

## The Prayer of Jabez (part III)

### *I Chronicles 4:9-10*

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**Introduction:** We come tonight to our last consideration of I Chronicles 4:9-10 in light of the 2 books: *The Prayer of Jabez* by Bruce Wilkinson & *The Prayer of Jesus* by Hank Hanegraaff. I want us to begin with the text, “*And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren: and His mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying: Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed, & enlarge my coast, & that Thine hand might be with me, & that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested*” (I Chronicles 4:9-10). What can we conclude by the comparison of these 2 books?

#### I. Hanegraaff’s initial response to *The Prayer of Jabez* >

A. “Is this just another how-to formula – you know, ‘Pray this prayer once a day for 30 days & tell one other person about your new prayer habit,’ or could this really be ‘a God thing?’” (H.H. p. xi.)

B. “What would Jesus say about the prayer of Jabez? If we could ask Him, ‘Lord teach us how to pray,’ would He tell us to pray the prayer of Jabez?” (H.H. p. xi.)

C. “After reading *The Prayer of Jabez*, I was personally motivated to reexamine my own prayer life in light of Scripture. And it was from that study that this book was born” (H.H. p. xii.).

D. “You are about to plug into the power, provision, & purpose of prayer, as only the Son of God can provide it. In the end you will understand how the prayer of Jesus is the pattern for not only your own prayer life but for truly understanding all of the other prayers recorded in Scripture” (H.H. p. xii.).

#### II. Hanegraaff’s continual review to *The Prayer of Jabez* >

A. Compare Solomon’s opportunity by God to “*Ask what I shall give thee*” (II Chronicles 1:7) with the prayer of Jabez. Solomon “humbly asked for wisdom & understanding instead (:10). The Bible records that God was so pleased with his prayer that He not only made Solomon the wisest man who ever lived, but He blesses him with ‘riches, wealth, & honor’ (:12)” (H.H. pp. 2-3).

B. Consider the fact that when Jesus was asked how to pray, He did not respond by referring to a prayer of Joshua, Jephthah or Jabez, but rather: “Jesus knew that His disciples would never properly understand *examples* of prayer without first understanding *principles* of prayer. And that’s exactly why He gave us the prayer of Jesus” (H.H., p. 3).

C. “The goal of prayer should never be the roaring approval of the crowds but rather the approval of our Father in heaven... The secret to prayer is secret prayer” (H.H., p. 8).

D. “The tragedy of contemporary Christianity is that we measure the success of our prayer life by the size & scope of our accomplishments, rather than the strength of our relationships with God. All too often we are fixated on our outwardness, while God is focused on our inwardness” (H.H., p. 10).

E. Contrast this “fast-food – instant gratification” culture with: “A cacophony of voices promise us quick fixes & instant cures while in reality there are none. The secret of a successful marriage is found in the time spent developing a relationship with your spouse, The secret of raising kids is a function of the quality & quantity of the time spent interacting with them...” (H.H. pp. 15-16).

F. Note the warnings Jesus gives in this matter of prayer > Matthew 6:5-8. There is the warning of “*vain repetitions*” (6:7) & the promise, “*But your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him*” (6:8). H.H. then asks: Why bother praying if God knows what we need before we even ask Him? (p. 19).

G. “Prayer, however is not merely a means of presenting our requests, it is a means of pursuing a relationship with our Heavenly Father” (H.H., p. 20).

### III. Hannegraaff’s ultimate reaction to *The Prayer of Jabez* >

A. “If we are to nurture a strong bond with our Creator, we must continually communicate with Him. And prayer is our primary way of doing just that” (H.H., p. 21).

B. “A memorable way of prioritizing the principles of such communication through prayer is found in the acronym F-A-C-T-S > Faith – Adoration – Confession – Thanksgiving – Supplication:” (H.H., p. 21).

C. “Faith in God naturally leads to adoration. Through adoration we express our genuine, heartfelt love & longing for God. Adoration inevitably leads to praise & worship, as our thoughts are focused on God’s surpassing greatness” (H.H., p. 23).

D. “While unconfessed sin will not break our *union* with God, it will break our *communion* with God. Thus confession is a crucial aspect of daily prayer (see I John 1:9)” (H.H., p. 24).

E. “We ought to approach God ‘overflowing with thankfulness’ (Col. 2:7) as we devote ourselves ‘to prayer, being watchful & thankful’ (Col. 4:2). Such thankfulness is an action that flows from the sure knowledge that our heavenly Father knows exactly what we need & will supply it” (H.H., p. 25).

F. “We must ever be mindful of the fact that the purpose of supplication is not to pressure God into providing us with provisions & pleasure, but rather to conform us to His purposes (see I John 5:14-15) (H.H., pp. 26-27).

G. Compare also A-C-T-S > Adoration – Confession – Thanksgiving – Supplication.

Conclusion: Consider Hannegraaff’s practical guidelines for prayer in pages 92-93. He concludes his book by saying: “Prayer is a beautiful foretaste of something we will experience for all eternity. Paradise lost will soon become Paradise restored & a whole lot more. For we will experience something not even Adam & Eve experienced – face-to-face communication with the very One who taught us the prayer of Jesus” (p. 95). What can we learn by the examination of these 2 books?