

The Jabez Prayer: Enlarge My Territory
Lynn Haven UMC
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Introduction

The second petition Jabez makes in his prayer is to ask God to enlarge his territory. In Jabez's time that was most likely a request for God to increase the size of the land in his possession. He was probably a farmer and more land would equal more opportunity to become prosperous. As a result, that prosperity would enable him to make a real difference in the world for the purpose of glorifying God. When we approach God with the sincere desires of our heart, He delights in granting them. In 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, at the end of Jabez's prayer, we are assured of this by the words written in response to his prayer: "So God granted him what he requested."

Search your heart for the unselfish desires God has placed within and spend some time digging deeper (as Jabez did) in prayer. How might those desires increase your ministry, joy, responsibility and faith?

Digging Deeper

Increased Ministry

1. If you were to ask God to enlarge your territory today, what would that mean in your life? What areas could you see moving in a more God-driven direction?
2. We heard about "Jabez appointments" in this week's sermon. (Divinely orchestrated encounters that enable us to minister to persons in need). Can you think of an example of an experience you have had where God put you in the right place, at the right time, to be able to minister to someone unexpectedly?

Increased Joy

1. How has spending time with the Lord in prayer, studying the Word alone (or in your small group), attending church or serving others increased your joy?
2. We have all heard the saying "it is better to give than to receive." This concept can be applied to the gift of our time and service as well. Imagine all the people and experiences you would miss out on if you ignored God's call to serve others. Describe a time when you were blessed by serving someone else.

Increased Responsibility

1. Luke 12:48 brings to mind a movie quote attributed to Peter Parker's (a.k.a Spiderman) uncle Ben, "With great power comes great responsibility." In this country we have so much more than a large majority of the world. What we take for granted, someone else is wishing for. For the purpose of furthering the kingdom, what are some ways you could make better use of the resources God has placed in your care?
2. Read Acts 6:2-3. Go forth and multiply! (Or something like that). Skilled workmen are all around us, secretly yearning for someone to tap them on the shoulder and show them how they can be of service. Some may be too scared, shy or simply unaware of how they might be able to use their gifts to honor God. Is there someone in your life with whom you could spend some time mentoring to be a disciple for Jesus Christ?

Increased Faith

1. Fear can prevent us from stepping out into the uncharted waters God may be calling us to enter. Is there something you have been scared of trying for fear of failure, rejection, time constraints, etc.? What if you tried it anyway? Step out in faith and trust God to handle all the little details. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped. He equips the called.

Conclusion

Jabez is remembered, not because of what he did, but because of what he prayed. Asking God to enlarge your territory is a bold act of faith that could yield eternal dividends of joy in your life, but will probably also require a great deal of work. As an act of faith and an expression of our desire to do great things for God, let's each pray this prayer every day this week: "O God and King, please expand my opportunities and my impact in ways that enable me to reach more people for Christ and touch more lives for Your glory. By Your grace and in Your power, let me do more for You! Amen."

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. (Luke 12:48b)