AT THE TABLE

A BIBLE STUDY TEACHING SERIES ON PRAYER

SESSION 3

The Prayer of Jabez

1 Chronicles 4:9–10 • AMPC

IN HIS PRESENCE

CROWN CODE • REAL MAN CODE • MOM CODE

AT THE TABLE
Session 3: The Prayer of Jabez

OUR TEXT

1 Chronicles 4:9–10 (AMPC)

"Jabez was honorable above his brothers; but his mother named him Jabez [sorrow maker], saying, Because I bore him in pain. Jabez cried to the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that You would bless me and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and You would keep me from evil so it might not hurt me! And God granted his request."

1 WHAT THIS PRAYER MEANS

Jabez appears in only two verses of Scripture, buried in a long genealogy, and yet those two verses contain one of the boldest prayers in the Bible. His name meant "pain" — a label given to him at birth that he could have carried as his identity for life. Instead, Jabez refused to let his name define his future. He brought his pain directly to God and asked, specifically and unapologetically, to be blessed. And God granted it.

2 WHAT IT MEANS IN THE BIBLE / CONTEXT

The text tells us Jabez was "honorable above his brothers" — we're given no details of his accomplishments, only that he was known as a man of prayer. His name was a wound spoken over him before he could speak for himself: his mother named him "sorrow maker" because his birth was so painful. In the ancient world, a name was believed to shape a person's destiny. Jabez had every reason to live small, apologize for his existence, and expect trouble to follow him.

Instead, he prayed four specific things: that God would bless him, that God would enlarge his territory, that God's hand would be with him, and that God would keep him from evil so it would not bring him pain. This is not a vague, polite request. It is a direct, four-part appeal — for blessing, for increase, for God's presence, and for protection from the very pain his name predicted. And the text simply says: "God granted his request."

3 ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES (ESV)

James 4:2

You do not have, because you do not ask.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.

4 TEACHING

The Prayer of Jabez gives us permission to pray specifically and boldly for God's blessing, without treating that request as selfish or unspiritual. Jabez did not ask in order to hoard for himself — he asked so that his life, his influence, his "territory," would expand for God's purposes. Asking God to enlarge what He has entrusted to us is not greed; it is faith that believes God has more for us than the label we were given.

Notice, too, that Jabez's prayer names his fear directly: "keep me from evil so it might not hurt me." He does not pretend to be fearless. He brings the specific pain his name represents straight to God and asks to be kept from it. This is a model for us — we don't have to dress up our prayers or pretend our wounds aren't there. We can name them exactly as they are and ask God to intervene.

And perhaps the most important part of this story is the shortest: "And God granted his request." Scripture does not linger on how, or explain the mechanics. It simply tells us that a man who refused to be defined by his pain prayed boldly, and God answered. Jabez's legacy is not built on his achievements — it is built entirely on this one honest, specific prayer.

5 PONDER

- Is there a label — spoken over me by someone else, or by my own circumstances — that I have let define my future?
- Do I feel comfortable asking God specifically and boldly for blessing, or does that request feel selfish to me?
- What is my "territory" — the sphere of influence, relationships, or calling — that I could ask God to enlarge for His purposes?
- What specific pain or fear do I need to name honestly before God this week, the way Jabez named his?

6 PUT IT IN ACTION

- Write out your own version of the Prayer of Jabez, naming your specific request for blessing, enlargement, God's presence, and protection from a named pain.
- Identify one label or name you were given — by circumstance, by others, or by your own self-talk — and bring it honestly to God this week.
- Pray boldly for one specific enlargement of your influence or calling, trusting it is not selfish to ask.
- Share the Prayer of Jabez with someone in your family this week and pray it over them by name.

7 CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray

God of Israel, we come to You the way Jabez did — honestly, specifically, without apology. Oh, that You would bless us and enlarge our territory! Let Your hand be with us in everything we do. Keep us from the evil and the pain that our names, our histories, or our circumstances would try to assign to us. We refuse to be defined by what has been spoken over us apart from You. Grant our request, Lord, the way You granted his. In Jesus' name, Amen.