

1. We won't meet next week (Memorial Day). We'll meet all of June, skip July & August, & resume 9/12.
2. Our LifeLine for 6/6 will either be Psalm 87:7 or John 17:3.

LifeLines 5/23/22

Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me & enlarge my border, & that Your hand might be with me, & that You would keep me from hurt & harm!" And God granted what he asked.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

Jabez is a minor character in the OT. Here's verse 9, to provide the only context we're given: **Jabez was honored more (more honorable) than his brothers; & his mother named him Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."**

In ancient Jewish customs, a person's name was often expected to foretell his future. In this prayer, Jabez defied this name-branding. He was obviously a man of prayer who loved God & believed so strongly in His power that he cried out to Him, boldly. For the author of Chronicles to mention him, especially this briefly, suggests Jabez was of admirable character & very possibly had an important role to fulfill.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS

NIV

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that You would bless me & enlarge my territory! Let Your hand be with me, & keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

ESV

Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that You would bless me & enlarge my border, & that Your hand might be with me, & that You would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!” And God granted what he asked.

New King James Version

And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, & enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, & that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

NLT

He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, “Oh that You would bless me & expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, & keep me from all trouble & pain!” And God granted him his request.

TLB

He was the one who prayed to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would wonderfully bless me & help me in my work; please be with me in all that I do, & keep me from all evil & disaster!” And God granted him his request.

MSG

Jabez prayed to the God of Israel: “Bless me, O bless me! Give me land, large tracts of land. And provide your personal protection – don’t let evil hurt me.” God gave him what he asked.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying... Jabez called on the living & true God, who hears & answers prayer. He called on the God who was in covenant with the Israelites; the One who wrestled Jacob & changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Jabez knew the God *he believed in* was the *Source* of all blessings.

“Oh that You would bless me...” Some versions say, ***“Oh that you would bless me indeed.”*** Adding the word, “indeed,” is like putting 3 exclamation points at the end of the sentence! Jabez didn’t really specify how he wanted God to bless him. He left the specifics up to God. God’s blessings are real & produce real effects. When God blesses people, He blesses them so they will share Him with others. His blessings *extend* the individual. To be blessed by God is to be made holy, & we’re expected to share His goodness with others. In asking this, Jabez proved he was not relying on self-sufficiency. He knew he needed & could rely on God.

These blessings may have been for physical, emotional or spiritual reasons, improved relationships, peace of mind, a compassionate heart, etc. Asking God for blessings isn’t a bad thing. At meal time, most of us offer a blessing over our food. You’ve probably asked God to bless your family, friends, folks on the prayer list & others. The best blessings to ask for are spiritual blessings! God’s blessings are real & produce real effects.

& enlarge my border... This could refer to territory, domain, driving out the Canaanites, prospering his endeavors with increase. On the other hand, the intent may *not* be for land, but for making an impact for the Kingdom of God. He *could* be asking that the territory of his heart be enlarged & overflow to those around him. It could refer to responsibility, opportunity, business success or influence to build God’s kingdom. For us, it might be for influence in our home, work, or community.

& that Your hand might be with me... Jabez knew he’d need God’s help, so he asked for God’s hand to be with him, help him, lead & guide him on right paths, give him wisdom (even power), protect & strengthen him from enemies. Without God’s hand on him, perceived blessings would be a waste. God’s hand is all sufficient.

Moses prayer for his tribe of Judah was that Judah’s hands would be sufficient for him to accomplish God’s work. (***Deuteronomy 33:7, below.***)

& that You would keep me from (evil) hurt & harm!... This is a plea to keep him from the evil of sin, trouble, enemies, even the harm of causing evil/harm to others. He asked God not to allow any oppression to overcome him or cause grief (his name implied) fall upon him. In so doing, he renounced the

negative connotation of his name. He asked that no pain come upon him, including pain he would suffer if he caused pain to someone else. (*Selah.*)

This is similar to words we pray in The Lord's Prayer. God is the great defender not only of our lives, but also of our faith.

And God granted what he asked... God brought about/caused to come about what Jabez asked (prospering him in his undertakings, seeking knowledge & holiness, success in business, even in conflicts with the Canaanites).

Jabez honored God in his prayer. He didn't pray to "get something." He called on God to help him accomplish *God's* purposes. Jabez had the right attitude when he prayed & asked for right things. God is always ready to hear our prayers, especially those that honor & please Him.

SELAH

RELATED VERSES

Genesis 12:2-3, "I will make of you a great nation, & I will bless you, & make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, & the one who curses you I will curse; & in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 32:26, Then He said, "Let me go for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

Numbers 6:22-27, The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron & his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the Israelites: You shall say to them, The Lord bless you & keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, & be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, & give you peace. So they shall put My name on the Israelites, & I will bless them.

Deuteronomy 19:8-9, If the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your ancestors - And He will give you all the land that He promised your ancestors to give you, provided you diligently observe this entire commandment that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God & walking always in His ways - then you shall add 3 more cities to these 3.

Deuteronomy 33:7, And this he said of Judah: O Lord, give heed to Judah, & bring him to his people; *strengthen his hands for him, & be a help against his adversaries.*

1 Samuel 1:17, Then Eli answered, “Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to Him.”

2 Chronicles 16:9, For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to Him.

1 Kings 3:7-13, And now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to *go out or come in*. And Your servant is in the midst of the people whom You have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give Your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern Your people, able to discern between good & evil; for who can govern this Your great people?” *It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.* God said to him, “Because you have asked this, & have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise & discerning mind; no one like you has been before you & no one like you shall rise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches & honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. If you will walk in My ways, keeping My statutes & My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life.”

Psalms 21:4, (A psalm of David, referring to himself as king) He (David) asked You (God) for life; You gave it to him – length of days forever & ever.

Psalms 37:4-6, Take delight in the Lord, & He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him & He will act. He will make your vindication shine like the light, & the justice of your cause like the noonday.

Psalms 66:19-20, But truly God has listened; He has given heed to the words of my prayer. Blessed be God, because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me.

Psalm 67:6-7, The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere Him.

Psalm 116:1-2, I love the Lord because He has heard my voice & my supplications. Because He inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.

Psalm 119:173, *Let Your hand be ready to help me*, for I have chosen Your precepts.

Proverbs 10:22, The blessing of the Lord makes rich, & He adds no sorrow with it.

Proverbs 16:3, Commit your work to the Lord, & your plans will be established.

Isaiah 42:6a, I am the Lord your God, I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand & kept you.

Matthew 6:13, And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

Mark 11:24, So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, & it will be yours.

Hebrews 4:16, Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy & find grace to help in time of need.

2 Timothy 4:18, The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack & save me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever & ever. Amen.

1 John 5:14, And this is the boldness we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

SUMMARY

For us to pray like Jabez, we must each acknowledge who God is in *our* lives – the Source of all blessings. When we approach God with the right heart, appropriate attitude, & motives, He will give us blessings. We can approach Him boldly, just as Jabez did.

God is especially pleased when we ask Him to give our hearts the desire to spread His Gospel ([Romans 1:16-17](#), [LL, 5/2](#)). That expansion of territory would surely put a smile on God's face! If we ask God's hand to be with us/on us at all times, we'll surely take the right paths *for His sake* & maximize our blessings along the way.

When we learn to submit our will to God & pray like Jabez, we'll see God move in mighty ways; so consider praying this prayer for yourself & loved ones daily.* Let's ask God to do great things through us so we will bring Him glory.

Add This Verse to Your LifeLines!

***ALL* SCRIPTURE IS OUR –**

LifeLine!

Let's Continue Learning MORE!

*Adapt your own prayer from tonight's verse. Sandy can share an example.

References: biblehub.com; Upper Room Disciplines, May 16, 2022; Christianity.com; bibilium.com; crosswalk.com; biblegateway.com.