

A PRAYER THAT CHANGED A LIFE

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Introduction: "Jabez" was given such a name at birth because his mother was greatly distressed while giving him birth. He was the most outstanding man of his time and the reason why was perhaps when he prayed his prayer was different from that of others. His prayer was asking God to change his life in a dramatic way. Will God answer such a prayer again today for us? Just how different was his prayer?

I. "OH, THAT YOU WOULD BLESS ME INDEED!"

1. Is it possible that God could want us to be "selfish" in our prayers and actually ask Him to bless us personally?
 - To "bless" in the meaning of the Bible terms is a supernatural favor.
 - It is not to ask for what we could get for ourselves (new boat, new car, etc.)
 - It is to ask for God's goodness to be given to us, not someone else.
 - *"The Lord's blessing is our greatest wealth; all our work adds nothing to it." (Prov. 12:22)*
2. It is leaving it entirely up to God to decide what the blessings will be, where, when and how He will bless us.
 - To ask for God's blessings is to throw one's self entirely into the will of God and His power and purpose for our lives.
 - It is becoming entirely involved in what God wants to do in us, through us, and around us all for His glory.
3. What could we lose by not asking God's blessings to be upon us? We would lose that which we fail to ask for.
 - Jesus said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you..."*
 - James said, *"You do not have because you do not ask..."*
4. It is the nature of God to bless and His blessings on us are limited by US, not by God nor His resources, or power or anything else. We limit God by our failure to ask.

II. "OH, THAT YOU WOULD ENLARGE MY TERRITORY!"

1. Do you think God has more for you than what you are experiencing? Then ask God to enlarge your life so you can in turn do more for Him.
 - Ask for more influence, more responsibility, more opportunity, more service, more ability, more of everything.
 - Ask for more in order to bring more honor and glory to God, but not to/for yourself.
2. Think for a moment, what you call "yours" is really what God has entrusted to you.
 - **"Oh God, please expand my opportunities and my life in such a way that I touch more lives for Your glory, let me do more for you."**

3. Most of us think that we have too much already, but when we pray this prayer of asking God to increase, enlarge our life of service, amazing things can begin to happen-
 - opportunities expand, ability and resources increase, doors are opened, new people come into your life and more unexpected things happen.
4. No person has ever experienced all that God wanted to do through his/her life. In reality, we are the ones who determine what is enough.
 - "Little" steps don't require much help from God, however when we ask God to step in and enlarge, increase our life, then we need all the help we can get from God.
5. Right now, ask God to increase your life and your ministry in order that He may be honored.

III. "OH, THAT YOUR HAND WOULD BE WITH ME!"

1. Everyone has gotten in "over his/her head" where one's abilities were not enough, we "bit off more than we could chew." That's what happens when we ask God to step in and enlarge and increase our life. Things happen so fast, things that are beyond our ability to handle, etc.
2. When God takes over our lives, He expects things from us which we can never handle on our own. We will fail UNLESS God is allowed to step in, therefore this third request, ***"...oh that Your hand would be with me..."***
 - We are to step out on faith to do the things that God brings into our lives. **"God did that and nobody else!" "God carried me, gave me the words, gave me the power..."**
 - Jesus said, ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, and lo, I am with you always..."***
 - Remember how the Church got started, the Day of Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit?
3. When we ask for God's hand to be upon us, the results that occur can be explained only as the hand of God.
4. Usually when we attempt things for the Lord, we use our own power, ability, resources and haven't learned how to let God take over.
 - If we pray this prayer asking God to "bless us, expand and enlarge our life and service, then we are certainly going to need this third request, ***"...oh that Your hand would be with me."***

IV. "OH, THAT YOU WOULD KEEP ME FROM EVIL!"

1. Notice the wording, "keep me FROM evil" not "keep me through evil.."
2. Asking God to increase your ministry for Him is also asking Satan to get involved also.
 - The further we get into God's enlarging our lives and ministry for Him, the more attacks we are going to get from Satan on us and on our families.
3. Most of our prayers are for God to help us "hold out, to make it through" Satan's attacks. We seldom think to ask God to keep us AWAY from temptation and Satan.
 - The Lord's Prayer reminds us to pray ***"...and lead us NOT into temptation but deliver us from the evil one..."***

- Think about it, when was the last time you asked God to remove you from temptation?
 - Without temptation, sin is no problem. When we focus on removing temptation more than our avoiding it, it is a huge spiritual leap forward.
- 4. The most effective prayer against sin is for us to pray that we will not have to fight unnecessary temptations in the first place, therefore, ***"..oh that You would keep me from evil."***

CONCLUSION:

1. For those who earnestly want what God wants, He will hold nothing back.
2. Contrary to our way of thinking, asking God to bless us and expand our life of ministry and service for His honor is not arrogance or self-centeredness. Honoring God more is what we are here for in the first place.
3. What would your day be like if you knew God was going to bless you, enlarge your service and ministry in some way during the day and that He was going to guide you through the things that were going to happen, and keep all forms of evil and temptation away from you all day long?
 - This is what God really wants for you. Would you like to have it God's way?

THEN ASK FOR IT!

***"And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying,
"Oh, that You would bless me indeed,
and enlarge my territory,
that Your hand would be with me,
and that You would keep me from evil,
that I may not cause pain!"
SO, GOD GRANTED HIM WHAT HE REQUESTED."***

(This sermon is not original with me)