

Today's Devotional is provided by Cathy Batson

## Praying with Jabez

Each morning before I leave the house and each night before bed I pray the prayer of Jabez. This short prayer is spoken by a man whom no one noticed.

*Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." 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." And God granted his request.*

—1 Chronicles 4:9-10

There isn't a lot of information about this obscure man. For all intents and purposes it appears he and his family was erased from Israel's history. So why is he mentioned at all?

Jabez was an honorable man, he recognizes how God is a true God and provides blessings in so many ways. I can only imagine how difficult it was to bear the burden of the shame that was associated with him. I suspect that he had days when he felt lost and hopeless. This simple prayer brought him relief and strengthened his relationship with God.



I was drawn to this prayer as well as the story because I identified with him in many ways. I decided to recite this prayer over 14 years ago and it has drastically changed my life. God has enlarged my territory in so many ways. I admit I haven't always realized or recognized that my territory has enlarged.

Early on, my expectation of God enlarging my territory was that I would hit the lottery, receive an unexpected check in the mail which would

allow me to retire and skip off into the sunset. Instead, I received unexpected promotions on jobs, or God would remove a difficult obstacle that had me worried and unable to sleep.

Over the years I've learned to recognize that God has the ability to enlarge my territory, keep me from harm, keep watch over me, without so much as breaking a sweat. Often unbeknownst to me. God rocked me through my battle with shame, fear and doubt.

My relationship with God continues to grow strong. I am often knee deep in busyness when I suddenly realize that God has granted, and continues to grant, my requests.

Jabez was a man of great faith. His testimony is more than 3,000 years old, however it continues to have a powerful impact today. Thank you Jabez! May your name be forever blessed.