

the breakthrough
series

the

Prayer

of

Jabez

f.r

Teens

Bruce Wilkinson

Author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller *The Prayer of Jabez*



Part of the Breakthrough Series
No. 131

“*The Prayer of Jabez* is terrific. Jabez’s cry was that God would bless him so that he could bless others, change his generation, and change the world.”

JASON PERRY, *PLUS ONE*,
2001 DOVE AWARD WINNER,
NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

“I was just blown away by the simple truth in the prayer of Jabez. It’s challenging, and it really has touched my life.”

JEFF DEYO,
SONIC FLOOD

“Not since *Experiencing God* have I read a devotional so potentially life changing! I’m not much of a reader, but I became absorbed with this book and have immediately experienced the *awesome* rewards of praying the prayer of Jabez. Thank you, Dr. Wilkinson, for revealing to me, in a new way, the power of prayer!”

SCOTT ROBERTS,
SOLOMON’S WISH

“Since hearing about Jabez, I walk around with a different composure, in a different mood. His experience has taught me to live expectantly, to be aware that God is at work around me and in me. Instead of being self-centered, I’m looking around to see—*What has God prepared for my life today?* Who does He want me to meet, to bless? I live differently than I did.”

GEOFF MOORE, CONTEMPORARY
CHRISTIAN RECORDING ARTIST

“This book really challenged me to put aside all my selfish little worries and realize that we are praying for Him to help us do what He needs us to do. It’s okay to ask for God’s blessing because through it we’re going to be able to reach more people.”

RACHAEL LAMPA,
DOVE AWARD WINNER

“This is a *great* model for prayer and a great encouragement to pray! I have seen God move because I’ve expected Him to move and *asked* Him to move. It all points to God.”

ELI, CONTEMPORARY
CHRISTIAN RECORDING ARTIST

the
Prayer of
Jabez for
Teens

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B r u c e W i l k i n s o n

with David Kopp



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For information:

Multnomah Books

12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200

Colorado Springs, CO 80921

To our daughter, Jessica.
Every year, you get more amazing!
And fourteen is no exception.
You are such a special gift to our family.
Love, Dad

Special thanks to my writing partner,
David Kopp,
for your help getting this message into words;
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for your skillful editing;
Marcus Brotherton,
for your excellent contributions;
and to the many teens who
contributed stories,
for showing me what God is doing right now
in answer to bold prayers.

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Dear Teenager:

I wrote the *The Prayer of Jabez for Teens* with you in mind. Young people around the world are leading the way in a prayer revolution. They're seeing God do miracles. And I don't want you to miss out on what's happening.

This little book starts with everything we put in the original, bestselling *The Prayer of Jabez*; then we ask the question:

If God wanted to change the world with a teenager like you, how would He want you to pray?

From there, I show you how to pray a daring prayer that can shape each day of the rest of your life. It's short—only one sentence with four parts—and found in a part of the Bible most people don't often read. But I believe it contains the key to the most exciting and significant life you could imagine.

Want to find out more about the Jabez revolution?

I hope you do!

Bruce H. Wilkinson

JANE CALLED THE
FIRE ALARM

little man,
big prayer

Sometimes life seems to unwind like an enormous brown ball of string. Every morning you roll out of bed, pick up the string where you dropped it the night before—and off you go. Today seems pretty much the same as yesterday. One more day, one more length of string—and that big brown ball just keeps unwinding....

But some days aren't like that at all. They don't unwind like string; they land like a brick. One thing happens, and everything changes.

It could be...

- a phone call,
- a move to a new town,

- something someone says or does,
- a decision,
- an accident.

Whatever it is, that one thing changes your life, maybe for the better, maybe not. It's like you turned a corner and walked smack into a world you've never seen before.

This book is about one thing—a little prayer that will change your life.

Sometimes I think of this prayer as an invisible revolution because it starts so deep inside you. You change what you know; then you change how you think and feel; then you change what you ask God for and what you expect. It all feels so mysterious and out of sight...but then one day—zap! You look around (“Hey, did a brick just land around here?”) and you realize your life has changed...and it's a whole lot better!

If you've ever thought that your life should be about more than just unwinding another day's worth of brown string, you're ready to meet a man named

Jabez (I pronounce that JAY-bez, but you can say it any way you like).

When Jabez was still trying to decide what kind of life he wanted, he looked at who he was. He didn't like what he saw. He looked at what he had to work with and who his family was and what tomorrow might bring, and *he didn't like any of it*. He felt like a nobody with no future. He probably could have described himself right then with words like *boring*, *loser*, or just plain *stupid*.

But he didn't.

Instead, he did one thing. He prayed a simple prayer.

I want to tell you more about this man named Jabez and his prayer, but first I want to ask you something. *Are you ready to do one thing today that could change your life from ordinary to extraordinary?*

If so, keep reading. *The Prayer of Jabez for Teens* is going to show you what happens when young people decide to reach for an amazing life.

As it turns out, that's exactly the kind of life God promises. Let me show you what I mean....

Asking for a Big Life

When I was five, I wanted to drive a fire truck. When I was seven, I wanted to be a cowboy. When I was ten, I wanted to play for the New York Yankees, or maybe be a mafia hit man. (Is this starting to sound familiar?) When I was fifteen, I wanted to be an Olympic high jumper.

But when I was twenty-six and about to finish college and grad school, I didn't have a clue what I wanted to be. Except for one thing—I wanted my life to count for God.

I remember those days very well. I remember feeling a little uncertain and a lot in the dark. Darlene, my wife, and I often prayed together about what would come next. What did God want for our lives?

One day I heard a speaker named Dr. Richard Seume ask this question: “Do you want a bigger vision for your life?”

Bigger? I asked myself. *Well, maybe, but I'm already planning to serve God and live a good life. Isn't that big enough?*

Dr. Seume based his challenge on the shortest life

story I had ever heard—only three sentences in the Old Testament. The biography in question belonged to a man named Jabez. The first thing the Bible says about Jabez is that he was “more honorable than his brothers” (1 Chronicles 4:9). Dr. Seume said that’s what we should want for our lives, too. Jabez wanted to be more and do more for God.

Prayer is an invisible revolution.

It all feels so mysterious and out of sight...
then one day—zap!

I went home, stood in my kitchen, and stared out the window. *Lord, I prayed, I think I want a life like that. I want to be more honorable for You.* But questions kept tugging at my mind. *What exactly did Jabez do to rise above the rest? And why did God answer his prayer?*

I picked up my Bible and read verse 10—the prayer of Jabez. Something in his prayer would explain the mystery. It just had to. Think about it: Here was a guy who got into the history books

because of what he prayed and what happened next. Standing in my kitchen, I read his prayer over and over, searching with all my heart for the future God might have for someone as ordinary as me.

The next morning I prayed Jabez's prayer word for word.

And the next.

And the next.

Do you know what? Thirty years later, I haven't stopped praying the prayer of Jabez, and God hasn't stopped answering. If you were to ask me what sentence—other than my prayer for salvation—has changed my life the most, I would tell you that it was the prayer of a little-known man named Jabez.

Jabez and You

I think you have an appointment with God on this page just like I did in that kitchen. Why do I think that? Because you're reading this book right now. God brought you here because He knows your hopes

and dreams. He knows that you don't have it all together in your personal life yet. But He knows, too, that you want something better for your life than just the usual ho-hum—for that matter, better than just the usual “success” you see on the street or on TV.

In a lot of ways, you're like Jabez. You're at the beginning of your life, but already you know that there are a hundred ways to get stuck, to get it wrong, to mess things up permanently. And you don't want that. You want something bigger. Maybe even something huge.

You're just not sure how to get from here to there.

But you're about to find out. As you learn about Jabez and his little prayer, you're going to meet a God who can make it happen in your life. You may not have met this God before. He is:

- a God who wants to give you more than you've ever thought to ask for.
- a God who has a big and important plan for your life.

- a God who is in the business—every day—of doing miracles through people just like you.

Do you want that? Or do big promises sound suspicious to you?

Listen! I know the message of this book is true because God has proved it in my own life. And because He's proving it in thousands of lives right now around the world. And, most of all, because it's in the Bible.

The Man with No Future

Someone once said that there is really very little difference between people—but that little difference makes a great deal of difference. Jabez isn't a big star in the Bible like Noah or Moses or David. In fact, most people have never heard of him. (He's like that kid at school who isn't very talkative or popular. A lot of people don't even realize he exists.)



Are you ready

To make matters worse, Jabez's story is tucked away in 1 Chronicles, one of the least-read sections of one of the least-read books of the Bible. The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are a long list of unusual names that even brilliant scholars have a hard time pronouncing.

Take chapter 4: "The sons of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal." And that's just the beginning.

Ahumai...

Ishma...

Idbash...

Hazelelponi...

Anub...

I'll forgive you if you have a sudden urge to put this book down and reach for the TV remote. But stay with me. Because forty-four names into the chapter, our story breaks through:

to do one thing today that could **change your life**
from ordinary to extraordinary?

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” 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. (1 Chronicles 4:9–10, NJKV)

That’s it. In the next verse, the roll call picks up as if nothing has happened—*Chelub, Shuah, Mehir...*

Do you see what just happened? Something about Jabez made the historian stop mid-drone, clear his throat, and switch tactics. “Ah, wait a minute!” he seems to say. “You just *gotta* know something about this guy named Jabez. He stands head and shoulders above the rest!”

What was it about Jabez that made him so special? You can search from front to back in your Bible, as I have, and you won’t find any more information than we have in these two verses. The even-shorter

version of this already short story would look like this:

- Things started badly for a person no one had ever heard of.
- He prayed an unusual, one-sentence prayer.
- Things ended amazingly well because God granted his request.

Clearly, the outcome can be traced to his prayer. Something about Jabez's request changed his life and left a permanent mark on the history books of Israel. I'll restate his four requests again:

1. "Please bless me indeed!"
2. "Please enlarge my territory!"
3. "Please put Your hand on me!"
4. "Please keep me from evil!"

At first glance, the four requests might strike you as sincere or smart but not terribly remarkable.

Yet just under the surface of each lies an amazing and powerful truth that many Christians *never* understand.

When you put this prayer to work in your life, things will start to happen.

Jump into the River!

When was the last time God worked through you in such a way that you knew beyond a doubt that He had done it? In fact, when was the last time you saw miracles happen on a regular basis in *your* life? If you're like most teenagers I've met, you wouldn't know how to ask for that kind of experience—or even if you should.

Recently, I was in Dallas to teach on the Jabez blessing to an audience of nine thousand. Later, over lunch, a man said to me, “Bruce, I heard you preach the message of Jabez fifteen years ago, and I haven't stopped praying it. God's miraculous answers have been so overwhelming that I have just never stopped.”

Teenagers around the world are learning to pray in the same way. In fact, I know students who have

used the prayer of Jabez all through junior high and high school. I know youth groups that have prayed it for the days leading up to a mission trip.

Just the other day, I received an e-mail from a kid named Brandon. “When you pray like Jabez, get ready for things to happen!” he wrote. He told me that he’d had one of the worst days he could remember recently—his car got a flat tire and his girlfriend



God knows that you want **something better**
for your life than just the usual ho-hum.

dumped him. But he decided to keep praying the little prayer we’re talking about. By the end of that week he had led three friends to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. And listen to this—they all *came to him* asking to talk about God! “God answers prayers,” Brandon wrote. “I’m only sixteen and God is using me in ways I never thought I could be used.”

God really does have an extraordinary life waiting for you. He’s been planning all the great things

you will do for Him since before you were even born! (Ephesians 2:10). All you have to do is want His best for your life...and ask for it with all your heart.

Think of it this way: Instead of standing near the river's edge, begging for a cup of water to get you through each day, you'll do something unthinkable. You'll take the little prayer with the giant prize and *jump into the river!* At that moment, you will begin to let the currents of God's grace and power carry you along. God's great plan for you will surround you and sweep you forward into the exciting life He has waiting.

If that is what you want, say good-bye to all those days that unwind like a boring brown ball of string. And keep reading.



Think what
a million teenagers
could do...