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Newsletter for January 2006

Vol. 4 No. 1



Praise's of the Month



Well, some of you may have noticed that you had not gotten a newsletter lately. It seems that our overseas partners miss the teachings more than our own backyard America. That does not say much for our country, but anyway on to the praise's. The main reason for the ministry not getting out the newsletters is we have been going through changes so to speak. In November, we launched Where the Rubber Meets the Road on our web site. Since that time, we have seen an unexpected growth in the programs listeners especially in the poorer countries of Africa. Praise the Lord. Not only has this increased the programs Internet listeners, but saves the ministry \$250 per month that can be used for more Bibles. Again, another praise is that the Bible ministry is growing and growing as can be evidenced by this e-mail, I received. "Hello pastor aj, i thank God for how he had been using this wonderful ministry to minister to me and others , i pray God will continue to bless this ministry and take you to greater height in life for his own glory.I thank you for those bibles you sent, i received them last week(8 copies), they are beautiful .By the grace of God i will distribute them by the help of God to souls. Pls pray for me that God will put his fire in my heart, fire burning for souls and for him. Once again God bless you. from bro timothy dotun komolafe from nigeria." Just one example. Just think that every time you give to this ministry you are being part of reaching the world. It just boggles my mind. We have even gotten a request for large print Bibles for the older Christians in Africa! His Will Ministry experienced a 34% growth in our Internet ministry alone last year. Our sister ministry Global Prayer Warriors experienced a 16.5% growth in prayers and visitors to the web pages. The business that the Lord has given us is growing and Mary and I should be totally debt free by mid-year. We are just so excited to be able to work totally for the Lord owing no man. God is so good people. Please make it a point to look back at last year and give the Lord praises for every good thing that happened to you and then stop and tell someone what great things He has done for you. Therefore, these are just a few reasons the newsletter missed a few months but it is back and we praise the Lord and give the Lord the glory He deserves. PRAISE THE LORD PEOPLE!

God Bless Pastor A. J.

 **The Word Speaks!** 

Exodus 20:3-7 (NLT) ³“Do not worship any other gods besides me. ⁴“Do not make idols of any kind, whether in the shape of birds or animals or fish. ⁵You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not share your affection with any other god! I do not leave

unpunished the sins of those who hate me, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations. ⁶But I lavish my love on those who love me and obey my commands, even for a thousand generations."

Now when God decided to give the Israelites the law He started simply enough. The first and second commandments were simply do not worship or put anything before me. **PERIOD!!!** So I must ask what is wrong with this picture? If you're like Mary and I read the following and weep.

(I-Newsire) - MARY-IS-GOD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT, a Marian Movement within the Catholic Church will open a new site on December this year. In a private conversation with FNC, its founder Dominic Sanchez Falar, stated "the need to inform the Catholic World of the truth of the Fatima message amidst satanic efforts in the Vatican to hide the truth for good". Dominic claims that the third secret of Fatima states Mary's divinity and is the reason why it has remained enshrouded with cover-ups and misinformation by Vatican officials. "The problem is that the Fatima Apparition got the Church's authentication before Church officials then, were able to know the message of Our Blessed Mother. It would have been a different story had the message been known prior to Church investigation of the apparition itself. It was all in accordance to the Will of The Most Holy Spirit", Dominic stressed. MIGCM has supporters in at least 2 major islands in the Philippines and has close associations with some influential catholic priests. Dominic though, refrained from giving more information when asked to name his supporters in the Clergy. Noticeably the Archdiocese is still silent on the matter despite complaints by some concerned Catholics on what they claim as heresy being propagated by MIGCM. The movement, which is barely two months old, is constantly progressing and its activities are quite conspicuous in the Internet.

I cannot speak for you but it sure seems that these guys have it wrong they are controlled by Satan not people who say they are crazy being controlled by Satan

Mary's Thoughts for the Month

Do you ever wonder what God's purpose for you life is? It is clearly outlined here in the book of Ephesians. ¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16) What are God's intentions for our lives? God intends to perfect and equip His saints. In the business world or any kind of secular occupation, it is imperative that one has the necessary education and practical training to equip him for his particular position in a firm. However, these educational training methods are not sufficient. All successful businessmen will admit that experience is what is ultimately needed to make a success of your vocation. In the spiritual realm this is of no less importance. If, what we learn through God's word is not translated into an experiential knowledge, then all the other educational training methods are null and void. This is what Paul had in mind when he said: 2 Corinthians 1:3-6 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. God's word is always the first place we should go when we are searching for the purpose He has for us. It cannot be found in a forty-day plan that you study or a self-help book. God does have a purpose for your life. He will reveal that purpose to you as you seek Him and spend time in His word. Even tribulations are a part of God's purpose for your life, these teach us valuable lessons, and draw us nearer to Him. Jay and I know a little bit about going through trials and tribulations, and we have learned to submit ourselves to His hand of correction quickly, we have also learned to praise Him for all things that come our way. Praise Him for everything in your life, the good and the bad and His purpose will be revealed to you. You will also be glorifying Him by giving Him a sacrifice of praise.



The Sad things Department



Religious tensions in Punjab state increased last week, as police who had taken several Christians into custody, presumably to protect them against Hindu extremists, instead beat them in jail. From 40 to 50 Christians were praying at a home in Maloud, Mukhtsar district, the night of September 25 when a mob, including members of the Hindu extremist group Bajrang Dal, stormed the house. Led by Lekhraj Batla, president of the Bajrang Dal in Maloud, the mob threatened the Christians and beat some of them. Bajrang Dal is the youth wing of the extremist Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council). The believers called the police, and four of them – Gurdev Singh, Balkaran Singh, Jaswant Singh and Amar Singh, a pastor – were taken into custody, as the mob had turned even more violent.

At the police station, however, Hukum Chand Sharma, assistant sub-inspector of the Maloud Police station, put them behind bars. Sharma, who was drunk, repeatedly struck the Christians, gravely injuring Gurdev Singh and Amar Singh. Sharma then sent forces to arrest Pastor Swarnjit Singh, also present at the prayer meeting. But Pastor Singh had just left his home to pray with others for those in jail, so the police arrested Pastor Sukhdev Singh, a guest at his house. Pastor Singh had also attended the earlier prayer meeting. Police took Sukhdev into custody, and at the jail Sharma beat the 60-year-old pastor, leaving him seriously wounded. "The police worked hand-in-glove with the Bajrang Dal even before they attacked our meeting," Pastor Swarnjit said. "Hukum Chand Sharma was fully drunk, and he hit the Christians again and again, saying to them repeatedly, 'Call your Jesus now, and let me see how he saves you from the wrath of Hukum Chand Sharma.'" Police released the Christians the next evening, as according to Indian law a person cannot be detained in custody for more than 24 hours. "The pastors and the three others were in a bad shape when the police let them off next evening," Pastor Swarnjit said. "They had not even been treated for the wounds that they had received, so we had to admit them to the hospital straight away." Gurdev Singh and Sukhdev Singh remained in the hospital with serious injuries. When Christian leaders of Maloud reported the incident to the senior superintendent of police, he initially paid no heed. But after the Christian delegation persisted in providing him with facts, he asked for an investigation. Results are still awaited.

Pastor's Corner

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HELL?

Did you notice? Have you heard? That hell does not exist anymore? There is nothing to be afraid of because hell has been closed by popular opinion. No more flames, no more eternal torment, no more sulfur and brimstone. At least I must assume this to be true because I cannot remember the last time I heard a hell and damnation sermon. Years ago I remember reading a great sermon from one of the old fire preachers. He said the best deception the old devil has ever come up with was convincing people he really did not exist. He even went further and made them think of him as a harmless Halloween character with his red suit and horns. The old devil has gone even further now to send the delusion that it is politically incorrect to preach about hell and damnation. If we want people to come to our churches let's give away cars, homes etc. Let's not convict them of sin! Oh! there is another politically incorrect term. Today's biggest and most popular preachers tell us they are here to make us feel good. They preach a Santa Claus God whom we can tell what we want and how we want it. Please, someone show me where Jesus said our jobs as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to make people feel good! It is my understanding that my calling as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to preach the Gospel truth no matter whom I offend. My understanding is that it is better to offend someone and save them from hell than to make them comfortable and condemn them to hell. Oh! Yes I forgot hell has been closed because of lack of interest. Or could it be like we are told in the Bible. *Isaiah 5:14-19 (TLB)* ¹⁴Hell is licking its chops in anticipation of this delicious morsel, Jerusalem. Her great and small shall be swallowed up, and all her drunken throngs. ¹⁵In that day the haughty shall be brought down to the dust; the proud shall be humbled; ¹⁶but the Lord Almighty is exalted above all, for he alone is holy, just, and good. ¹⁷In those days flocks will feed among the ruins. Lambs and calves and kids will pasture there! ¹⁸Woe to those who drag their sins behind them like a bullock on a rope ¹⁹They even mock the Holy One of Israel and dare the Lord to punish them. "Hurry up and punish us, O Lord," they say. "We want to see what you can do!" ²⁰They say that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right; that black is white and white is black; bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.

Hum! Does this sound familiar. The world goes out of its way to prove that verse 20 is true. What was right has now become wrong, what was wrong has now become right. Please take time to note that these words of Isaiah were written 800+/- years before Christ walked the earth and over 2800 years before today. But can't you picture the poor sinner that never accepted Jesus Christ as his or her Savior. He was just a happy church goer listening to the happy gospel while sucking down his Starbucks latte from the mega church store. He dies and goes to hell, but of course hell

does not exist and he tries to explain to the devil that he is not real and it is all a mistake. As he is being dragged into eternal torment the old devil is explaining to him how he is only one of many who that pastor has condemned to hell and that he (the devil) is eagerly awaiting his workers arrival. [Ezekiel 3:17-18 \(NLT\)](#) ¹⁷"Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman for Israel. Whenever you receive a message from me, pass it on to the people immediately. ¹⁸If I warn the wicked, saying, 'You are under the penalty of death,' but you fail to deliver the warning, they will die in their sins. And I will hold you responsible, demanding your blood for theirs." Did you get that the false preachers and teachers will be held responsible for ever person they fail to tell the truth to?

I guess my question is how can we Christians win a hurting world to Jesus if Hell does not exist? How can anyone fear a God who "wouldn't dare" punish the evil. If we are so afraid to offend someone that we won't tell them that they will end up in a place of eternal punishment why should they desire to become a Christian and serve Jesus. If there is not a devil trying to drag them into hell for eternal punishment what would make them want to become a Christian and live a holy life? Oh yes, I forgot that Holiness is the other thing that has apparently died and very few have even attended it's funeral. No one can really put their finger on how or when holiness died. It just seems that one day someone noticed it did not show up at church or in a Christians life anymore. But, with the happy gospel being preached along with the Santa Claus God no one cared. What do we need holiness for when we can tell God what to do and how to do it. We don't need to be holy and righteous to get Gods approval if that is the case. When was the last time you heard a minister preach on the necessity of being holy. Didn't God say [Leviticus 11:44 \(NLT\)](#) ⁴⁴"After all, I, the LORD, am your God. You must be holy because I am holy..." Today the average Christian blends into the world so well we cannot tell them apart.

I mean if hell is closed what reason do I have to want to be a Christian living a holy life? Hey, when you're dead, you're dead, right? WRONG! When you're dead your in HELL one moment after if you do not have Jesus. Just the other day I received one of the greatest compliments I have received in a long time. One of our listeners from Africa said they loved to listen to the Radio programs because I was a "hell and damnation preacher"

In the late 1800's the German Philosopher Nietzsche wrote "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, murderers of all murderers, console ourselves? That which was the holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet possessed has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? With what water could we purify ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we need to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods simply to be worthy of it?" This was a rhetorical question he was speaking of the state of the society he knew. He saw the change the slow decaying change away from God.



Time magazine in the late 1980' asked the question " Is God Dead? I was only 27 years old and a young Christian at the time. But I remember pausing and wondering why. Not why or how God had died but why and how the Christian church had failed so much that such a question would even be thought to be asked. What have we done my fellow followers of Jesus What have we done to our fellow man by not preaching the Gospel of Jesus. By not telling them they are all doomed to an eternity in Hell? My friends, I can tell you will 100% faith and assurance there is a hell that is alive and well and waiting eagerly for you if you don't have a relationship with Jesus.

A few years back a new saying popped up. " Jesus Don't leave earth with out Him" I love that thought. But, take a moment with this thought. [1 Samuel 2:25 \(NLT\)](#) ²⁵"If someone sins against another person, God can mediate for the guilty party. But if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede?" If hell is closed and God is dead who will intercede? I could be wrong but denying the existance of hell and failing to preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ is sinning against His Father and who will intercede for you.

I will leave you with the words of my Savior. [Revelation 1:17-18 \(KJV\)](#)

¹⁷And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and

the last: ¹⁸I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

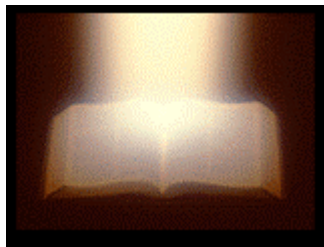
**Think About it my friend.
God Bless
Pastor A. J.**

PONDER THIS DEPARTMENT

Survey Shows Many Pastors Misread Congregants' Priorities

Two national surveys conducted by the Barna Research Group show that, while pastors claim members of their congregations are deeply committed to God, lifestyles and actions of the congregants indicate otherwise. The Barna surveys asked pastors what their congregational members are most passionate about. On average, the church leaders' responded that 70 percent of adults in their churches considered their personal faith in God above all other priorities. In fact, as many as one out of every six pastors believed that 90 percent or more of the adults in their churches hold their relationship with God as their top priority in life. However, a sample of adults asked to identify their top priority in life provided a different outcome. Only one out of every seven adults put their faith in God at the top of their priority list. George Barna, president of the Barna Group, believes the discrepancy between the pastors' beliefs about congregants' priorities and the church members' actual priorities can easily be explained. One problem, Barna says, is that too many pastors often use superficial measures such as church attendance to gauge commitment among their congregations. "Looking at attendance, it's good to fill up the church and to raise the money for the programs," he observes, "but the reality is, Jesus didn't die on the cross to fill church auditoriums." What Christ died for, Barna asserts, is "so that people's lives would be transformed and He would be number one in their lives. Attendance really does nothing to measure that." Nor, he points out, does it give any clear indication of people's commitment to specific aspects of their Christian faith, such as evangelism -- something else the recent study showed is not a priority in most churches. "About seven out of every eight churches don't even look at whether or not their people are in fact sharing their faith in Christ with others," the Christian author and researcher notes. "And even fewer churches, of course, take a look at what is happening in those instances where the gospel is being shared with nonbelievers." Barna believes surveys like these are important, especially for a contemporary culture in which those in the pews are for the most part lukewarm about their faith. He says the results could help church leaders better gauge congregants' priorities and could also help churches reconsider how they evaluate their ministry.

This Months Bible Moment



The things we have given to the devil without a fight Part Two

Has any one besides myself noticed how old slue foot has been slowly removing Christians' eyes from off of Jesus? A little at a time he has caused us to move our attention off the Lord and what

He wanted. Today I just want to talk about one example, Holiness: **Leviticus 20:26 (NLT)** ²⁶You must be holy because I, the LORD, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own. Or **1 Peter 2:9 (ASV)** ⁹But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Has anyone noticed that holiness in the church and a Christian's life has died? Not only has it died but it seems that very few even noticed it was gone and even fewer attended the funeral. Holiness in a Christians life has been replace with a softer easier to swallow pill. Have you noticed the, we fall down we get up gospel? Or, have you heard the, we are human and even God knows that gospel? We wonder why we crave the signs and wonders. We wonder why there are great numbers of false prophets running around. We wonder why the only one getting rich is the blab it and grab it preachers themselves. I cannot count how many prayer requests come in to Global prayer from people who have "sowed their seed to meet their need" only to be in a worse financial position then they were before. Then when you tell them that the "mighty" man of God who told them to sow their seed is the only one getting rich they are mad at you.

Can you see how the old devil has taken our eyes off the truth and put them on lies? When you cannot tell the difference between a worldly business conference with speeches to uplift and inspire and your Sunday morning services then you are in big trouble my friend. Let's look at a worldly definition of holiness. Below is the dictionary definition.

ho-ly (hl) *adj.* **ho-li-er, ho-li-est** **1.** Belonging to, derived from, or associated with a divine power; sacred. **2.** Regarded with or worthy of worship or veneration; revered: a holy book. **3.** Living according to a strict or highly moral religious or spiritual system; saintly: a holy person. **4.** Specified or set apart for a religious purpose: a holy place. **5.** Solemnly undertaken; sacrosanct: a holy pledge. **6.** Regarded as deserving special respect or reverence:

First, each of the six qualities of being holy all has one thing in common. God's own words in Leviticus, " I have set you apart from the other people...". Let's look again at what God says: **Leviticus 19:1-2 (KJV)** And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy. In addition, **Leviticus 11:44 (ASV)** For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that moveth upon the earth. And again, **Leviticus 11:45 (ASV)** ⁴⁵For I am Jehovah that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

Do you get the central message here? God is telling the people of Israel that the key to His blessings is holiness. We are to be Jesus to the world. We are to be as Paul put it "a peculiar people". The other day I lost my temper. Yes! It still happens to me rarely. But, I had to apologize because of it. The person who was the recipient of my momentary lapse looked at me and said, "how can you call yourself a pastor if you're going to act like that." Sadly, he was right. When Jesus was mocked, beaten, spat upon, whipped, and finally hung on a cross you did not hear one curse, one discouraging word. Why because He was the Son of God, and therefore he was Holy as His Father is Holy. How can we expect our Lord and Savior to bless us, to empower us, heal us, if all we want is something for ourselves?

Be honest with yourself, ask do you feel holy, does your life show forth holiness or do you fit right in with the rest of the human race? It is as David said when his sin with Bathsheba was found out. **2 Samuel 12:13 (KJV)** ¹³And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. You see when you use the name Christian and live a life no different from the world you sin directly against the Lord. You, whether intentionally or not, mock God and my friend I would not want to be in your shoes. There is coming a time and it may be here that you will be turned over to your own delusions. Listen to what Paul had to say to the Romans. **Romans 1:19-32 (NLT)** ¹⁹For the truth

about God is known to them instinctively. God has put this knowledge in their hearts. ²⁰From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse whatsoever for not knowing God. ²¹Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. The result was that their minds became dark and confused. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became utter fools instead. ²³And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people, or birds and animals and snakes. ²⁴So God let them go ahead and do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. ²⁵Instead of believing what they knew was the truth about God, they deliberately chose to believe lies. So they worshiped the things God made but not the Creator himself, who is to be praised forever. Amen. ²⁶That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷And the men, instead of having normal sexual relationships with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men and, as a result, suffered within themselves the penalty they so richly deserved. ²⁸When they refused to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their evil minds and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, fighting, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They are forever inventing new ways of sinning and are disobedient to their parents. ³¹They refuse to understand, break their promises, and are heartless and unforgiving. ³²They are fully aware of God's death penalty for those who do these things, yet they go right ahead and do them anyway. And, worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. You are probably saying right now that is not me! But if you do not have holiness in your life I challenge you to re-read it carefully and be totally honest with yourself that none, no not one of the above applies to you. I will be totally honest with you my life is not holy enough, because there are a few words in Paul's description that still pop up their head in my life. I will leave you with the words of Revelation.

Revelation 22:10-11(NLT) ¹⁰Then he instructed me, "Do not seal up the prophetic words you have written, for the time is near. ¹¹Let the one who is doing wrong continue to do wrong; the one who is vile, continue to be vile; the one who is good, continue to do good; and the one who is holy, continue in holiness." "See, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

It is your choice my friends. When the final moment comes, when the eyes close for the last time and you realize this is it. Will you have that peace of knowing you followed Jesus and lived a Christlike life to the end? Or will you die with an uneasy feeling, that questioning? I am not a betting person, but if I was I would chose holiness and being different over conforming to the world any day. **Romans 12:2-3 (NLT)** ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. ³As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you.

Love Ya Pastor A. J.

Give me that old time religion!!

PRAYER OF JABEZ PART 2

By

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The James passage he used is piggy backed to the other of Jesus' but it is taken from the context of "we do not have because we ask amiss." In other words for ourselves- wrong motives, which is exactly what he is encouraging. So I'm surprised he would use this as a validation. He asks "*is it possible God wants you to be more selfish in your prayers? I've met so many earnest Christians who take it as a sign of immaturity to think such thoughts.*" He goes on to say that we think it is impolite or greedy to ask for too many blessings. John 14:13-15 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." There is the bottom line. If your walking correctly you will not ask amiss! or self but for the things of God, then he will be glorified. Wilkinson dissects each of the requests of Jabez, pouring his own speculation at times into what Jabez was supposedly thinking or doing as he prayed. "*enlarge my territory*" ... *The next part of the Jabez prayer—a plea for more territory ... If Jabez had worked on Wall Street, he might have prayed, "Lord , increase the value of my investment portfolios. When Christian executives ask me, "Is it right for me to ask God for more business?" my response is, "Absolutely!" If you're doing your business God's way, it's not only right to ask for more, but He is waiting for you to ask. Your business is the territory God has entrusted to you.*" (pp. 30-31) How does he know what God's will is for you? Is it always more?

He then goes into his explanation of Jabez's prayer. What he does is take one man's personal cry and applies it to all of ours. He spiritualizes certain points to make it applicable for today.(1 Chron. 4:9 in the SEPTUAGINT – "And Jabez was more glorious than his brethren; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, I have brought thee forth as Jabez. And Jabez invoked the God of Israel, saying, If in blessing thou wilt bless me, and enlarge my borders, and thy hand be with me, and wilt give me understanding not to depress me: and God brought about all that he requested."

I do not see Jabez's 2nd request as God *enlarge my territory*, meaning to expand his influence. Jabez' cry for extending the borders literally meant the land geographically. Chronicles is about the tribes and genealogy. Although there is nothing wrong with asking for this, again if our prayer is reduced to say this prayer for our getting blessed we have a problem-- not just with the prayer-- with our heart. My and others concern is that this awakening for the need to pray includes this attitude in it.

If we were to take Wilkinson's advice and apply it to others in the Bible, would it work? What if John the Baptist prayed to have his borders extended, would he have been in the will of God. Certainly he could not have said, "I must decrease and He must increase." Or what of Peter, who was told by the Lord at the end of the gospel of John that John will live and he will not. Would Jesus have answered his prayer of Jabez by saying oh bless me and expand my life? I hope you get the picture.

"*His kindness in recording Jabez's story in the Bible is proof that it's not who you are, or what your parents decided for you, or what you were "fated" to be that counts. What counts is knowing who you want to be and asking for it. Through a simple, believing prayer, you can change your future. You can change what happens one minute from now.*"(p.29) I can change my future! This all seems to narcissistic, what I want to be, what I want, mine. What about God's will and plans, are we not to seek what he wants us to be?

Wilkinson certainly adds to the account filling in what did not happen. Speculations are consistently offered "*In my mind's eye, I picture Jabez standing before a massive gate recessed into a sky-high wall. Weighed down by the sorrow of his past and the dreariness of his present, he sees before him only impossibility—a future shut off. But raising his hands to heaven, he cries out, "Father, oh, Father! Please bless me! And what I really mean is ... bless me a lot!"*" (p. 22)

Bless "ME"

If we look at the Scripture, besides Jabez there is only one other time anyone asks God directly to bless them like this. It is when Jacob wrestled with the Lord all night and the Lord said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" (Gen. 32:26) His name was then changed to Israel and from his line came the 12 tribes of Israel the nation. It was God's intention to do this.

God has automatically given the Church what we need and it is all found in Christ. Eph. 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." The reason for this is because of the new covenant Gal 3:14 "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Are we not complete in Christ already?

More often the term used is "blessed be the Lord" or God, not man. We are not encouraged to pray bless me, but to walk in his grace and we receive these spiritual (and sometimes physical blessing) because of His promises.

We do not receive them because we didn't pray like Jabez, but because we did not ask in accordance to His will or are not in obedience to God.

The way I see it the book encourages and sanctions a form of selfishness as part of one's relationship with God. Prayer is to have us learn the will of God and that our will would agree with the will of God. If my prayer does not line up with God's will as revealed in the Scriptures, then I need to ask Him to change my heart. Molding us by changing our desire is part of the sanctification process. What is ignored is for God to change our hearts in Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez*. Selfishness is encouraged although he states it in such a way that to further the kingdom it must run through us. The repeating of Jabez's prayer is for the purpose of causing God to bring His blessings and miracles to us. *"You will change your legacy and bring supernatural blessings wherever you go. God will release His miraculous power in your life now. And for all eternity, He will lavish on you His honor and delight"* (pp. 91-92).

Wilkinson states *"If seeking God's blessings is our ultimate act of worship, and asking to do more for Him is our utmost ambition, then asking for God's hand upon us is our strategic choice to sustain and continue the great things that God had begun in our lives. That's why you could call God's hand on you "the touch of greatness." You do not become great; you become dependent on the strong hand of God. Your surrendered need turns into His unlimited opportunity. And He becomes great through you."* (p.49)

There are some things he said that are right and some wrong. Yes we want the kingdom extended through our lives but our chief aim should be to bless God and be ministering to him, not seeking blessing for ourselves! The major flaw is "seeking God's blessings" is not an act of worship-- neither is it the ultimate act of worship.

On p.23- Wilkinson says to bless means to ask for or to impart supernatural favor. Yet we find that God more often gave his blessing without any asking. For example Abraham in Gen.12 was to go out from his country and family and God will bless him and make his name great. This is about grace when someone walked in faith, we don't have to do any work to receive God's blessing. God gives out of his love and mercy based on the (new) covenant.

"When we ask for God's mighty presence like Jabez and the early church did, we will also see tremendous results that can be explained only as from the hand of God."(p.55) Yes but it was not a bless me or praying Jabez' prayer but help us to help others extend your kingdom by the gospel.

Wilkinson seems to think that Jabez is the ultimate prayer for all people of all time. *"the more God answers your Jabez prayers (p.71). I think Jabez would have liked that prayer (p.74). Speaking on God opening up people for discussion "I call these encounters Jabez appointments."*(p.37) "If you're like many who use the Jabez prayer...you'll come to times in your life when you feel so blessed that you stop praying for more, at least for a while (p.84). If one becomes hooked on these "blessings" will they stop and be satisfied? Jabez is held up so much that it becomes the criteria for conviction of sin-" *You should that when you sin after experiencing the Jabez blessing, you'll experience a deeper grief over your disconnect from God than you ever thought possible."* (p.85) I'm sorry but this seems to be a infatuation with a single man's prayer.

"Oh...keep me from evil." Jabez's last request is a brilliant but little-understood strategy for sustaining a blessed life." (p. 63) *"Do you believe that a supernatural God is going to show up to keep you from evil and protect your spiritual investment? Jabez did believe, and he acted on his belief. Thereafter his life was spared from the grief and pain that evil brings."* (p. 74) The fact is we do not know his condition in life, he was called Jabez because his mother bore him in pain, not that he was in pain his whole life. Wilkinson says he was in pain and then makes it seem that Jabez prayed he would not pain others because of his pain. There is never a mention of Jabez anywhere else in the Bible. His prayer reveals nothing of his history, or his relationship with God before or after this record. Wilkinson is at best speculating on where the Bible is silent.

Wilkinson uses the success stories of others to validate his prayer of Jabez concept. There are thousands of people who have been taught to pray Jabez's prayer and attribute their prosperity directly to this prayer method. Experience is never to be used to validate what is in the Word of God. The word of God validates our experience. Wilkinson states *"All I know it works over and over- it works."* Many things work but we need to ask are they biblical. One might argue this is a prayer from the bible. But so are other prayers that we could not transfer ownership to ourselves. Nor could we expect the same results from praying them. Do we find any apostle praying or recommending this prayer? Do we find this kind of principle taught in the New Testament? If not then why make it a practice. Prayer formulas do not enthrone God in our lives. What makes anyone think God will do the same thing for us that he did for Jabez because we pray the same prayer? If this was so we can take any Bible character use their prayer and expect the same results. Is this realistic? This to me is having God as our butler which is just as the word faith camp teaches. Is not Christ to be Lord over our lives, it is presumption at least to think God will do for us what he did for another. His will for Jabez is not the same for all. Remember at the end of the book of John- Peter was told by Jesus that he would go where he did not before and he asked what about John, Jesus basically said what's it to you if he lives on. God deals with us all on an individual basis.

This has turned into quite a phenomenon with Jabez prayer circles and clubs, newsletters. On one website it represents how many are now thinking, it had this to say. *"In the best way it is selfish prayer. (For a long time I have neglected myself, not loved myself, nor have I prayed for myself. Jabez loved himself enough to ask God to bless him. Charity begins at home, God's blessing begins with blessing me! If God does not extend our own boundaries then he cannot extend the boundaries of his Kingdom."*

Is God limited by man? There seems to be the problem. Those who have not prayed consistently or correctly are those who can have a flawed view of God and their relationship to him. Is the problem that we have not loved ourselves enough? Is this what the Bible teaches us to do, love self more? Jesus said we already love ourselves, our love is suppose to be directed to others. In this way this book is being misused because of Wilkersons interpretation. STOP

We should not be surprised at the acceptance and success of this small book after all numerous Christians already practice prayer models as spiritual incantations and many are looking for keys to success. I would

presume that Wilkinson intentions are not the same as word faith teachers, but they seem to arrive at the same place.

Is it Bible to accept that one could repetitiously pray the same thing over and over for a month and God would be obligated to bless them. Not according to Jesus (Mt.6). God's purposes for our lives are woven in time and outside our immediate sight. Can we know the mind of God or we coerce Him into blessing us now by a certain prayer? What kind of God responds in this way, not the God who is to be our Lord. There is a timing in the Lord blessing us and this seems to be a missing ingredient in Wilkinson's model. Wilkinson does not leave room for a no or even a wait from God, only an immediate answer of blessing. There is no balance in this. Jabez' request is reduced to a formula which I know God did not intend for it to be. What of the biblical concept that if we are faithful with the little he will give us more, this is certainly missing to the methodology Wilkinson has offered the Church. The real problem is that many of us want more, when we are ill equipped to handle it, this is not addressed. The opposite is taught, just ask and its yours.

Not everyone is thrilled about Wilkinson's book and many have voiced their view. In December 2001 Professor Mark R. Talbot of Wheaton College publishes his scathing theological treatise against the teachings of Dr. Bruce Wilkinson's "The Prayer of Jabez". Equating Wilkinson's teachings with the ancient heresy known as Gnosticism, Talbot's closing statement was a simple prayer... "May God Himself keep His people from falling prey to this book's inadequate theology."

In January of 2002 Dallas Theological Seminary publishes a paper by Professor of Theology, Dr. Roy Zuck, with the most unfavorable view of Wilkinson's teachings to date from the seminary where Dr. Wilkinson received his Masters degree.

You have My Guarantee

Wilkinson guarantees *the prayer will work and he leaves no room for failure*. But if someone has does not gain the success he promises then what is his counsel? This is no different than saying over and over by his stripes I'm healed or any Scripture to be claimed for ones own use. According to Wilkinson, it is sin in our lives that is the only thing that will stop the repetition of Jabez's prayer from working. When I hear this I consider Job who had evil befall him though he was doing what was right. His friends were sure it was because of sin but it was a God given test. In the end he received God's blessing but it was without his praying for it.

"If your like many who use the Jabez prayer...you'll come to times in your life when you feel so blessed that you stop praying for more, at least for a while. But I promise you that you will see a direct link: You will know beyond doubt that God has opened heaven's store-houses because you prayed." (p.84)

What about the apostle Paul who asked the Lord to take away his infirmity. God said no, but instead gave him grace. Paul wrote most of the New Testament, yet he did not get his request. Nor did he ever pray Jabez's formula. But Jabez who was not an apostle prayed and received his requests. We need to ask why? The answer is simple, God's will and purpose is different for everyone, there is no set formula for success.

Should we pray for things beyond our ability? Of course! But lets not limit ourselves to Jabez' prayer and make it to be like some protestant rosary.

"O Lord, I beg you first and most this morning, please bless... me!" Startled at such a selfish prayer, you pad down the hall to your shower. But as you're adjusting the water temperature, a thought hits you. It's so obvious, you can't believe you haven't thought it before: Great men of the faith think differently than the rest of us." And this he attributes as the reason some men and women of faith rise above the rest."(p.17)

Wilkinson asks "*what of Idbash, Hazeleponi, and Anub what honors and awards did they get from God?*" (p.76)

Just because it does not have their names does not mean others did not have God's blessings. Whose to say they were not great because they are not mentioned. Hazzeleponi is a female mentioned in the list of the genealogy of Judah (1 Chron 4:3) Idbash is a descendant of Judah who, with his two brothers (and a sister), are said to be "the sons of Etam" (1 Chron.4:3), probably meaning of the lineage of the founder of the place, or perhaps that they themselves were its settlers.(From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.)

If we look at Heb.11 the great men of faith that he refers to did not have expanded borders but became outcasts at certain times of their lives or most of them. If we look at Hebrews 11 that mentions all these faithful ones Abraham, Moses Samson etc. the writer also states Heb 11:36-12:1 "Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

One wonders about those who are not named are included with those who were faithful. Why they did not have their borders extended? Maybe they didn't pray the prayer of Jabez. Did you notice Jabez is not mentioned either, does this mean he was not faithful?

Actually the chapter explains to us "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb 11:6) So it is not a certain prayer that yields results. It is clear Jabez had an significant character as he was more honourable than his brethren. This qualified him for God's grace under the Old Testament covenant. A more efficacious prayer would be like Solomon's prayer for wisdom so he could rule the kingdom wisely.

The last section of the book titled "Redeemed For This," where he writes we could successfully pray for our "*God-sized best he has in mind for you.*" This is his prayer of Jabez formula, appealing to our wanting God's all for our lives. It is the Holy Spirits work in the believers life that changes us and sometimes it can be a slow but steady process. What about our being servants and being a blessing to others? Instead he wants us to pray the selfish prayer every day "Oh Lord, please bless me." If its not steps its requirements-- if not requirements its guidelines-- if not guidelines its models. Say these words, this phrase this way and you'll have a divine delivery. We need to have a relationship with the Lord not self-help books that give you chustpah to ask "bless ME" I want MY blessing. How many other prayers are there we could pray that would be self aggrandizing. There is no

message of the cross in the book. Everything we have in prayer is to come through the cross. This is not a spirit lead prayer but a formula for disaster, if we are not dying to self in our prayer life. I'm sorry but this kind of praying is far removed from the New Testament teaching of Jesus!

Wilkinson is bringing a Christian who is supposed to be under grace and states "*so many Christians are not desperate as Jabez was to receive it!*" (p.23) All we have is in Christ I don't believe we have to become desperate for God's blessing, He knows what he's doing. Wilkinson has reduced success for the Christian walk to a prayer instead of faith (trust) in the God in whom our prayer is to be directed toward. It becomes a 'faith prayer' that is supposed to guarantee success. Instead the bible speaks of a consistent relationship with our Father that will sustain us through the trials and failure.

He also says "I don't want to go to heaven and hear God say: *"lets look at your life, Bruce. Let me show you what I wanted for you and tried repeatedly to accomplish through you. but you wouldn't let me."* What a travesty! If he means because someone was not praying or yielded to God's will and direction in life I have no problem agreeing with him. But if he means not praying the prayer of Jabez for God's blessing I have a big problem with this statement. We walk in his grace, when we surrender and carry the cross and obey, God hears our prayers- there are no shortcuts. There are no certain prayers, or formulae's to guarantee God's blessings or power. Only God knows what Jabez meant in his heart. Jabez' prayer is exactly that, his own prayer. *Note:* Bruce Wilkinson has resigned as president of the organization he founded 25 years ago, Walk Thru the Bible Ministries. He has recently announced he is venturing into television and film to reach more people with his message. "My desire is to open more people's hearts to everything God has for them," Wilkinson said. "My goal is to take this message beyond America to every nation across the globe." (I assume that message being the prayer of Jabez)

Just a little information on Pastor Michaels . My name is Porter Michaels, a founder of Bethel Life Ministries; we have planted 6 churches within 2 years in Benin and Togo Republic. I am married with 4 children and my wife's name is Stella. We reach the lost and equip the saints in their search for perfection. Many people are starving for the word of God. Can you possibly imagine or comprehend what it would be like to be hungry for the word of God and not have that word in book form to read. Many here cannot afford some food to eat, our pastors and workers goes several days without food. (1John 2:15-17) We can't even pay our rents and bills. We trek because we can't afford a bicycle. May God have mercy.

NEVER A FRIEND DEARER



Oh there is never a friend Dearer
than Jesus has been to me,
The one who unstopped my ears and
caused my eyes to see,

No other friend in this whole
world would ever be as true,
No other friend have I known who
can do what He can do,

He is the lover of my soul, He is
the Savior I adore,
When you have Jesus, my friend
you'll thirst no more,

There has never been a friend so
dear, who can make me smile,
I know that when trouble comes, He
will walk with me each mile,

No other friend in this whole world would ever be as true,
No other friend have I known who can do what He can do.

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John 3:16 (NLT)

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it. ¹⁸There is no judgment awaiting those who trust him. But those who do not trust him have already been judged for not believing in the only Son of God.