

The
P R A Y E R
of J A B E Z

✿ B I B L E S T U D Y ✿



B R U C E
W I L K I N S O N

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

The
PRAYER
of JABEZ

B I B L E S T U D Y
FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP USE



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with DAVID KOPP



Multnomah Books

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Introduction

A PRAYER TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Sometime around three thousand years ago, one of history's great nobodies decided to pray. When he looked at himself and his circumstances, he saw no reason for hope. But when he prayed, he prayed the boldest, most hopeful prayer he could imagine. And God answered.

God is still answering. The prayer of a man named Jabez is motivating millions of people today to seek the Lord in a new way, to cry out to Him for blessing, and to reach for a larger life in His service. Are you one? Then you too are an answer to Jabez's prayer.

Once you see what God can do through His most ordinary servants, you'll never want to slide back into mediocre living. For too long, Christians have drastically underestimated God's desire to bless them and work through them to accomplish His will in the world.

If Jabez were around today, he'd be quick to tell you that the words of his little prayer hold no magical powers. But he would also tell you that if you want to experience God's greater purpose for your life—no matter how unpromising your circumstances might be right now—you're just a prayer away.

THE LITTLE MAN WITH NO FUTURE

If you haven't read *The Prayer of Jabez* yet, I highly recommend you do. If you're new to the story, you'll find it in 1 Chronicles, buried in the official genealogies of the tribes of Israel. The historian, writing about 500 B.C., traces the official family tree of the Jews from Adam through thousands of

years up to his own time. That endeavor makes for hundreds of names—most of them unfamiliar and hard to pronounce.

Take chapter 4. *The sons of Judah were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.* And that's just verse one.

Ahumai

Ishma

Idbash

Hazelponi

Anub...

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BIBLE STUDY

The four-week Bible study you're holding invites you to go deeply into God's Word to see how the message of Jabez's little prayer is supported and explained by the whole of Scripture. Besides being biblically based and felt-needs oriented, the study has several key distinctives:

It's topical. We focus on the biblical reasons to pray for blessing, influence, power, and protection so that we can do God's work in the world. You won't find, for example, a book study or an in-depth approach to theology or doctrine.

It's conversation friendly. Some questions are information based. Some are intended simply to provoke a helpful discussion.

It's designed for individual or group use.

It's question driven. Sometimes called the Socratic method, this teaching method pulls you from topic to topic through a sequence of key questions.

It incorporates several learning approaches. You'll find inductive studies, fill-in-the-blanks, personal inventories, character profiles, Bible exposition, activity-based assignments, and inspiring quotes.

It offers optional study plans. The study presents more learning opportunities than a class can complete in an hour. Select the material that will work best for you. Some groups will want to extend this four-part study to an eight- or twelve-week course.

It's all about life change. The whole purpose of studying God's Word is to be changed in our character and our behavior so that we please God more, become more like Christ, and serve Him more every day.

BIBLE VERSION

The study, as well as the book it is based on, has been prepared using the New King James Version of the Bible. Using that version privately or in class will ensure convenience and clarity, but it is not required.

Not exactly suspenseful reading! But midlity, the chronicler stops. One name deserves special comment:

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)

HELPING YOU GET AROUND

You’ll see three icons used throughout the study to help you use the material more quickly.



indicates a key verse, definition, or explanation that you won’t want to miss.



indicates optional material for further study. Use this icon to help you decide what materials you can leave for later.



indicates a group process question that focuses on life experience.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The Prayer of Jabez Audio, read by the author, can provide busy people with an easy way to learn and review the message of the book.

The Prayer of Jabez Devotional (and accompanying *Journal*) by Bruce Wilkinson. This thirty-one-day devotional follows the same four-week structure as the Bible study.

If you are a teenager (or have one in your home), I recommend *The Prayer of Jabez for Teens*. These resources are all available from Multnomah Publishers.

For younger kids, I suggest *The Prayer of Jabez for Kids* (Tommy Nelson).

Visit www.prayerofjabez.com for recent updates on the Jabez phenomenon, new product information, inspiring stories from readers, and help from *Hot Questions, Helpful Answers*, a response forum from the author.

Also watch for the *Prayer of Jabez* videos, coming in 2002.

In the next verse, the roll call continues as if nothing has happened—*Chelub, Shuah, Mehir*... You can scour from front to back in the Bible as I have, looking for more insight into this man Jabez, and you'll find nothing. We know simply that things started badly for a person no one had heard of; he prayed an unusual, one-sentence prayer; and things ended extraordinarily well.

That one prayer and a life that was “more honorable than his brothers” earned Jabez a place of honor in Israel’s history books. And fortunately for us, his minibiography reveals an intriguing record of personal transformation. In only two verses, we see cause and effect—beginning, middle, and end. And if we look hard enough, we find hiding behind each of his four requests a truth that can change our lives and our futures.

WHERE MIRACLES BEGIN

Personal change begins when you cry out to God *for what He wants for you* with hands open and heart expectant. Miracles begin here, too. Each day you'll see new beginnings and new opportunities. You'll think new thoughts. The direction and impact of your life will shift. And your name, like Jabez's, will be headed for God's honor roll for all eternity.

As you study from page to page in the days ahead, remember that you are in full pursuit of blessing from a God who can “do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us” (Ephesians 3:20). May He strengthen and guide you—and bless you *indeed!*



God shapes the world by prayer.

Prayers are deathless.

They outlive the lives of those who utter them.

E. M. BOUNDS

Week One

“OH, THAT YOU WOULD
BLESS ME INDEED!”

*God is more eager
to bestow His blessings
on us than we are
to receive them.*

AUGUSTINE



GETTING STARTED

Have you asked God for anything truly impressive lately?

You've probably asked Him to bless the food, bless the kids, bless your day. But when was the last time you asked God for something huge—something that would change your life now and make an impact for all of eternity? To pour out His lovingkindness on you with such bounty that your heart would fill to overflowing?

The first part of the Jabez prayer, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed!” asks God to do something supernatural in your life. Because the only way you can live a blessed life is if God acts.

When you ask God for what He already longs to give you, amazing things start to happen!

THIS WEEK YOU'LL DISCOVER...

- ◆ what the word *blessing* means.
- ◆ why you must ask in order to receive certain kinds of blessings.
- ◆ why it's not selfish to ask God to bless you.
- ◆ what attitudes need to be revised to agree with the Bible.
- ◆ how to pray the advanced prayer for the Jabez blessing.

1. WHAT DO I REALLY BELIEVE ABOUT BLESSING?

1. *Some people feel greatly blessed by God. Others do not. Which category do you fall in, and why?*

MY BLESSING INVENTORY

2. *The following inventory will bring to the surface what you believe about God's desire to bless you. Score yourself with the numbers 1 through 5 as follows:*
 Strongly disagree. ② Slightly disagree. ③ Unsure. ④ Agree.
 ⑤ Strongly agree.

- ___ I pray every day asking God to bless me.
- ___ I can quickly recall specific blessings God has given in the past.
- ___ I think of God as loving and eager to give me blessing.
- ___ I believe that one reason God hates ongoing sin in my life is because it blocks some of the blessings he wants to give me.
- ___ I've experienced that the greatest blessings in life grow directly out of my personal relationship with God.
- ___ YOUR SCORE: Total the values assigned to the five statements. If you scored...

- 21–25 *You're flying high on the blessings of God.*
- 16–20 *You're a frequent flyer.*
- 11–15 *You're hoping to lift off soon.*
- 5–10 *You need to spread your wings.*

3. *How would you pray differently if you genuinely believed that there are many blessings God gives only to those who ask?*

“ ” TALK POINT “ ”

Growing up, did your family ever openly pray for God's blessings?

Did something happen that makes you feel totally “unblessable”?

Are you emotionally comfortable asking God for His blessing?