



# THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

## PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

### “PRAYER FLAWS”

#### A New You for a New Year Series, Part 2)

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The Bible tells the story of Jabez whose name meant “borne in pain.” He called on God through prayers (1 Chr. 4:9-10) to bless him, to expand his territory, and to keep him from evil and pain. Jabez’s answered prayer led Bruce Wilkinson to promote his book, *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to Blessed Life*. Wilkinson claims that Jabez’s prayer, if recited repeatedly, guarantees to release the power and the presence of God in our lives. However, the book has some flaws that should be pointed out in order to truly benefit from the prayer of Jabez.

#### What are the flaws of the book?

1. The book is used as a mantra. A mantra is a word or sound repeated to concentrate in meditation. The prayer of Jabez should be used as a model and not as a mantra. When Jesus’ disciples asked Him how they should pray (Mt. 6), He specifically warned them against such practice (1 Thess. 5:17; Mt. 7:7; 15:8). God wants us to speak to Him spontaneously from the heart (Rom. 8:26-27) with the help of the Holy Spirit.
2. The prayer assures that God always answers our prayer if it is repeated daily (1 Chron. 4:10). God the Father denied Jesus’ prayer that the cup might be taken from Him (Jesus) and be spared suffering on the cross (Lk. 22:42). Though we recite Jabez’ prayer, it is not a guarantee that God will answer our prayers the way we want it to be (Mk.8:36). The truth about this prayer is that God may not grant our request which might harm us or He will delay his answer for our own benefit. (2 Pt. 3:9; Eccl. 3:11). We need to remember that when we pray, whether it is the prayer of Jabez or some

other prayer, we cannot manipulate, control or force God to do what we want.

3. The key to abundant life is unscriptural. The book presents the prayer of Jabez as the key to abundant life which is not Biblical. The Lord says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (Jn. 10:10). Biblical characters like Moses, Abraham, Paul and many others were blessed abundantly, but the Bible did not mention any of them praying like Jabez. If God answers prayers with a “yes”, then it is His will to do so.
4. Jesus Christ’s name was rarely mentioned in the book. While it focused a great deal about God the Father, it rarely mentioned about God the Son. People of any faith, interfaith or no faith at all can feel that they can embrace the message. The truth is that God hears and answers our prayers if they are offered in the name of Jesus. He intercedes for us before God’s throne (Jn. 16:24; Heb. 4:16; Eph. 3).

#### Conclusion:

When we are at the end of the rope asking for the last-minute answer to our prayer, remember that God is not limited by any territory, boundary, or time. We should continue to pray and rest in full confidence that His response will certainly be good and right because He will act as He knows best for us (Isa. 55).

#### Reflection:

1. What are you praying for right now?
2. Are you struggling on how you should pray?
3. Do you think God will grant your heart’s desire?

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