

## *Prayer of Jabez*

### **1 Chron 4:9-10**

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**Intro** *Much attention to this obscure prayer brought by book of same name by Bruce Wilkinson*

- A. Was Barnes & Nobles #1 best-seller for 2001
  - 1) So popular, he expanded the offering! (Over 8 mill. sold)
  - 2) See CBD catalog for associated items for sale
- B. Have read the book & can see why it's so popular.
  - 1) Has roots in "health & wealth" gospel
  - 2) Remember Oral Robert's "seed faith"
    - a. Send him \$100, get \$1,000 from God!
  - 3) Much of what Wilkinson says in his book caters to same.
    - a. He says it's the prayer for Christians who want an extraordinary life where miracles happen regularly.
- C. What do we know about Jabez?
  - 1) Not much, just what we can read of his prayer.
  - 2) Tells us much about him & helps us set our priorities.

#### **I. "Oh, that You would bless me indeed!"**

- A. Great request (granted by God) but what kind are we after?
  - 1) Wilkinson says, "*It's possible that God wants us to be more selfish in our prayers.*"
  - 2) Just ask specifically he says and '*your life will be marked by miracles!*'"
  - 3) Agree: He says, "*Jabez's prayer focuses on our wanting nothing more or less than God wants for us.*"
  - 4) Best blessings are spiritual & are only in one place
    - a. **Eph 1:3**
- B. Obtaining blessings from God requires at least 3 things:
  - 1) Proper attitude of heart: **Matt 5:1-12**
  - 2) Obedience to God's word:
    - Luke 11:28, John 13:17, James 1:22, 25**
    - a. Wilkinson never mentions obedience!
  - 3) Personal liberality: **Mal 3:8-10, Luke 6:38, 2 Cor 9:6-11**
- C. The fact that God blessed Jabez reflects his godliness

#### **II. "Enlarge my border!"**

- A. Wilkinson says it's like praying "*Lord, increase the value of my stock portfolio!*"
  - 1) To him, it's a mix of materialism and spirituality
  - 2) Do this & "*You'll have a front row seat to a life of miracles!*"
- B. Agree: "*This is where you ask God to enlarge your life so you can make a greater impact for him.*"
- C. Jabez is not appealing for more land or material possessions.
  - 1) Land, inheritance rights, etc strictly regulated in Old Law
    - a. Land never permanently sold, always reverted back.
    - b. Besides both OT & NT warn against covetousness.
  - 2) Rather, a request for God to enlarge or broaden his sphere of influence.

- D. We have areas of influence & should seek to broaden them
  - 1) **Matt 5:13-16**
  - 2) Most of us, tho, might rather pray: *“Lord, bless me but I don’t need anymore responsibility!”*
  - 3) We should look for opportunity to do what we can for others, showing the influence God has on us!
    - a. **Gal 6:10, Matt 25:31-46**
    - b. Note the basis of separation in Matt 25
      - 1. Not ONLY correct doctrine, but how well did we use opportunities to help others?
  - 4) God gives to each a zone to operate in; let’s use it effectively for Him!

- a. **2 Cor 10:13-16**

### III. *“That Your hand might be with me!”*

- A. Wilkinson says, *“With that (prayer) we release God’s power to accomplish His will...”*
  - 1) God doesn’t need me or my help in accomplishing His will
    - a. A prayer is not a magic spell that obligates God!
  - 2) Rather, is the other way around: I need God!
    - a. Agree: *“You become dependant on the strong hand of God.”*
- B. *“Hand of God”* often used for God’s power and presence on the lives of His people.
  - 1) Jesus reminds that, with God, we are never alone
    - a. **John 16:32**
  - 2) It is why Jesus came: He is “God with us”
- C. We must recognize our dependancy on Him.
  - 1) America says, *“You can do what you want, go where you want. You’re an American!”*
    - a. Tell our kids that they can be anything they want, sky’s the limit! They start to think *“I can do all things!”*
    - b. The truth is *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Phil 4:13*
- D. Are some things we CANNOT do, if we want Him with us
  - 1) Gary Kerr’s son got a job in a bowling alley. Loved it til he got promoted & found out the promotion meant he had to bring beers to bowlers. He refused the promotion.
  - 2) Jesus says He’s with us IF we’re with Him!
    - a. **Matt 28:19-20, John 14:23**

### IV. *“That You would keep me from harm that it may not pain me!”*

- A. NKJ reads: *“Keep me from evil so I may not cause pain”*
  - 1) Note how Jabez got his name - **1 Chron 4:9**
    - a. His very name means “pain” or “sorrow”
  - 2) Both renditions make great prayer!
- B. When we do wrong, we hurt others
  - 1) So sad to hear some say, *“It’s none of your business!”*
  - 2) What one does affects others - **1 Cor 12:26-27**
    - a. Most of all, it wrongs Christ - **1 Cor 8:12**
  - 3) It’s why we must help each other when we sin
    - a. *“If anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.” Gal 6:1*

C. The ultimate pain & sorrow is to be separated from God

1) ***“Lead us not into temptation... Matt 6:13***

2) The consequences of falling are unthinkable!

**Conc. “God granted him his request”**

A. What if folks pray the materialistic version in Wilkinson’s book & God *doesn’t* make them rich, or cure their cancer or get them a better job or return on their stock?

1) Lots of folks going to be unhappy & worse: disappointed with God.

B. Take a lesson from Jabez

1) ***“He was more honorable than his brothers...”***

2) This much we know: He was a godly man!

3) If our life is as honorable for God as his was, if our conduct and respect for God’s will is as Jabez’s, then God will answer our prayers for spiritual blessings!