



REFLECTIONS

January 5, 2014

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain."

1 Chronicles 4:10

Lessons from the Jabez Prayer

Perhaps Jabez needed to lose weight, or maybe improve his muscle tone, or read the Torah every day. But he included none of those requests in his prayer. He prayed for God to bless him and grant him a larger role. And he asked God to protect him physically so he would be able to perform in a greater arena of service to God.

Traditionally, each year begins with resolutions that will make something better. Weight loss seems to always head the list along with saving money, stopping a bad habit, and finding a new job. But with all of them something is missing—the expressed reason for doing them.

Too often resolutions define goals without association to a meaningful purpose for achieving them. Without a meaningful purpose, passion and commitment to accomplish the goals are not strong enough to endure for long. But there is purpose behind every goal and assessing its worthiness is a beneficial exercise. Is the outcome self-serving or God serving?

Jabez was a minor character appearing in a book that draws little notice in the Bible. Not much is known about him except his prayer, but there are some lessons from the Jabez prayer to take away.

He prayed for the Lord to bless him with a greater role; and he prayed that no harm would come to hinder him. Jabez may have needed to lose weight or increase his muscle tone to perform well in a larger role; and he may have also needed a greater understanding of the Torah to be effective in it. Or there may have been a need to change jobs for him to play a greater role; but he directed his attention to his desire to serve the Lord in a larger way rather than the steps necessary to do it. And here is the best part.

1 Chronicles goes on to tell us, "*And God granted his request.*"

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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