

HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

1 April 2024

Jabez asked God for four things:

1. "That thou wouldst bless me."
2. "...enlarge my coast"
3. "...that thine hand might be with me."
4. "...that thou wouldst keep *me* from evil"

"God granted him that which he requested."

Book: "The Prayer of Jabez" by Bruce Wilkinson, 2000.

- This book teaches the unbiblical and false idea that anybody can pray the same words that Jabez prayed, and God will grant them physical, material, or financial blessings.

What does it mean to enlarge something in the bible?

Enlarge: found 25 times in the bible.

1 Samuel 2:1 Hanna prayed, "My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies."

2 Samuel 22:37-38 David prayed, "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip."

- Both of these verses are connected with opposition and enemies.

Psalms 119:32 "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."

- This is not a prayer for his physical heart. (See also Isaiah 60:5).

2 Corinthians 10:15 "...having hope...that we shall be enlarged by you..."

- Paul is not hoping to become physically larger.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 "...our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us...be ye also enlarged."

- Here, enlargement is mentioned in contrast to being straitened (confined, restricted).

Esther 4:14 "*then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place."

- Here, enlargement speaks of being delivered from your enemies.

Job 12:23 "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them *again*."

- As "*increasing*" is the opposite of "*destroying*," "*enlarging*" is the opposite of "*straitening*" (restricting).

Psalms 4:1 "thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress." God delivered him from his distress.

Making application to the prayer of Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10):

“Enlarge my coast” has two possible meanings.

1. Jabez pleads to “**the God of Israel.**” The Jews are the ones who have God’s promise of physical property as a reward for obedience to Him (Exod. 34:24, Deut. 12:20, 19:8). This would be an appropriate prayer for a Jew.
2. Jabez said to God, “**Keep me from evil.**” This indicates a possible reference to an enemy that is oppressing him and the Israelite people. So, his prayer, “**Enlarge my coasts**” would be a request for God to take away his enemies and give him freedom from an oppressive, restricted situation.

Making application to David’s prayer for an enlarged heart (Psalm 119:32):

“I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.”

- David WANTS to run the way of God’s commandments.
- There are some hindrances that David wants removed so that he can go the way God wants him to go.
 - These hindrances are within him. His own heart is a hindrance.

WHAT IS HINDERING OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AS BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS?

- We are commanded to “**Grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**” (2 Pet 3:18).
 - God “**hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.**”
 - We have the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 14:17, Romans 8:9, 1 Cor. 3:16, Eph. 3:16).
 - We have the word of God, 66 books, 1189 chapters (Rom. 10:17, 1 Pet. 1:23, Heb. 4:12).
 - Why are we not more like Jesus Christ than we are today?
 - We need some enlargement.
 - We need deliverance from the things that are hindering, constraining, and preventing us from living the Christian life as we should.
 - **Ask God** to help you to remove the obstacles that are hindering your growth toward godliness.
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