



Pray Your Pain Away: Lessons from the Prayer of Jabez

Part 2: "OH, THAT YOU WOULD BLESS ME
AND EXPAND MY TERRITORY"

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

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PRAY FOR YOUR BLESSING

One of the things we can learn from the Prayer of Jabez is that Jabez looked to the Lord to be the giver of blessings. He understood that it was only God who can expand his territory.

BLESSINGS IN THE BIBLE

- "God's intention and desire to bless humanity is a central focus of his covenant relationships. For this reason, the concept of blessing pervades the biblical record. Two distinct ideas are present. First, a blessing was a public declaration of a favored status with God. Second, the blessing endowed power for prosperity and success. In all cases, the blessing served as a guide and motivation to pursue a course of life within the blessing."
- "The Old Testament Terms for blessing abound in the Old Testament, occurring over 600 times. The major terms are related to the word meaning "to kneel," since in earlier times one would kneel to receive a blessing"
- "The parallels between the Old and New Testament usages of blessing are striking. To be blessed is to be granted special favor by God with resulting joy and prosperity. In the New Testament, however, the emphasis is more on spiritual rather than on material blessings."

WHY WE NEED TO PRAY TO GOD TO BLESS US AND EXPAND OUR TERRITORY?

Scholars suggest that the context of Jabez' prayer has to do with land acquisition. Since territories in mid-eastern settings are measured by the span of pasture land one has, it is highly probable that Jabez was asking God to expand his land and the livestock he had. Yet, it is also interesting to note that, unlike the common land-grabbing practices during those times, Jabez expressed his reliance on God for divine intervention over use of violent force to acquire greater portions of land.

When wanting to see an increase in our possession, do we normally resort to our own strength instead of looking to God for answers? **Prayer is an indicator of how much we rely on God to bless us and expand our territory.** Here are the reasons why?

Prayer allows us to tap heavenly favor to grant us what we cannot accomplish by human force

The fact that Jabez was mentioned in the Bible unlike his brothers asserts that he had received favor from God. And, unlike his brothers, he trusted God to grant him exactly what he asked of Him.

1. By human force: grabbing what is not yours
2. By heavenly favor: seeking God for divinely-initiated means to get what we want
 - a. "Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue. Gods voice in response to mine is its most essential part." (Andrew Murray)

Prayer allows us to depend on God to give us success instead of trusting our near-sighted strategies

Jabez prayed to God because he believed that God alone can grant him success. Prayer was his strategy. Others around him may have resorted to human strategies, but Jabez relied on divine help to get what he wanted. This results, as some scholars suggest, to him getting more land than his brothers.

- Depending on God is an expression of our humility before Him. 1 Peter 5:6 tells us, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." Prayer is humbling ourselves before God and acknowledging that our success can only come from Him.
- We often approach prayer as a means to ask God for strategy. We seldom recognized that prayer itself is the strategy where we trust God to move in our behalf.
- Some quotes on prayer to help us realize our need to depend on God:
 - o Time spent in prayer will yield more than that given to work. Prayer alone gives work its worth and its success. Prayer opens the way for God Himself to do His work in us and through us. Let our chief work as God's messengers be intercession; in it we secure the presence and power of God to go with us (Andrew Murray)
 - o Do not strive in your own strength; cast yourself at the feet of the Lord Jesus, and wait upon Him in the sure confidence that He is with you, and works in you. Strive in prayer; let faith fill your heart-so will you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.(Andrew Murray)
 - o "What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men -- men of prayer." — E.M. Bounds, Power Through Prayer
 - o "God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men." — E.M. Bounds, Power Through Prayer
 - o "I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God." E. M. Bounds

Prayer is actually about seeking to be intimate with God more than seeking His intervention

"Please be with me in all that I do" (v.10)

Expressing trust and dependence on God is what prayer is really all about. Jabez sought the Lord to be with him. He asked God, "Please be with me in all that I do". That clearly shows that Jabez desires intimacy with God over God's intervention.

- "Those who know God the best are the richest and most powerful in prayer. Little acquaintance with God, and strangeness and coldness to Him, make prayer a rare and feeble thing." - E.M. Bounds
- "Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still." - E.M. Bounds
- "It is hard to wait and press and pray, and hear no voice, but stay till God answers." - E.M. Bounds
- "Four things let us ever keep in mind: God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer and God delivers by prayer." - E.M. Bounds

IF THERE ARE PAINS CAUSED BY THE LACK OF BLESSINGS, LOOK TO GOD AND PRAY YOUR PAIN AWAY

OUR BLESSINGS ARE IN GOD'S HAND. MORE IMPORTANTLY, OUR GREATEST BLESSING IS GOD. He alone can bless us and expand our territory without us having to grab things or to take advantage of people. He can promote us more than we can work our way to get ahead of people.

FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Reflect: Prayer is an indicator of how much we rely on God to bless us and expand our territory
2. Reflect: Prayer allows us to tap heavenly favor to grant us what we cannot accomplish by human force
3. Do you get your blessings by human force or heavenly favor? Why did you say so?
4. Reflect: Prayer allows us to depend on God to give us success instead of trusting our near-sighted strategies
5. Reflect: We often approach prayer as a means to ask God for strategy. We seldom recognized that prayer itself is the strategy where we trust God to move in our behalf.
6. Reflect: "I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God." E. M. Bounds
7. Reflect: Prayer is actually about seeking to be intimate with God more than seeking His intervention
8. Reflect: "Four things let us ever keep in mind: God hears prayer, God heeds prayer, God answers prayer and God delivers by prayer."
9. Reflect: **OUR BLESSING ARE IN GOD'S HAND. MORE IMPORTANTLY, OUR GREATEST BLESSING IS GOD.** He alone can bless us and expand our territory without us having to grab things or to take advantage of people.