



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

LIVING LARGE (PROSPEROUS)

A New You for a New Year Series, Part 1A

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In 1 Chronicles 4: 9-10, Jabez was given a name that meant "I bore him in pain". Surely, he must have grown up being teased and ridiculed because of his name. In our own life, we may have faced something similar, being ridiculed and judged or labeled as "dim witted" or "ugly" or worst "black sheep." Hence, as Christians, we should emulate Jabez who despite the enigma attached to his name chose to rise above, to be honorable, to move forward. As a result, his prayer was granted.

1. Names are important.

- 1.1 Our names are an important part of our identity. For this reason, our parents must have thought long and hard in their choice of the names they will give us.
- 1.2 In Biblical times, the name given to a person often meant the character or the plight in life that he/she might walk. Some examples of names with corresponding meaning(s) are: Jacob (Supplanter); David (Beloved); Jeremiah (the Lord exalts); Solomon (Peace); and Jesus, (God saves).
- 1.3 In the Bible, there were instances when Jesus changed the names of certain people to reflect their destiny or their specific mission. When God changed a person's name and gave him a new name, it was usually to establish a new identity. Some examples are: Abram (High Father) to Abraham (Father of a Multitude); Sarai (My Princess) to Sarah (Mother of Nations) (Gen.17: 15); Jacob (Supplanter) to Israel (Having Power with God) (Gen. 32:28); Simon (God has heard) to Peter (The Rock) (Mt. 16: 13-20); and Saul to Paul (Acts 13: 9).

2. The past doesn't define our future.

2.1 Just as Jabez was able to live an honorable life despite having been labeled as "pain" from birth, we too can rise above our past. Only on few instances that the course of our past life affects our future. Nothing can change the past. But the Bible teaches us that sincere repentance, conversion and forgiveness can lead us to a better upright life. This gives us the power to alter the perception of our past. We need to adjust to the new "self", thereby, being able to change the direction of our future.

2.2 In order to lead an honorable life that's pleasing in the eyes of God, we need to walk the "extra mile" for Him. We should not put boundaries on what we can do for Him. Let us not limit our service for God's glory.

3. **Our name has also been changed.** For all us who claim and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, our name is "Christian", meaning, a follower of Jesus Christ. As such, our character and conduct must reflect that we are indeed followers of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

We should not allow others' opinions nor our past life define our self-image, diminish our confidence and ruin our future. Our identity as Christians is what really matters

REFLECTION: Have you experienced when you have been judged because of your past life? How did you overcome this?

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