament Great Commission text must be identified, then it will be Genesis 12:3-'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you [Abraham].'¹ This is the earliest statement of the fact that it will be God's purpose and plan to see that the message of his grace and blessing comes to every person on planet earth. The message did not begin there. The basis for it, in fact, went all the way back to Genesis 3:15, as will be seen shortly, but in Genesis 12:3 it found its most succinct declaration and announcement. Likewise, the last book of Scripture emphasizes the same concern for all to hear the good news of the gospel: 'every tribe and language and people and nation' (Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 14:6). Thus, this theme of a mission to the whole world forms one giant envelope (a figure of speech called an 'inclusio') framing the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation" (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament*, xi).

In Old Testament times, God intended for his covenant people, Israel, to be a missional nation. The Mosaic covenant transformed those delivered from Egyptian slavery into a priestly people. The LORD says in Exodus 19:5: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my reassured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." According to the NET Bible, this meant:
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"All the Israelites would be living wholly in God's service and enjoying the right of access to him. And, as priests, they would have the duty of representing God to the nations, following what they perceived to be the duties of priests-proclaiming God's word, interceding for people, and making provision for people to find God through atonement" (15^{tn} on Ex 19:5).

In a nutshell, the people were to be *active* (*centrifugal*, outward-moving) and not merely *passive* (*centripetal*, inward-moving) witnesses to the nations. The above author argues: "Was Israel's role and involvement in mission to the world centripetal (inward-moving, and therefore the people of those Old Testament days were said to play only a passive role in witnessing and spreading the good news) or centrifugal (outward-moving, and therefore the believers of those pre-Christian days were to be active in sharing their faith)? Centrifugal witnessing, it will be argued here, is the role assigned to Israel as it was to share actively with others the Man of Promise who was to come. This is why Paul quoted Isaiah 49:6 in his attempt to convince the Jews at Antioch Pisidia that it had been God's intent all along to extend his blessings of redemption to the Gentiles. The source of world missionary activity is rooted in God's call to the nation Israel in the Old Testament, which will then be the extended call to all who believe in all ages . . . the goal of the Old Testament was to see both Jews and Gentiles come to a saving knowledge of the Messiah who was to come. Anything less than this goal was a misunderstanding and an attenuation of the plan of God. God's eternal plan was to provide salvation for all peoples; it was never intended to be reserved for one special group, such as the Jews, even as an initial offer!" (xiii-xiv).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Psalm 67:1-7

For the director of music. With stringed instruments.
A psalm. A song.

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,

Selah

2 that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.

3 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.

4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples justly
and guide the nations of the earth.

Selah

5 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.

6 Then the land will yield its harvest,
and God, our God, will bless us.

7 God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Cf., another translation

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A
Psalm. A Song.

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,

Selah

2 that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

Selah

5 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

6 The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him! (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Underline "may" throughout.

* Bracket "face shine" in v. 1.

* Circle "upon" in v. 1.

* Circle "Selah" in vv. 1, 4.

* Box "that" indicating *purpose* in v. 2.

* Circle "your" in v. 2.

* Draw a line from "ways" to "salvation" and a line from

"earth" to "all nations" in v. 2.

* Highlight v. 3 and v. 5.

* Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 4.

* Circle "guide" in v. 4.

* Cross out "then" in v. 6.

* Circle "and" in v. 7.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Identify the *figurative* expression in verse 1, and tell what it means.
2. Explain the *purpose* behind the psalmist's request for God's blessing.
3. Verse 2 uses *parallelism* characteristic of Hebrew poetry. Explain how the second line specifies the first.
4. What does the *inclusio* do for you as you read the psalm? (See note on v. 3)
5. Explain the *reason* behind the nations' joy in verse 4a.
6. What do you infer from the fact that verse 4, at the center of the psalm, is its longest verse, and a *tricolon* (i.e., it has *three* parts)?
7. Does verse 4 imply that justice prevailed in the nations of that day? Explain.
8. Compare how the psalm ends (vv. 6, 7) with how it begins (vv. 1, 2). What do you observe?
9. According to verse 7, God will bless his people so that all nations will know his salvation (cf., v. 2). Do you think that implies he expects us to share his blessings with all nations? Explain.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about what this Psalm has to say about the Core Competency Giving Away My Faith.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

About Psalm 67 one author writes, "If a psalm was ever written round the promises to Abraham, that he would be both blessed and made a blessing, it could well have been such as this. The song begins at home, and returns to pause there a moment before the end; but its thought always flies to the distant people and to what awaits them when the blessing that has reached 'us' reaches all" (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, TOTC, 254).

This psalm has three *stanzas* or *strophes*. The first includes verses 1 and 2, the second verses 3-5, and the third verses 6 and 7. The first and third stanzas express virtually the same sentiment. In the vein of the priestly benediction found in Numbers 6:24-26, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace," the psalmist invites God to bless his people but not so as to benefit them only. He specifies the purpose behind his request in verse 2. He yearns for God to bless his people "so that" (NIV2011) all nations might know the LORD's ways, more specifically that they might know him and his salvation. In the final stanza, the psalmist states with confidence, "The land will yield its harvest" in verse 6—perhaps using "harvest" as a figure of speech (*metonymy*) to refer to all kinds of blessings from God. This seems likely given the fact that he repeatedly asserts "God will bless us" in the next line. The psalm concludes in verse 7 much like it opened nearly repeating verses 1 and 2 verbatim.

Verses 1 and 2 together with verses 6 and 7 form an *inclusio* that brackets the heart of the psalm found in verses 3-5. In fact verse 3 and verse 5, which contain the refrain "May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you," form another *inclusio* that brackets verse 4, the longest verse in Psalm 67. You may not care about *inclusios*; in fact, you may have read the psalm without even noticing them. Still, like other not-so-noticeable features of Hebrew poetry such as *meter* and *parallelism*, for example, they tie the psalm together, increase its impact on the reader, and make it more memorable. Verse 4 targets the point of the psalm, the day in which

the nations bask in the just reign of God over them and rejoice. The assertion "for you rule the people justly and guide the nations of the earth" refers to the time longed for when the nations will know the LORD's saving ways (v. 2) and the peoples from one end of the earth to the other will fear him (v. 7). As one writer puts it, "Without pointing to the Messiah, the psalm anticipates a glorious messianic era in which Jews and Gentiles share in the glorious presence of God" (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., 512).

Psalm 67 raises an interesting question: Does God give his people blessings *to show* to the nations so that they might know him, or does God give his people blessings *to share* with the nations so that they might know him? The psalm doesn't say for certain, but in light of God's commandments regarding foreigners in the law, it seems reasonable to believe that God didn't give his people blessings for others just to look at. He told his people in Leviticus 19:33-35, "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. *Love them as yourself*, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God." What's more, he includes foreigners in provisions made for widows and orphans. In Deuteronomy 14:28-29 he commanded, "At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and *the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows* who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." God expects his people to share his blessings, not hoard them. In other words, he expects their witness to be both *centripetal* and *centrifugal*.

The Message of the Passage
God blesses his people to be a blessing to the nations so that
all peoples might know him and his salvation.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **May** "The Hebrew text (using imperfects) leaves the question open: should we read each verse as a humble request ('May God be gracious,' so NIV) or as confident assertions ('God is gracious to us')? The familiar echo of the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24-26) in the opening verse immediately implies that the NIV's rendering in verses 1, 3-5 is correct. The notion of the peoples praising God repeated in verses 3 and 5 is thus correctly translated as a wish or request" (Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC, 277).

v. 1 **be gracious** I.e., "show us his favor" (the NET Bible) that is, "make his face shine upon us."

v. 1 **face shine** "A 'shining' face is an expression of pleasure and delight . . . To make one's face shine forth towards another person means to *show him favor*, as in Prov. 16:15 'In the light of a king's face there is life, and his favor is like the clouds that bring spring rain'. The same idea would be even more appropriate to the grace of God" (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, NCBC, 1:472 italics added). "An Oriental monarch revealed in his facial expression either his pleasure or displeasure with the party who sought an audience with him" (VanGemen, 510).

v. 1 **Selah** "This occurs 71 times (and a further three times in Hab. 3), predominately in Books I-III of the Psalter, probably it is the signal for an interlude (cf. LXX) or change of musical accompaniment. It is usually thought to come from a root *sl*, to lift up (cf. 68:4, Heb 5), i.e., perhaps, to strike up with the instruments or voices; but a root *slh*, supposedly corresponding to an Aramaic verb 'to bend', i.e. bow down, has alternatively been suggested" (Kidner, 51; cf., Anderson, 48, 49).

v. 1 **upon us** "The Aaronic benediction has God's face shining 'toward' or 'upon' you, but Psalm 67 has it shining 'with us' (lit.). This may imply that 'we,' the recipients of God's blessing, will ourselves shine" (Broyles, 279).

v. 2 **that** Verse 2 should not be read as an independent request, "May your ways be known" (NLT), but as a dependent clause indicating *purpose* ("that" or "so that"; cf., NRSV, ESV, NKJV, NASB, TEV) or perhaps *result* ("then"; cf., NJB, the NET Bible). 'The worshipers' reason for seeking God's blessing is not to be self-centered; it is to serve a wider purpose of revealing internationally God's characteristic ways of doing things" (Broyles, 279).

v. 2 **ways . . . salvation** The first term, "ways," refers to God's characteristic actions or "ways of doing things." The second, "salvation," as often occurs in Hebrew parallelism specifies the first. "Yahweh's way is a way of salvation" (279). "The Hebrew term [*derekh*, "way"] refers here to God's characteristic behavior, *more specifically*, to the way he typically saves his people" (the NET Bible, 5m on Ps 67:2 italics added). The term "salvation" is used here in its broad sense of "deliverance," "help," "victory." "The word [salvation] is rich, as it pertains to all the benefits of God-his kingship, rule, blessings, and promises (cf. 98:3; Isa 52:10)" (VanGemen, 511).

v. 2 **earth** A figure of speech called *metonymy*, which involves naming one thing to refer to another associated with it, e.g., naming "the White House" to refer to "the President." The psalmist doesn't have the planet on his mind rather those who live on it (cf., "all nations" v. 2b). "Then those living on earth will know what you are like" (the NET Bible).

v. 3 **May the peoples . . .** The bracketing of a passage of text with the same set of words at the start and end as in verse 3 and verse 5 is called *inclusio*. It's a powerful literary device used to emphasize what the psalmist deemed most important.

v. 4 **rule** Lit., "judge" (ESV, TEV, NRSV, NKJV, NJB). "This judgment is not something negative (which is the common perception); it is a cause for joy because it ensures fair treatment for all" (Broyles, 279).

v. 4 **justly** "We must be clear that the statement, for you rule (or 'will rule') the peoples justly, is a claim about how God characteristically rules, not a claim about world affairs (i.e., that justice now prevails). According to the psalms of Yahweh's kingship, the international manifestation of Yahweh's judgment is future: Yahweh 'is about to come to judge the earth; he will judge . . . peoples with equity' (lit., 98:9; also 96:10, 13)" (279).

v. 4 **guide** The term suggests "a shepherd-like concern" (Kidner, 255). The verb means "to guide, lead" or "to treat kindly, care for" (as in Job 31:18b). "Usually God is the subject of the verb (cf. Gen. 24:48; Dt. 32:12; Ps. 78:14, 107:30; Isa. 57:18, etc.) and he is often depicted as guiding his people like a shepherd (23:3, 78:52f.)" (Anderson, 480).

v. 6 **Then** "In verse 6, the NIV's then is not present in the Hebrew text. God's blessing Israel's harvest is not a consequence of the nation's praise of God but a prerequisite to it" (Broyles, 279).

v. 7 **and** The Hebrew grammar implies purpose; therefore, a better translation would be "so that all the ends of the earth may fear him" (279). The NET Bible translates, "Then [*result*, cf., note on v. 2] all ends of the earth will give him the honor he deserves." "When crops fail in Israel, she becomes a reproach among the nations (Joel 2:17, 19). But when God's people are blessed, the nations round about take note" (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 488).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

We are blessed to be a blessing. The very fact that we have been given such a great salvation moves us to praise the Lord and be a blessing to the nations. Many of us have the opinion that the nations are "over there" in a strange unknown place we have never been. But actually, the nations begin when we walk out our front doors. In order for kids to gain a global missional perspective we must start much closer to home. Your neighborhood is actually a great place to begin. Here are a few ideas to help you be a blessing to your neighbors. (1) Pray for your neighbors at dinner. Choose a house each week and pray for the people there. If you don't know their names, you know their address. The Lord knows who they are. (2) Take a weekly prayer walk as a family. Pray for your neighbors, the schools, and the businesses in your neighborhood. (3) If you see neighbors out raking leaves or doing chores, offer to help. (4) Organize a neighborhood canned food or clothing drive to donate to a local mission. (5) Set up a free lemonade or hot chocolate stand. What a fun way to bless families when they come in from a long day at school or work. (6) We are fortunate to live in an area with many mission organizations that would love your family to come serve on a Saturday morning. Pick one and go beyond!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Psalm 67

May God be _____ to us and _____ us and make His face _____ upon us, that your ways be _____ on earth, your salvation among all _____. (vv. 1-2)

What Do You Think

This Psalm praises the Lord for all the blessings He has given us, especially our salvation. How often do you spend thanking the Lord and praising Him for the blessings He has given you?

What R U Going To Do

Make a list of the top ten blessings for which you are most thankful. Ask your family members to do the same. Have everyone bring his/her list to dinner. How many were the same? Which ones were different?.

Core Comp

Giving Away My Faith - I tell others about Jesus to help with God's work.

Memory Verse

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . ."*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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